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The changing voting trend in assembly election Haryana a geographical analysis (2009-2014)

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Abstract

In the Indian democracy, the changing pattern of voting trends significantly affects the evolving political scenario in the electoral process. Haryana's political landscape has been profoundly shaped by regionalism and dynastic politics, influencing voting behaviour and contributing to a democratic deficit in the state. The state has witnessed the dominance of political families, which has fostered a culture of leadership continuity within family circles rather than ideological evolution or policy-based governance. This paper analyses the changing voting trend in Haryana assembly elections from 2009 to 2014, a period that marked a watershed transformation in the state's political history. The analysis relies on secondary data sources, including records from the Election Commission of Haryana, related research papers, and newspaper reports, which collectively reveal the modern change scenario of political parties and their electoral performance in Haryana. The statistical data of the changing voting trend is presented with the help of line graphs, bar diagrams, and tables using MS Excel. The study area map and voting seat distribution are shown using QGIS software. This paper mainly focuses on the changing voting trend from 2009 to 2014 due to the changing political scenario and people's shifting perspectives towards political parties. The electoral landscape of Haryana underwent a dramatic transformation between 2009 and 2014, reflecting significant socio-economic and political changes in the state. This period witnessed the meteoric rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the simultaneous decline of the Indian National Congress (INC), Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), and other regional parties. The changing voting trend is attributed to factors such as religion, caste dynamics, urbanization, and the growing influence of national political narratives over regional identities.

Keywords: Voting trend, political party, election manifestos, regional development

1. Introduction

Haryana, carved out of the erstwhile state of Punjab on 1st November 1966, has been a crucial battleground in Indian electoral politics. Despite being a relatively small state with 90 assembly constituencies, Haryana has consistently played an outsized role in shaping national political narratives. The state's political culture has been characterized by the dominance of a few powerful political families and caste-based affiliations, which have significantly influenced electoral outcomes over the decades. The Congress party dominated the state's politics for several decades after its creation, with intermittent challenges from regional forces and the Janata Party during the post-Emergency period.

The electoral history of Haryana reveals a pattern of anti-incumbency and shifting loyalties among voters. From the era of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma and Bansi Lal in the early years, to the long dominance of Bhajan Lal, and subsequently the rise of Om Prakash Chautala and the INLD, the state has seen power oscillate between different political formations. The entry of the Haryana Janhit Congress (HJC) under Kuldeep Bishnoi in 2007 added another dimension to the already complex political landscape. However, the most dramatic shift in Haryana's political trajectory occurred during the period under study, from 2009 to 2014, when the BJP transformed from a marginal player with just 4 seats in the 2009 assembly elections to the single largest party with 47 seats in 2014.

The 2009 assembly elections in Haryana were held in the backdrop of the Congress-led UPA government at the centre, and the party managed to emerge as the single largest party with 40 seats, though falling short of a clear majority. The INC formed the government under the leadership of Bhupinder Singh Hooda with the support of independents and other smaller

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parties. The INLD, led by Om Prakash Chautala, secured 31 seats to become the principal opposition party. The BJP, despite being a major national party, could manage only 4 seats, reflecting its limited organizational presence and electoral appeal in the state at that time. The HJC won 6 seats, while the BSP managed 1 seat, and independents and others won the remaining 8 seats.

The period between 2009 and 2014 was marked by several significant developments that fundamentally altered the political calculus in Haryana. The anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare and the subsequent rise of the Aam Aadmi Party created a nationwide wave against the incumbent Congress governments. The Narendra Modi factor, coupled with the BJP's aggressive campaign strategy and the promise of development and good governance, resonated strongly with the electorate in Haryana. Additionally, the BJP's strategy of fielding non-Jat candidates in a state where Jat dominance had been a persistent feature of politics proved to be a masterstroke, as it consolidated non-Jat votes across castes and communities in favour of the party.

