

## **Election of State Assembly Held during February and March, 2022: Study with Reference to Uttar Pradesh**

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### **Abstract**

Voter participation in any election gives the base for analysis and accordingly its related mapping in a region become significant for outcome of the research which represent the region's level of political awareness and development. The present study examines the socio-cultural structure of voter turnout in the Uttar Pradesh (UP) assembly election of 2022 which has been taken for study as a special reference. Election for five state assemblies have been conducted by the Election Commission of India concluded during month of February- March, 2022. In the present study, 18<sup>th</sup> Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly has been selected for making study due to the biggest electorate state in India and where the ruling party Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) UP's first incumbent government to retain power after 1985. Elections in all five states for assemblies which include Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand were conducted in seven phases commencing from 10<sup>th</sup> February and ended on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2022.

The study has focused on voter turnout in UP which varies significantly across the region. It was the highest in the western region (approximately 63 percent), while it was the lowest in the eastern region (approximately 57.87 percent). With an increase in overall party vote share, the spatial distribution of the BJP and its pre-poll allies Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party & Apna Dal votes becomes considerably important. First time, all exit polls indicated that the BJP has successfully grown its strength across all social classes in Uttar Pradesh. The BJP got 41.3 % of the total votes in this election, a minor increase from 39.4 % in 2017—and the first time since 1977 that a party got more than 40% of the vote in Uttar Pradesh's state assembly elections. During this election, voters in UP have casted their votes mainly considering issues related with governance, development, security and less consideration of identity politics (castes, community, and religion). The present study has used all official data related with election of UP to substantiate viewpoints available on the official websites of election commission as well as secondary data sources (Assembly Election 2022).

**Keywords:** Voting Pattern, Assembly Election, Uttar Pradesh, Voters and Constituencies, Election Commission, Political Party, Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP),

### **Introduction;**

Elections are the foundation stone of any democracy, including India. As per Encyclopedia Britannica, 'election is the official method of choosing a candidate for public office or approving or rejecting a political programme through voting.'

However, the character of electoral procedures varies between democratic societies due to regional variances. The state's geography determines the character of the democratic system and the proper voting form in that state.

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UP faced many changes and distinct features in party politics at the state level after independence to form the government known as congress led regime, politics emerged based on the common issues, emergence of party to power based on local and regional issues and most important emergence of the BJP to form government based on pre- election alliance in the state. Except for the 1977 election, congress remained the largest party and remained in power until 1989. The state's political eco system has shifted dramatically since 1989 during the postRam Mandir campaign when the BJP worked hard to activate the sentiments of the majority of the society. The BJP became active in state politics from 1991 and 1997-to 2002 when it formed the state government. The departure of the congress from the state politics of UP in the early 1990s and emergence of the BJP to form the government. Later, the Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) and Samajwadi Party (SP) consolidated their positions and formed their government. From 2002 until 2012, the masses trusted the more considerable backward class leadership and rejected both national parties' manifestations.

The 2007 and 2012 assembly elections ushered in a new era in United Progressive Party politics, as the hung assembly, coalition politics that had prevailed since 1993 may have ended. From 2007 to 2012, the BSP dominated the state when it permitted the participation of members of other castes and shifted political policy away from Bahujan samaj toward Sarva samaj. However, this attempt at social engineering failed during the 2012 election, with S.P. winning with a commanding majority and receiving overwhelming support from Dalits. The general election in UP of 2017 has introduced the new phase of state politics wherein the BJP became victorious with overwhelming

majority. This election of 2017 left both regional parties, SP and BSP behind in state politics which questioned the support- base of both parties. The BJP established and won the 2022 election on the name of good governance models, double engine Sarkar, Vikash for all and national image of the Prime Minister, Modi and state level image of the Chief Minister yogi.

### **Objective:**

The present study is based on the following objectives:

1. To examine the patterns of voting turns out.
2. To examine the pattern of party victories.
3. To determine how a party's electoral support is focused in specific regions or is evenly distributed across the state of UP.
4. To ascertain the reasons that has contributed to the rise of the BJP's popularity.

### **Data Base and methodology:**

The study includes both data from primary sources such as Election Commission of India as well as secondary sources like publications, periodicals and magazines, journals, and other government and non-government sources. The Election Commission of India, the Election Commission of Uttar Pradesh, and other sources where data are accessible were used to compile the electoral data (vote polled data).

