

EVENT REPORT

PANEL DISCUSSION: “ASSESSING GENERAL ELECTIONS 2024”

(Organised by Ramjas Political Review on 1st September, 2024)

1. The Ramjas Political Review (RPR) organised an online panel discussion on “Indian Elections 2024” on 1st September, 2024. The objective of this panel discussion was to reflect upon the results of the recently concluded Lok Sabha Elections and the various undertones, shocks, and future implications it carries along with an analysis of the voting behaviour in different regions and among different social groups within the nation.
2. The online discussion featured students from different colleges and disciplines across the country. During the proceedings, the participants deliberated on the various explanations of the results and trends observed during and after the national elections based on the available data. Furthermore, specific and comprehensive discussions about different electoral regions and category-specific behaviour of voters were also done.

PANELLISTS’ SESSION

3. **Mr Manav Dalmia**, an MBBS student of Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, spoke on the topic “*UP Nahin Dekha Toh Kya Dekha*”, highlighting the many reasons for National Democratic Alliance’s (NDA) failure in retaining the 80 Lok Sabha in Uttar Pradesh.
4. He mentioned the incident of paper leaks which brought about the alienation and distancing of youth from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He also linked the decline in the vote share of

the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) with the subsequent rise in the success of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA). Talking about the concentration of BJP votes in urban centres, he explained how around 90% of the BJP's votes were wasted due to the lack of rural support. Further, he deliberated on the effects of the Migration and COVID crisis and the divergence of state and central issues.

5. **Ms Maitree Sheoran**, a student at Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi, led the discussion on "*Decoding Eastern One-sidedness*". She highlighted the electoral outcomes of the 2024 general elections in the eastern-Indian states of West Bengal, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh. She emphasised the significant role of public dissatisfaction with the BJP government, which contributed to the success of the INDIA coalition. She noted that unemployment and developmental models were key factors influencing voter preferences, leading to a shift in sentiment in several regions. West Bengal saw continued support for the Trinamool Congress (TMC), while anti-incumbency against the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha boosted BJP's support. In Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, welfare-centric and developmental strategies led to decisive victories.
6. **Maitree** further analysed the critical role of economic proposals, regional interests, and developmental strategies in shaping the Lok Sabha election results. She stressed the importance of a unified opposition alliance at the national level, while also acknowledging the significance of regional alliances in specific states.
7. **Ms Ramanshi Dwivedi**, a student of Miranda House, spoke about the "*Subaltern Verdict*" in the election results. She deliberated on how the traditional voting pattern where marginalised groups supported the BJP saw a significant shift, with these votes moving towards the BSP and Samajwadi Party. This change, as explained by her, was driven by Dalits' dissatisfaction with not receiving adequate employment opportunities, leading to a sense of insecurity, which the opposition parties effectively highlighted and justified.

8. In Bihar, she emphasised the considerable economic neglect in rural areas, especially in infrastructure and healthcare. In the North East, she talked about *Adivasis*, who rely heavily on government support and found the central government's provisions inadequate, with recent regional issues not being properly addressed by the central authorities.
9. Finally, the last panellist, **Ms Khushi Kukreja**, a student of Ramjas College, delved into the issue of "*Women's Undercurrents*" in the Lok Sabha elections in 2024. She began by noting the rapid decline in the gender gap among voters and explored possible reasons why women increasingly participate in voting. She discussed various factors influencing women's participation in Indian politics, such as self-empowerment, institutional factors, and women-centric schemes. However, she highlighted the lack of research in gender politics, which limits understanding of gender's role in voter behaviour. **Khushi** also pointed out that there is no apparent correlation between higher female voter turnout and the election of women candidates in those constituencies.
10. In her presentation, she explained how women voters are often viewed as caregivers who need protection, leading candidates to offer amenities and women-centric schemes, assuming these matter more than political ideologies to female voters. Despite these assumptions, her analysis showed no correlation between such schemes and voter turnout. Additionally, she mentioned that female voters are often not seen as independent thinkers, with many women reportedly voting according to their families' preferences.

MODERATOR'S COMMENTS

11. Moderator **Mr Piyush Rangra** posed a question to **Manav**, asking if Uttar Pradesh (UP) is overemphasised and whether a political party should focus on UP or other states. Manav responded by asserting that UP plays a crucial role in securing a majority in Parliament, arguing

that control of UP reduces the need for support from regional parties. **Ramanshi** agreed with Manav, emphasising that UP's significance is justified as it is the most populous state in India. The discussion then shifted to Andhra Pradesh, where **Maitree** explained that the shift in regional sentiments was due to promises made by the Telugu Desam Party (TDP). When asked if Congress could return to power, **Maitree** expressed optimism, citing INDIA's unified front and developmental agenda.

12. The conversation also touched on women's voting behaviour, with **Khushi** noting that while some women may vote strategically, many still do not, despite BJP's pro-women schemes post-2019. **Mr Prem Ansh Sinha**, the Editor-in-Chief, questioned the relevance of Hindutva ideology after the 2024 elections. **Manav** expressed uncertainty about its future but pointed out the rise of caste-based politics in India. **Piyush** then inquired about caste-based voting in West Bengal, to which **Maitree** responded that the TMC remains strong in the state, maintaining connections at the grassroots level, regardless of caste.

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

13. In the discussion, **Ms Shrutee**, a student of Ramjas College in the audience, inquired whether the Hindutva ideology and the '*Jai Jagannath*' slogan played a major role in shaping the public vote in Odisha, and if these factors overshadowed other influences. **Maitree** responded that while the slogan and ideology were important, they were part of a broader set of influences, including anti-incumbency sentiments and developmental models, which collectively impacted voter behaviour in the state.

14. **Mr Arnav Sinha**, another student of Ramjas College in the audience, asked about the potential impact of the reversal in Centre-State support for the BJP after the 2024 electoral verdict, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, on the upcoming Assembly elections. **Manav** pointed out the unpredictability of Uttar Pradesh, cautioning against drawing conclusions for future State Assembly elections based on recent general election results. He emphasised the need for the BJP to focus on caste arithmetic, economic factors, and strengthening local leadership alongside its national leadership to enhance its prospects in the states.

CLOSING STATEMENT

15. Moderator **Piyush Rangra** delivered the closing statement for the event, thanking the panellists for their keen insights into the issue at hand, and the audience for their enthusiastic participation in the discussions. He mentioned how Uttar Pradesh remains a key battleground in Indian elections due to its unpredictable electoral landscape, making it vital for national political strategies, drawing on the points put forth by **Manav**. Further, he remarked how the eastern coast of India presents two distinct electoral patterns: Tamil Nadu and West Bengal favouring regionalism and progressive welfare, while Andhra Pradesh and Odisha show competitive politics shaped by factors like anti-incumbency, political vendetta, cultural identity, and welfare policies. He thanked **Maitree** for highlighting this important subject matter.

16. Piyush also highlighted how **Khushi** explained the important role of women voters as a crucial and influential voting bloc with complex voting patterns influenced by caste, regional dynamics, welfare programs, and strategic decision-making. Lastly, he thanked **Ramanshi** for

highlighting how marginalised communities have largely supported the INDIA bloc in this election, reacting to economic, social, and political factors.

Ends.