The 2014 assembly elections thus represented a tectonic shift in Haryana's political landscape. The BJP's tally of 47 seats was more than eleven times its 2009 count, while the INC was reduced from 40 to just 15 seats, and the INLD from 31 to 19 seats. This dramatic reversal warrants a detailed geographical analysis to understand the spatial patterns of voting behaviour change, the regions where the shift was most pronounced, and the factors that contributed to this electoral transformation. The present study attempts such an analysis by examining the trends and patterns of seats won by different political parties across the geographical expanse of Haryana during this critical period.

2. Objectives of the Research

The primary objective of this research is to study the changing voting trend in the Assembly elections in Haryana from 2009 to 2014. The specific objectives include:

- To examine the party-wise trends of seats won in the Assembly elections Haryana of 2009 and 2014.
- To analyse the consistency in the seats won by major political parties across the two elections.
- To identify the regional patterns of electoral change across different divisions of Haryana.

- To understand the factors responsible for the dramatic shift in voting behaviour during this period.

3. Research Methodology

The present study is primarily based on secondary data sources. The electoral data for the 2009 and 2014 Haryana Assembly elections has been obtained from the official records of the Election Commission of Haryana and the Election Commission of India. Additionally, related research papers, published articles, newspapers, and statistical reports have been consulted to provide a comprehensive analysis of the changing voting trends. The statistical data of the changing voting trend is presented with the help of line graphs, bar diagrams, and tables prepared using MS Excel. The study area map and voting seat distribution are shown using QGIS software, which enables spatial visualization of the electoral patterns across different administrative divisions and districts of Haryana.

The research methodology adopted for this study follows a quantitative approach to analyse the electoral data. The party-wise seat distribution for both election years has been tabulated and compared to identify the magnitude and direction of change. Bar diagrams have been used to provide a visual comparison of seats won by different political parties in the two elections. Line graphs depict the trends of seats won by the major political parties, highlighting the trajectories of growth and decline. The consistency analysis examines how many constituencies were retained, lost, or newly gained by each major party across the two elections. The regional analysis divides Haryana into its administrative divisions to understand the spatial dimensions of electoral change. The choropleth mapping technique through QGIS has been employed to represent the spatial patterns of voting behaviour across the state, providing a geographical perspective on the electoral transformation.

4. Trends of Seats Won

The analysis of trends of seats won by different political parties in the Haryana Assembly elections of 2009 and 2014 reveals a dramatic transformation in the state's electoral landscape. The most striking feature of this period is the meteoric rise of the BJP and the corresponding decline of the INC and INLD. The data presented in Table 1 and Figure 1 clearly illustrates the magnitude of this electoral shift.

Table 1: Party-wise Seats Won in Haryana Assembly Elections (2009 and 2014)

Political Party	Seats Won (2009)	Seats Won (2014)	Change
BJP	4	47	43
INC	40	15	-25
INLD	31	19	-12
HJCBL	6	2	-4
BSP	1	1	0
SAD	0	1	1
Others	8	5	-3
Total	90	90	0

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Reports 2009-2014

As evident from Table 1 the BJP's seat count witnessed an extraordinary increase from a mere 4 seats in 2009 to 47 seats in 2014, registering a phenomenal growth of over 1075 percent. This is perhaps one of the most dramatic electoral turnarounds in the history of any state assembly election in India. The BJP, which was virtually a non-entity in

Haryana's assembly politics in 2009, became the dominant force within a span of just five years. The party not only increased its seat share but also expanded its geographical spread across the state, winning seats in regions where it had traditionally been weak.

The Indian National Congress, which had emerged as the

single largest party in 2009 with 40 seats, suffered a devastating defeat in 2014, losing 25 seats and being reduced to just 15 seats. This represents a decline of 62.5 percent in the party's seat tally. The Congress's decline can be attributed to multiple factors, including anti-incumbency against the Bhupinder Singh Hooda government, allegations of corruption, failure to address the concerns of various caste groups, and the nationwide Modi wave that swept across northern India. The party's traditional support base among Jat voters was also eroded as the BJP successfully consolidated non-Jat votes against what was perceived as Jat-dominated Congress rule.