### **Area of Study:**

U.P., one of India's most politically significant states, is located between latitudes 23° 52' and 30° 028' North and longitudes 77° 004' to 84° 038' east. UP was bifurcated into two states where 13 districts were given to establish the new state namely Uttarakhand on November 08, 2000 and leaving 71 districts with the state of UP. Now after the division, UP has 81 parliamentary constituencies, 403 assembly constituencies. (As per figure 1).

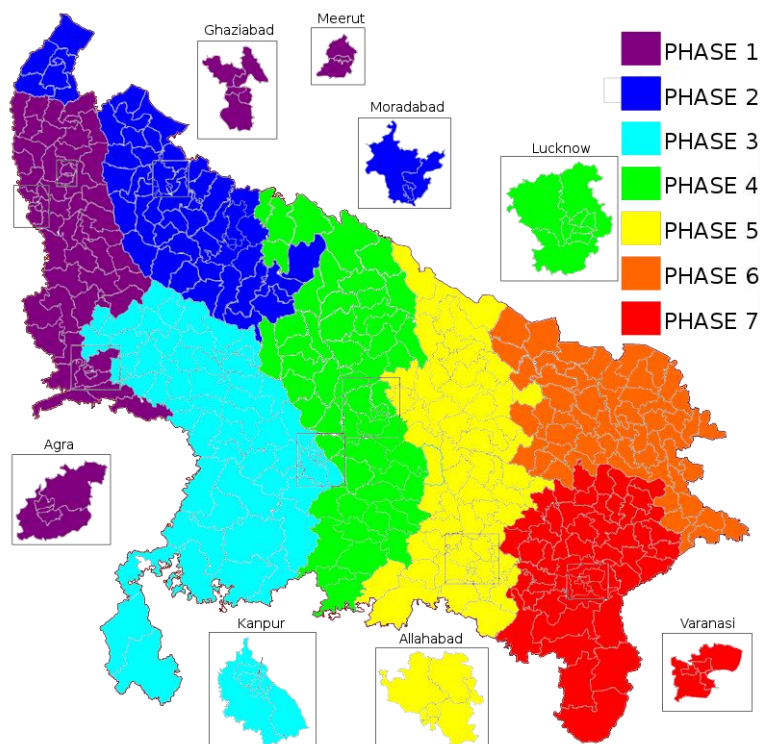


**Fig: 1 Study map of Uttar Pradesh Assembly Constituencies (As per delimitation of 2022 declared by the Government)**

Uttar Pradesh is the largest and most populated state by population which is the part of the Indo- Ganga tic plain that lies between peninsular India and Himalayas in the north. According to the 2021 census, the literacy rate in the state is 73.0 %, while still behind the National average of 77.70 %. The female literacy rate is even lower at 63.4 % and significantly below the male literacy rate of 81.8 %. About 79.73 % of the U.P population comprises Hindus, with Muslims accounting for 18 %. Approximately 23.6% of the state's population belongs to the upper caste taking all castes in this category, which now becomes the minority so far as vote representation is concerned.

## Result and Discussion

Voting pattern analysis is always focused on two aspects, first, why people vote and second, how they arrive at their conclusion. It is customary for voters to vote during election seasons according to their political allegiance and affinity. Local, regional, and national elections each have a unique set of issues, and voter preferences vary from one level of elections to the next. The people choose candidates who appear to be more capable of contributing to the provision of basic facilities and growth.



**Fig: 2**

The assembly election of 2022 presented a different outcome. Except for the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), all the main parties contested the election in pre-poll alliances. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) allied with Apna Dal (S) and Nishad Party, and the Samajwadi Party allied with Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP). Turnout was 60.6 per cent in the 2022 assembly election, down slightly from 61.04 per cent in the 2017 assembly election. Only ten constituencies had a voting turnout below 50%. In Saharanpur, Amroha, and Lalitpur districts, voter turnout was relatively high (almost 70%). In the 2022 assembly election, voter's participation has been lower, resulting in low turnout in most constituencies with an even spatial distribution pattern. However, an average voter turnout of 60.6 per cent was observed across the seven rounds (Fig: 2), indicating that about 90 million electors voted. Additionally, voter-participation was slightly lower than the 61.04 per cent recorded five years earlier.

