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The Resurgence of Regional Parties in India: Influence on National Politics in the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections

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Abstract: *The 2024 Lok Sabha elections in India witnessed a significant resurgence of regional parties, marking a dynamic shift in the nation's political realm. This paper explores the rise of regional political forces and their growing influence on both state and national politics. Traditionally dominated by national parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress (INC), the 2024 elections revealed a more fragmented and multi-polar political realm, with regional parties playing a crucial role in determining electoral outcomes. By examining the reasons behind this resurgence such as increased regional identity politics, dissatisfaction with central governance and the strategic alliances formed between regional and national parties the paper evaluates the influence of this shift for India's democratic structure and governance. It also analyzes the potential challenges and opportunities by a strengthened federal institutional framework, exploring how regional parties are likely to shape up the future of national policy, alliance politics and India's socio-economic development. The study concludes by reflecting on the long-term impact of this trend on the political situation of India especially in the context of the evolving balance of power politics between central and regional authorities.*

Key words : Regional Parties, significant resurgence, dynamic shift, multi-polar political realm

INTRODUCTION: The 2024 Lok Sabha elections in India signaled not only a testification for national parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress (INC), but also a pivotal moment for regional parties across the country. In recent years, there has been a notable resurgence of regional parties, with these groups increasingly influence over national politics and altering the dynamics of traditional party power structures.¹ Parties like the Trinamool Congress (TMC) in West Bengal, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in Telangana, and others have enhanced their regional presence, reflecting strong localized support that often prioritizes state-specific issues over broader national political agendas.

This shift towards regional prominence has significant influence for the national political landscape. As regional parties expand their influence and form coalitions, they are becoming instrumental device in determining the balance of power at the central level. With the electorate's increasing focus on local governance issues, social welfare and identity politics, regional parties are likely to play kingmaker roles, shaping policies, alliances and the outcomes of the 2024 elections. Understanding this resurgence and its impact on Indian politics is essential to gauge how national policies, coalition governments and federal dynamics might evolve in the coming years. The 2024 elections may not just redefine the power structures within the Lok Sabha but also underscore the importance of a more decentralized and more representative form of Indian democracy.²

The 18th General Election for the Lok Sabha in 2024 has underscored some significant trends and shifts in Indian politics, reflecting both the strengths and challenges faced by the country's major national and regional parties. This analysis explores into the main outcomes, key trends, and influence for Indian politics based on the election results. NDA's performance, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), retained a majority with 294 seats but fell short of its earlier performance in 2019. The BJP itself secured 240 seats, a reduction from its 303-seat win in the previous election. This shift highlights a reliance on allies for securing a governing majority.³ The Indian National Congress (INC) improved its seat count to 99, nearly doubling its presence from 52 seats in 2019. A key factor in this increase was the party's coalition with other opposition members within the INDIA alliance, which allowed it to perform better in states like Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Telangana. Regional parties' growing influence, regional parties further solidified their role as kingmakers, especially in states where the NDA or UPA alone couldn't dominate. The INDIA alliance's gains were particularly notable in states where regional parties hold significant sway, such as Maharashtra and Bihar.⁴

BJP's reduced seat count, the drop in the BJP's seats from 303 in 2019 to 240 in 2024 reveals areas where it lost ground. In some populous and politically significant states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the BJP faced strong challenges from regional parties, which managed to make a great notable inroads and weaken the BJP's previous dominance. BJP's vote share decline, the BJP's vote share fell slightly from 37.36% in 2019 to 36.56% in 2024.⁵ While this change might seem minor, it had a considerable impact on the number of



seats secured. The loss of votes in some certain states created into an overall reduction in seat share, showing how sensitive seat counts can be to even small shifts in voter support. The Indian National Congress saw a rise in its vote share to 21.19%, with a 1.7 percentage point increase from 2019. While this increase may appear modest, it proved impactful in terms of seats, allowing Congress to nearly double its representation in the Lok Sabha seats. Effective collaboration within the INDIA alliance enabled Congress to target and win seats in some states.⁶

An analysis of 18th General Election Lok Sabha (2024) Result

Here's a table shows for the **2024 Lok Sabha election seat distribution** based on the trends and analysis discussed. This table shows the distribution by key alliances and regional parties:

Party / Alliance	Seats Won
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	294
Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	240
Janata Dal (United) (JD(U))	16
Shiv Sena (Shinde faction)	12
Other NDA Allies	26
INDIA Alliance	180
Indian National Congress (INC)	99
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)	38
Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)	9
Samajwadi Party (SP)	12
Shiv Sena (Thackeray faction)	10
Other INDIA Allies	12
Other Regional Parties	69
Trinamool Congress (TMC)	30
Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS)	12
Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)	6
Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party	14
Biju Janata Dal (BJD)	7
Independent / Others	2
Total	545

Source: Compilation of data from election commission of India's website.