The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), the principal opposition party in 2009 with 31 seats, also suffered a significant setback in 2014, losing 12 seats and being reduced to 19 seats. The decline of the INLD can be attributed to the incarceration of its top leadership, including Om Prakash Chautala, in the teachers' recruitment scam,

which severely damaged the party's credibility and organizational capacity. The absence of charismatic leadership and the inability to present a viable alternative to both the Congress and the BJP further weakened the party's electoral prospects.

The Haryana Janhit Congress (BL), which had won 6 seats in 2009, could manage only 2 seats in 2014. The party's decline was a consequence of its failure to establish a distinct identity separate from the Congress and its inability to capitalize on the anti-incumbency sentiment. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), which had not won any seat in 2009, opened its account with 1 seat in 2014, primarily from the Sikh-dominated areas bordering Punjab. The BSP maintained its single seat in both elections, while the category of 'Others' saw a decline from 8 seats in 2009 to 5 seats in 2014, as the BJP's rise absorbed many independent and smaller party votes.

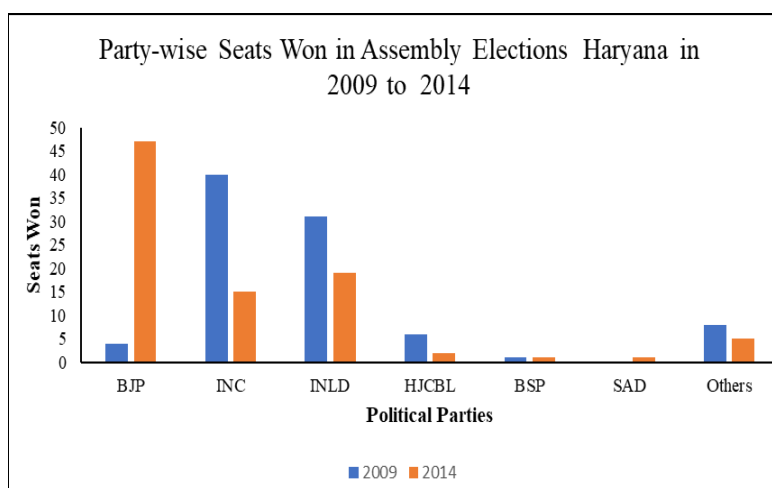


Fig 1: Party-wise Seats Won in Haryana Assembly Elections: 2009 vs 2014

Figure 1 provides a visual comparison of the seats won by different political parties in the 2009 and 2014 Haryana Assembly elections. The bar diagram clearly demonstrates the dramatic shift in the electoral fortunes of the BJP and the INC. While the INC towered over all other parties in 2009, its position was completely overturned in 2014 as the BJP

emerged as the dominant party with a commanding lead over its rivals. The near-symmetrical nature of the exchange between the BJP's gain and the INC's loss is particularly noteworthy, suggesting a direct transfer of votes from the Congress to the BJP rather than a fragmentation of the opposition vote.

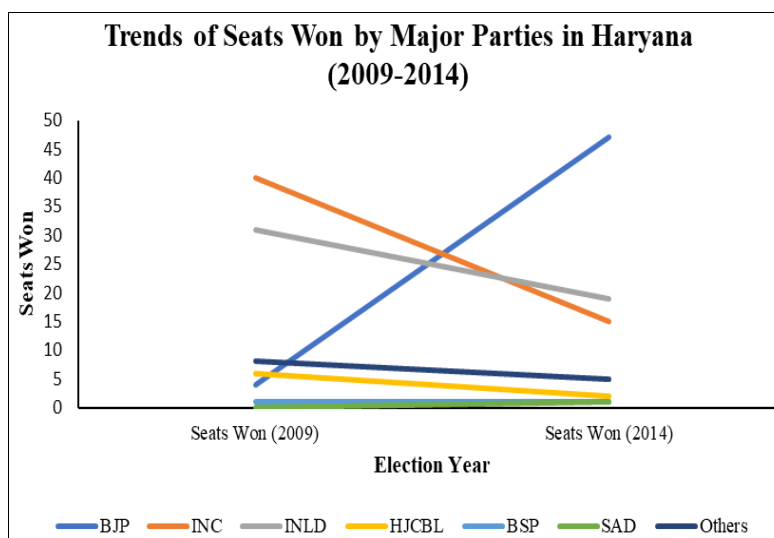


Fig 2: Trends of Seats Won by Major Parties in Haryana (2009-2014)