According to Election Commission of India (ECI) data, 41.29 percent of voters casted their votes in favor of the BJP. In 2017, the party got 39.67 percent of votes. The Samajwadi Party (SP), the party's main rival, had a considerable increase in both its seat total and vote share. The SP, led by former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, won 111 seats and 32.06 percent votes (47 and 21.82 percent votes, respectively, in 2017) and established itself as the state's main opposition party.

A political party's seat share indicates its relative power in the legislature and determines which party would form the government. The success of a political party is measured in terms of the percentage of seats gained relatively to the total number of seats contested. BJP won 255 out of 403 assembly seats in the 2022 election, getting 63.27 per cent of the assembly seats. The BJP secured 63 of the 85 reserved seats. The SP finished second with 111 seats in total. The BSP won 1 seat and Congress only 2 seats. (See Table 1.1).

**Table: 1.1 Uttar Pradesh: Seat Won by different Political Parties in Assembly Election 2022**

Party	Seat Won	Percentage of seat share won
<b>National Parties</b>		
BJP	255	63.27
BSP	1	1.24
CPI	0	-
CPM	0	-
INC	2	0.49
<b>State Parties</b>		
RLD	8	1.98
SP	111	27.54
JD	2	0.49
<b>Registered unrecognized party</b>		
ADAL	12	2.97
NINSHAD	6	1.48
SBSP	6	1.48
<b>Total</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** - Compiled from the Data of the State Election Commission, U.P

The BJP's victory was astounding, as it won 255 of the 376 seats it contested, an 81.25 percent success rate. The ratio of seats gained to seats contested demonstrates the failure of opposition and work performed by the present

incumbent led victory for BJP. Vote percentage as got by all political parties are indicated in (1.2 Table) below:

**Table: 1.2 Uttar Pradesh: Degree of Success of different Political Parties in Assembly Election-2022**

Party	Seat Contested	Seat Won	Success in Percentage
<b>National Parties</b>			
BJP	376	255	67.81
BSP	403	1	0.24
CPI	38	0	-
CPM	27	0	-
INC	401	2	0.49
<b>State Parties</b>			
RLD	33	8	24.24
SP	347	111	31.98
JD	16	2	12.5
<b>Registered unrecognized party</b>			
ADAL	17	12	70.58
NINSHAD	10	6	60
SBSP	19	6	31.57

**Source:** - Compiled from the Data of the State Election Commission, U.P

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The BJP got 57 less seats over 2017 despite the fact the rise in the vote percentage in compare with 2017 assembly elections, while the SP gained 64 seats over 2017 while losing

1 seat over 2012. The BSP lost 18 seats in 2022 compared to 2017, while Congress lost 5 seats. Additionally, the RLD gained 7 seats. (See Table 1.3).

**Table: 1.3 Uttar Pradesh: Gains and Losses of seats of different Political Party in Assembly Election 2012-2022**

Party	Seat won in 2022	Seat won in 2017	Seat Won in 2012	Gain/Loss of seats	
				2017-22	2012-17
<b>National Parties</b>					
BJP	255	312	47	-57	+265
BSP	1	19	80	-18	- 61
CPI	0	0	0	-	-21
CPM	0	0	0	-	0
INC	2	7	28	-5	0
<b>State Parties</b>					
RLD	8	47	224	+7	+127
SP	111	1	9	+64	-1
JD	2	-	-		
<b>Registered unrecognized party</b>					
ADAL	12	9	-	+3	-
NINSHAD	6	1	-	+5	-
SBSP	6	4	-	+2	-
<b>Independent</b>	0	3	6		