Resurgence of Regional parties and Their Influence-The resurgence of regional parties in the 18th Lok Sabha Election of 2024 marked a significant shift in the dynamics of Indian politics, with huge substantial influence for both the distribution of seats and the role of regional issues in shaping national governance. This election highlighted the continued importance of regional players, as they played decisive roles in both securing seats for themselves and impacting the fortunes of national alliances.

Regional parties saw a great marked increase in their seat share, reflecting a voter preference in many states for parties that prioritize some state-specific issues. These parties often focused on local governance, identity politics, and policies that addressed the unique social and economic needs of their regions. In states like West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Bihar, regional parties not only retained their traditional strongholds but also gained some additional seats by aligning with the INDIA alliance or running independently, based on the political landscape of each state of country. For the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the Indian National Congress-led INDIA alliance, regional parties were crucial allies. The BJP, in particular, had to rely more heavily on its regional allies than in previous elections to reach a majority, marking a shift from its previous strategy of winning an absolute majority on its own. The INDIA alliance leveraged the support of regional parties like the DMK in Tamil Nadu, Shiv Sena (UBT) in Maharashtra, and RJD in Bihar to increase its seat count. This strategy not only strengthened Congress's position but also allowed some regional parties to gain a foothold in the national arena.⁷

In West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) retained its dominance, winning a significant number of seats despite competition from both BJP and Congress. TMC's focus on Bengali identity and state autonomy resonated with the electorate, showcasing the strength of state-focused agendas.⁸ Tamil Nadu saw the DMK maintain its position, keeping the BJP's influence at bay. The DMK, aligned with the INDIA alliance, leveraged its stance on regional pride and social justice to secure its seats. Telangana's Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) continued to dominate its home state, with KCR's focus on Telangana-specific issues like irrigation, job creation, and state autonomy proving successful. In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, regional



parties such as the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Samajwadi Party (SP) capitalized on local issues like caste dynamics and social justice to secure significant gains within the INDIA alliance framework, reducing the BJP's seat share in these crucial states.⁹

The resurgence of regional parties more emphasizes that coalition politics is now central to Indian governance. National parties must actively engaged with and support regional agendas to maintain coalitions and ensure policy implementation. With regional parties gaining a larger share of seats, there is likely to be a stronger push for federalist policies, with greater autonomy and resources for states. Both the BJP and Congress may need to reconsider their strategies, focusing more on regional partnerships and adapting to local issues to remain competitive in states where regional parties are highly influential. The success of regional parties suggests that addressing regional aspirations and state-specific issues will be a decisive factor in upcoming elections. National parties may increasingly adopt a localized approach to strengthen their appeal and concerning issues.

CONCLUSION-The resurgence of regional parties in the 18th General Election for the Lok Sabha in 2024 marks a significant turning point in Indian politics realm, underscoring the evolving nature of voter preferences and the importance of local representation. The election results highlight a growing discontent with traditional national parties, particularly the BJP, as regional parties effectively articulated and addressed the specific needs and aspirations of their constituencies. Regional parties played a critical role in shaping the electoral landscape, leveraging their deep-rooted connections with local issues and community identities. Their success reflects a shift toward coalition politics, as national parties increasingly find themselves reliant on regional allies to secure a governing majority. The prominence of the INDIA alliance, which united various regional players with the Congress, demonstrated the potential for collaboration in overcoming the challenges posed by big dominant national parties. Moreover, the resurgence of regional parties emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of Indian federalism, where state-specific concerns and regional aspirations take centre stage in national politics discourse. This electoral outcome suggests that future governance will require a greater focus on more localized issues, making it imperative for national parties to adapt their strategies to engage some effectively with diverse regional electorates.

In conclusion, the 2024 Lok Sabha elections signal a new era in Indian politics, characterized by the enhanced agency of regional parties and their pivotal role in shaping both national policies and political narratives. As India continues to grapple with complex socio-economic challenges, the influence of regional parties is likely to persist, reshaping the political scene and redefining the nature of governance in the country.

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