Figure 2 depicts the trend lines of seats won by the major political parties in Haryana during the period 2009 to 2014. The divergent trajectories of the BJP and the INC are the most prominent features of this graph. The BJP's line shows an almost vertical ascent from 4 to 47 seats, while the INC's line shows a steep descent from 40 to 15 seats. The INLD's trajectory also shows a decline, though less steep than that of the INC, falling from 31 to 19 seats. The HJCBL and Others show relatively modest changes. These trend lines underscore the magnitude of the electoral transformation that occurred in Haryana during this five-year period, with the BJP's gains coming primarily at the expense of the INC and the INLD.

Table 2: Trends of Seats Won by Major Parties in Haryana (2009-2014)

Division	BJP 2009	BJP 2014	INC 2009	INC 2014	INLD 2009	INLD 2014
Ambala	1	13	8	1	4	4
Rohtak	1	10	15	4	6	5
Hisar	1	11	7	2	10	6
Gurugram	1	8	6	4	7	3
Faridabad	0	5	4	4	4	1

Source: Election Commission of India, Statistical Reports 2009-2014

Table 2 and Figure 3 present the regional distribution of seats won by the major political parties across the administrative divisions of Haryana. The Ambala Division, comprising the districts of Ambala, Panchkula, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, and Karnal, witnessed the most dramatic transformation with the BJP increasing its tally from just 1 seat in 2009 to 13 seats in 2014. The INC, which had held 8 seats in this division, was reduced to just 1 seat. This division, with its significant non-Jat population including Punjabis, Banias, and other trading communities, responded overwhelmingly to the BJP's development-oriented campaign and the Modi factor.

The Rohtak Division, which is the traditional stronghold of the Hooda clan and was the power centre during the Congress regime, saw the BJP winning 10 seats compared to just 1 in 2009. The INC's seat count in this division

5. Regional Analysis of Seats Won

The regional analysis of seats won in Haryana provides important insights into the geographical dimensions of the electoral transformation. Haryana is administratively divided into six divisions: Ambala, Rohtak, Hisar, Gurugram, Faridabad, and Karnal. Each division has its own distinct socio-economic and caste composition, which influences voting behaviour in significant ways. The regional distribution of BJP seats across these divisions reveals the party's broad-based appeal in 2014, as opposed to its limited presence in 2009.

dropped from 15 to 4, a devastating blow to the party's core support area. The fact that the BJP could make significant inroads even in the Rohtak Division, considered the citadel of Bhupinder Singh Hooda, demonstrates the depth and breadth of the anti-incumbency sentiment and the appeal of the BJP's campaign.

The Hisar Division, a traditional stronghold of the INLD and the Chautala clan, also witnessed a significant shift. The BJP won 11 seats in this division in 2014, up from just 1 in 2009. The INLD's tally declined from 10 to 6 seats, while the INC was reduced from 7 to 2 seats. The Gurugram Division, which includes the rapidly urbanizing districts of Gurugram, Faridabad's periphery, Mewat, and Rewari, saw the BJP winning 8 seats compared to 1 in 2009. The Faridabad Division also showed a similar pattern with the BJP winning 5 seats in 2014 after having won none in 2009.