**Source:** - Compiled from the Data of the State Election Commission, U.P

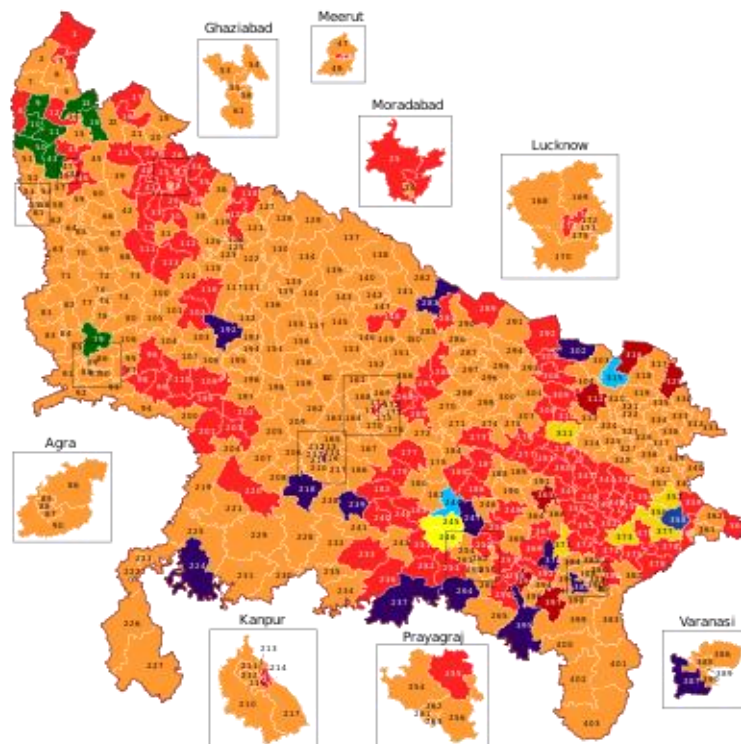
Thus, the BJP got rise in the vote percentage from 39.67 percent in 2017 to a share of 41.29 percent in 2022 whereas the SP got 64 more seats in compare with 2017 elections.

The result of the election, 2022 demonstrated the performance of parties in constituency. The BJP was the only party in the election of 2022 who represented in all of the state's districts wherever contested and its' allies contested. The party performed exceptionally well in Saharanpur, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Hapur, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Kasganj, Etah, Hathras, Mathura, Agra, Bareilly, Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur, Lakhimpur Kheri, Sitapur, Hardoi, Unnao, Lucknow, Sultanpur, Ayodhya, Farru The SP, which currently holds 111 seats, has gained

popularity in a new region, owing to previous wins. SP performed best in the districts of Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, Moradabad, Sambhal, Rampur, Meerut, Firozabad, Raebareli, Ambedkar Nagar, Etawah, Auraiya, Kaushambi, Basti, Azamgarh, Mau, Ballia, Jaunpur, and Ghazipur. Thus, only the SP maintained its position in the 2022 election, showing that voters in most constituencies shifted their allegiances to the SP. The BSP was the third-largest party in 2017 with 19 seats but gained only one seat in 2022. Congress was poorly structured and could only gain two seats. Raja Bhaiyya's Jansatta Dal won two seats in the Uttar Pradesh elections of 2022. Despite personal attacks from SP candidate Gulshan Yadav and SP

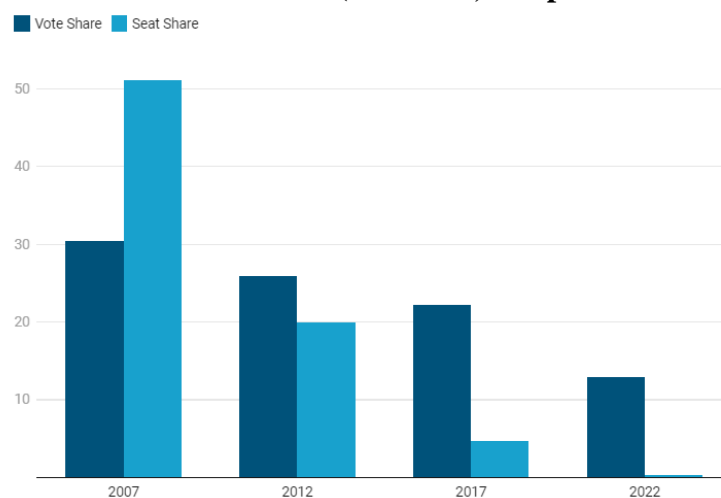
president Akhilesh Yadav, Raja Bhaiya easily

won his seat. (See Figure 3).



**Fig: 3**

The BJP achieved its highest performance to yet, securing 41.3 percent of the vote, a slightly dropin BJP's seat share as compared to 2017. Whereas the incumbent SP gained a lot of 9.8 percentage points. Additionally, the **BSP's Vote Share and Seat Share Since 2007 (Table 1.4, compiled from Government Source)**



The share of votes of the BSP is only 12.9% which is insignificant in the state as this party grew significantly in the general elections of

BSP has lost around 6% of its votes since 2017. Between 2017 and 2022, the BJP decreased their vote share by around 2.7 percent. Prior to this, the party had a peak of 33% vote share in 1993. (See Table 1.4).

2007. The BSP came in existence only in the year 1993, since then the party faced ups and downs. However, after a gap in the state



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politics, the BSP has increased their vote-share. The repercussions in terms of seat availability are catastrophic. In 2007, with 30% of the vote, the BSP won a single majority of seats. Despite receiving 12.9 per cent of the vote, it has been relegated to a single seat.

### The Bipolarization of Uttar Pradesh politics

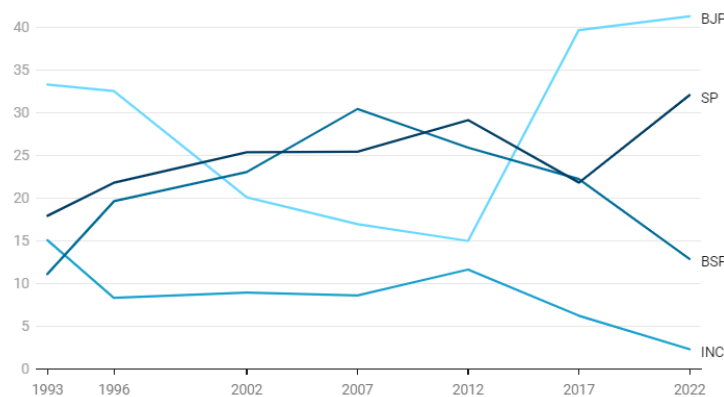
The trajectory of parties' vote share since 1993 demonstrates the scale of the state's political upheaval. For the first time in its history, the BJP has crossed the 40% threshold in a state election. It's difficult to recall that the BJP was

in 2022.

on the decline before 2017. Few parties have amassed as many votes as the BJP has in such a short period.

The Samajwadi Party, with 32%, too had a strong showing. Ten years ago, such a vote share would have given it a solid majority in the parliament. However, the days of low vote share single majority are finished for the time being, as the BJP has significantly increased the winning threshold in Uttar Pradesh.

**Vote Share of Main Parties in Uttar Pradesh State Assembly Elections 1993-2022**



**Fig: 5**

### Political geography speaks

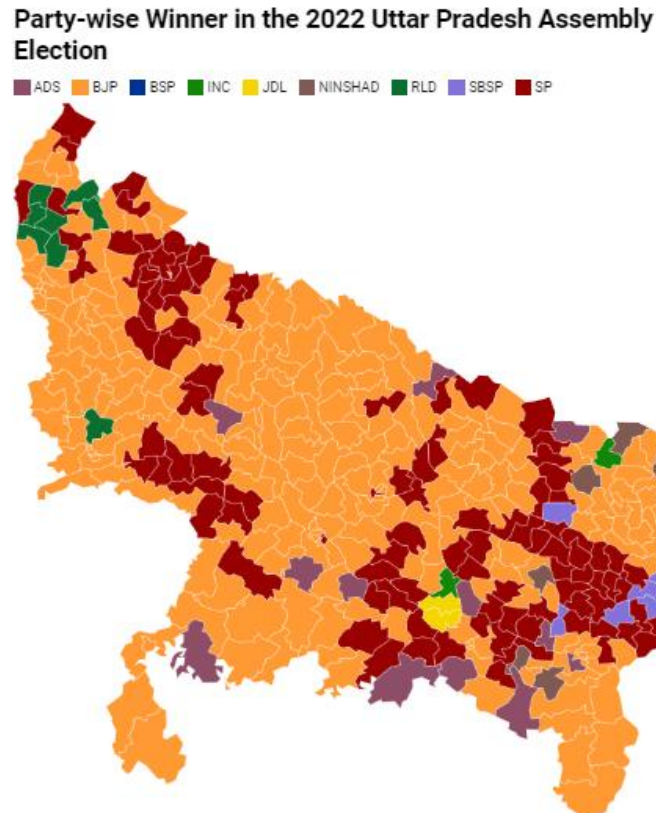
The geographical distribution of the results speaks for winning position of BJP across the state of UP in the election of 2022. From west to east, we can discover clusters that provide insight into the performance of political parties. The RLD in alliance with the SP won eight seats in the western UP as Jats supported the alliance as these areas were active in farmers' movement. With support of voters influenced with farmers' movement, the SP