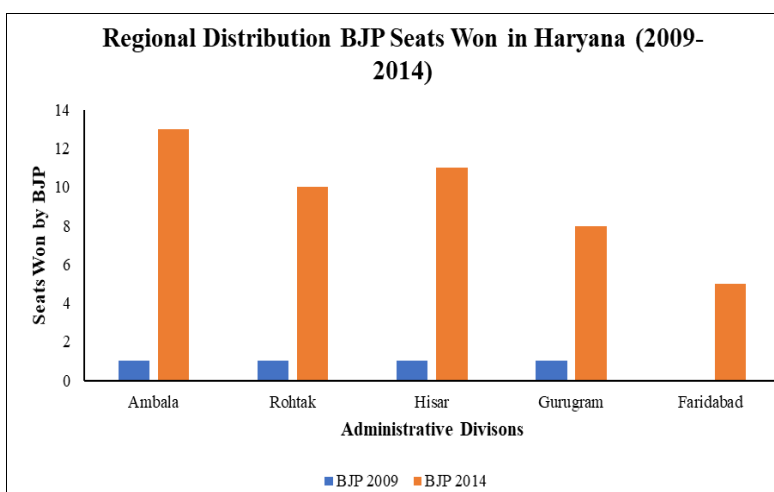
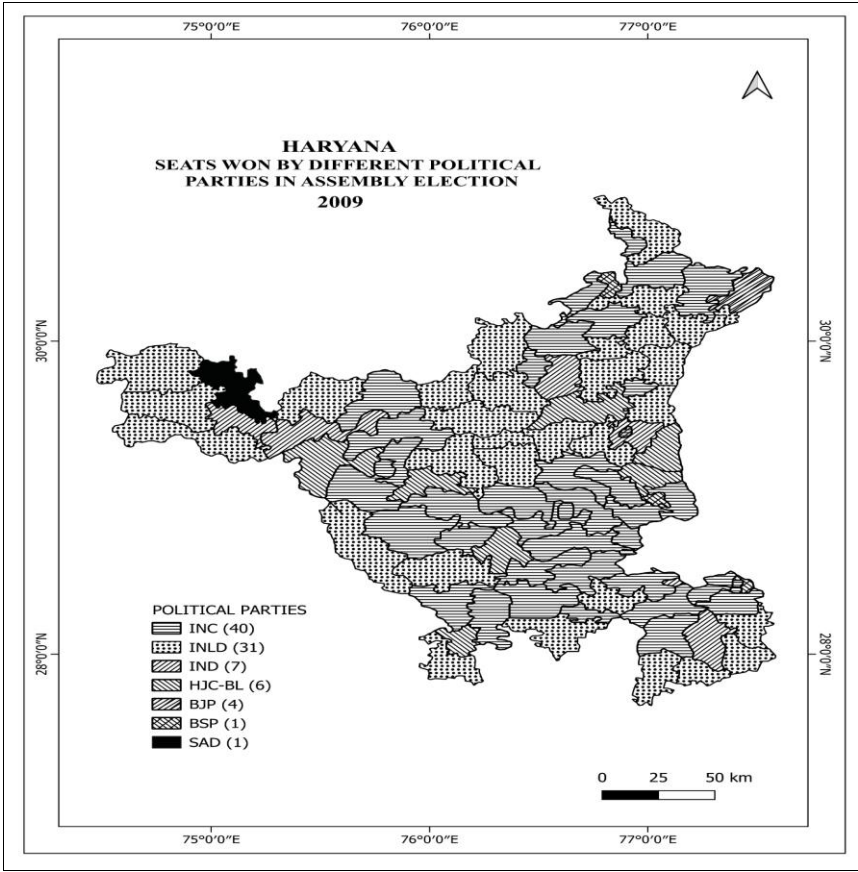