won the assembly constituencies of Kairana, Sardhana, Charthawal, and Saharanpur.

Rohilkhand is the second cluster emerged for SP in UP that is in and around of Rampur parliamentary constituency where Muslim population has largely casted their votes in favor of the SP in 2022. In this region, around 31% Muslim have the vote share.

The SP's consolidation of Muslim votes aided the alliance in achieving a 44 per cent strike-rate in that region, the second-highest in the country after eastern Uttar Pradesh.





**Fig: 6**

The 3rd cluster is located in lower Doab, near the traditional Yadav belt SP strongholds of Jaswant Nagar, Karhal, and Bidhuna, where family members of the head of SP contested on the symbol of the party of SP. However, the BJP's Jayveer Singh won Mainpuri, another Yadav stronghold that the SP won in 2012 and 2017.

Finally, we move eastward to the regions where the SP earned the most gains in this election. The SP bagged 26 of the state's 61 seats in eastern Uttar Pradesh and 22 of the state's 52 seats in the north-eastern region. Its seats are concentrated around Azamgarh, whilst the BJP concentrated around Gorakhpur. In addition, this is the area in which the SP's alliance par, the

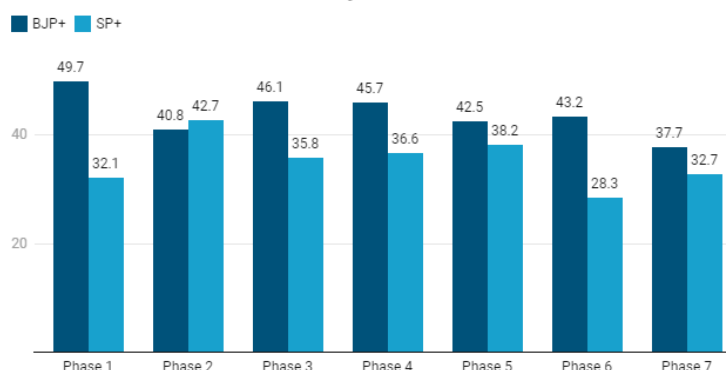
SuheldevBharatiya Samaj Party, gained six seats.

#### **Phase-wise description**

A phase wise description of the data helps us to analyze these observations. The BJP scored its highest vote share in phase 1, of the western Uttar Pradesh. Given that this is also an area where the RLD performed well, we can assume that both alliances performed well due to significant voter polarisation. In that phase, the average victory margin for BJP candidates was 20.7 per cent, compared to 7.3 per cent for SP-RLD candidates.

The BJP's performance in consecutive phases was constant, except for phase 7, which roughly corresponds to eastern Uttar Pradesh.

**Phase-wise Average BJP and SP Alliance Vote Share in the Uttar Pradesh State Assembly Elections 2021**



**Fig: 6**

The growth of the BJP's striking rate corroborates the results map. After gaining 79 per cent of seats in phase 1, the BJP's strike rate drops to 56 per cent in phase 2 before recovering back to 79 per cent in phase 3. In phase 7, both coalitions have the same strike rate.

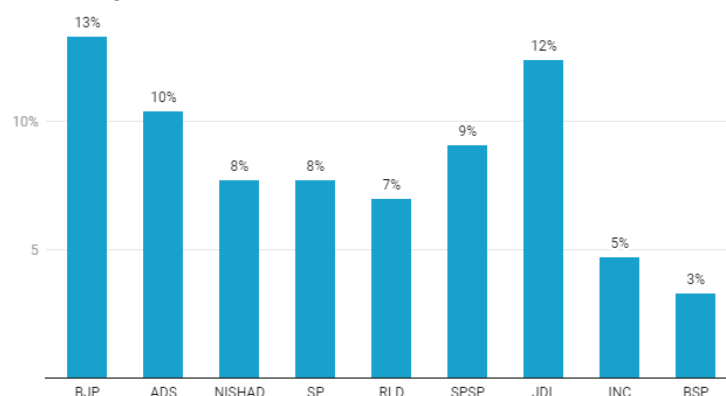
### Victory Margin

Victory margins are a useful indicator of the degree of competitiveness of elections. The number of close contests indicates how

marginal vote shifts could have influenced the overall distribution of seats in 2022.

In assembly election of UP of 2022, 131 MLAs were elected with a margin of victory of less than 5%, which is considered a tight election. Ninety-one MLAs won by a margin of between 5% and 10%, a comfortable margin, 68 by a margin of between 10% and 15%, which is a substantial margin, and 113 by margins greater than 15%, which is comparatively high.

**Party-wise Average Victory Margin in Uttar Pradesh State Assembly Elections 2022**



**Fig: 7 Party-wise Average Victory Margin in Uttar Pradesh State Assembly Elections 2022**

### Muslim representation goes up

Thirty-four Muslims were elected to the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, which indicates the rise of ten over the previous five years. When examining the major parties, we find that the SP, BSP, and Congress collectively increased the number of tickets distributed to Muslim candidates in the last two elections. In 2022,

the BSP gave 16% of their tickets to Muslim candidates, compared to 13% for the SP and 10% of Congress.

### Women Representation

During election held in 2022, there has been increase in the number of women's representatives marked from 42 to 47 member of Legislative assembly. The congress party

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during election of 2022, declared more tickets for women candidate and slogan of 'LadkiHoon, Lad Sakti Hoon was popularized. Despite all efforts of the congress party which begun only few months from the scheduled election time, the congress party could not get the public eye on their slogan. The congress party got only one seat in UP in 2022. No such issues raised by the congress party which resulted the great loss in election of 2022.

As a result, while the overall number of women candidates increases, the number of women in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly does not increase significantly due to Congress's decision to field 155 women. The BJP maintained the similar number of women candidates approximately with the election of 2017. Thus, the 2022 assembly elections revealed a tremendous turn in all parties' traditional support bases, with voters of all castes, classes, genders, and educational levels flocking to the BJP, resulting in its landslide triumph. Development issues significantly impacted the ruling party's electoral support base.

## Conclusion

Throughout the 1990s, the U.P. witnessed political upheaval and significant volatility, which affected both the party system and the administration. Between 2002 and 2012, state-level parties with a distinct social base dominated, with the BSP and S.P. significantly increasing their seat and vote share in the 2007 and 2012 Assembly elections, respectively, and Congress completely collapsing. In the 2012 Assembly election, the SP's spatial spread increased as the party's overall vote share increased, whilst both national parties, the BJP and the Congress struggled to establish their position in UP. Both BSP and SP were defeated in the 2017 by the BJP with the image of the central

government and image of the central leadership of BJP and further 2022 Assembly elections. As the BJP's vote share increased, the spatial distribution of its votes became more uniform, and the party improved its performance in all regions.

The present study specifies with outcome to make three observations. To begin, these results demonstrate the party system's bipolarity and the significant polarisation that exists inside Uttar Pradesh society. The Samajwadi Party fared well in areas where its main support base is concentrated - Yadav in Lower Doab and Muslims in Rohilkhand.

Eastern Uttar Pradesh presents a more complex environment that warrants additional examination. However, the outcome in Uttar Pradesh was also geographically specific, and marked by caste-based and communal polarisation. Consolidating the Muslim vote behind the SP is also a sign of escalating divisiveness. Second, the BJP's performance characteristics reflect a consolidating of prior successes. The victory of BJP in UP in 2022 can be marked as a victory based on good governance, equity-based development and safety to the society.

Of course, there have been other factors working in the BJP's favor. Publicity surrounding its welfare programmes, image of the central government led by BJP, and a diverse range of resources, leadership, and organizations all had a role in its re-election. The charts and maps in this article do not address such issues directly but rather serve to classify parties and candidates' performance.

Finally, the Samajwadi Party in the state has shown the way to contest elections based on the local issues.

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