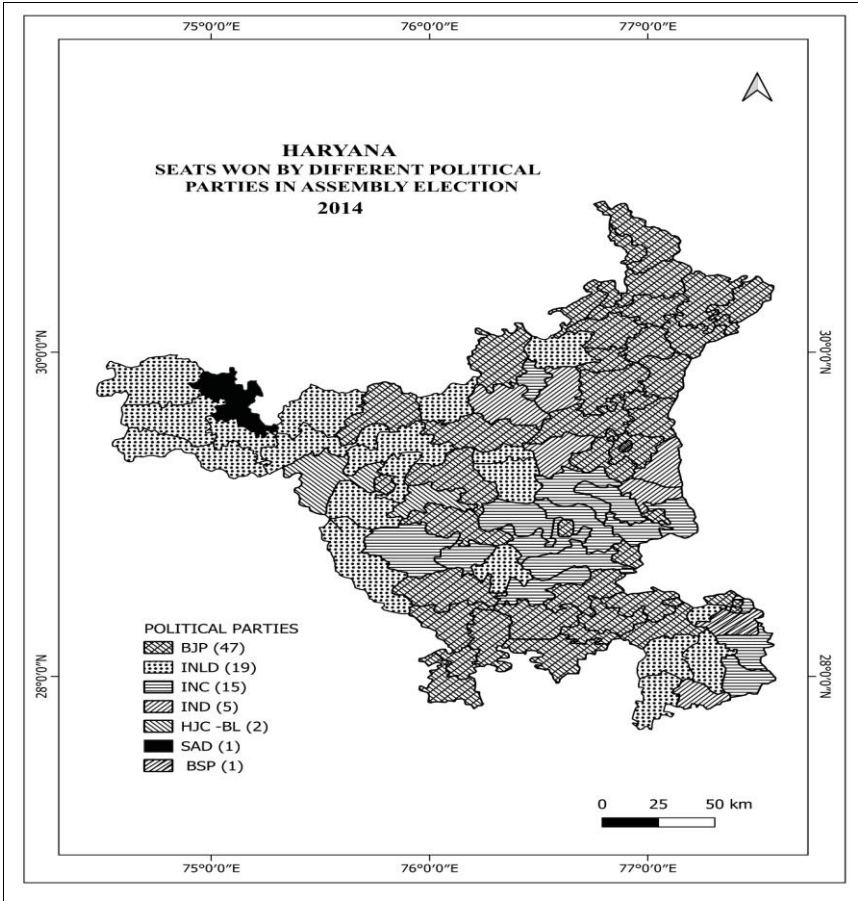
Fig 3: Regional Distribution of BJP Seats Won in Haryana (2009-2014)

The regional analysis thus reveals that the BJP's victory in 2014 was not confined to any particular region of Haryana but was spread across all divisions of the state. This geographical spread indicates that the factors driving the BJP's success were not limited to local or regional issues but had a statewide and indeed national character. The Modi

wave, coupled with the BJP's strategic positioning on issues of governance, development, and caste dynamics, resonated across the diverse regions of Haryana, transcending the traditional fault lines of region, caste, and clan that had previously defined the state's electoral politics.



Sources: Map created by Researcher with Qgis software



Sources: Map created by Researcher with Qgis software

Conclusion

The period from 2009 to 2014 witnessed a tectonic shift in Haryana's electoral landscape, with the BJP emerging as the dominant political force from a position of virtual irrelevance. The party's seat count increased from 4 in 2009 to 47 in 2014, a growth of over 1075 percent, which is among the most dramatic electoral turnarounds in Indian state politics. This transformation was driven by a combination of national factors, including the Modi wave and the anti-corruption sentiment against the UPA government, as well as state-specific factors such as anti-incumbency against the Hooda government and the BJP's strategic non-Jat coalition. The INC suffered the most significant decline, losing 25 of its 40 seats and being reduced to a distant second position with just 15 seats. The party's decline was not limited to any particular region but was spread across all divisions of the state, indicating a comprehensive rejection by the electorate. The failure to address governance issues, the perception of corruption, and the inability to counter the BJP's narrative all contributed to the Congress's downfall. The INLD, despite being the principal opposition party in 2009, also suffered a decline, losing 12 seats to end up with 19 seats in 2014. The party's inability to capitalize on the anti-incumbency against the Congress government was largely due to its own leadership crisis following the conviction of Om Prakash Chautala and Ajay Chautala in the teachers' recruitment scam. In terms of consistency of seats won, the INC retained only 10 out of its 40 constituencies, the INLD retained 12 out of 31, while the BJP retained only 2 out of 4, though the latter figure reflects the party's marginal status in 2009 rather than voter disloyalty. The BJP gained 45 new constituencies in 2014, demonstrating its expanded geographical reach across the state. The regional analysis reveals that the BJP's victory was not confined to any particular region but was spread across all administrative divisions of Haryana. The Ambala Division witnessed the most dramatic transformation, with the BJP increasing its tally from 1 to 13 seats. Even the Rohtak Division, the traditional stronghold of the Congress, saw the BJP winning 10 seats in 2014 compared to just 1 in 2009.

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