

# Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha 2024 Analysis

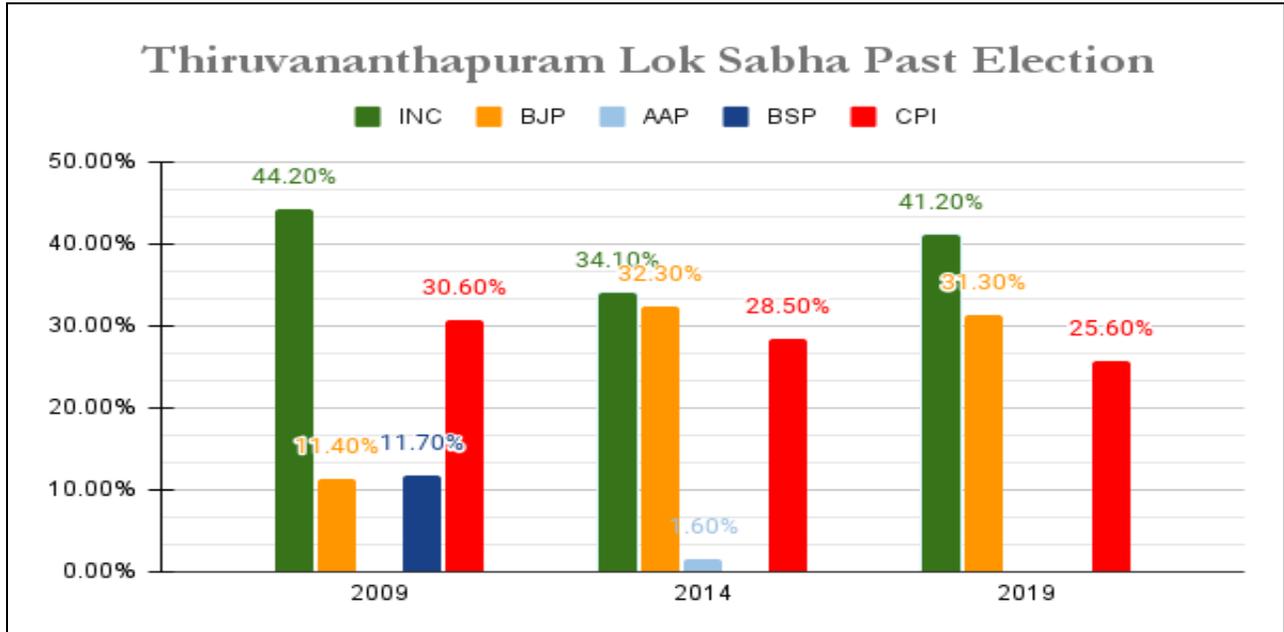
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### I. Background

Thiruvananthapuram constituency in Kerala is one of the prominent constituencies out of 20 in Kerala. Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency comprises seven assembly constituencies which are Nemom, Kazhakoottam, Thiruvananthapuram, Parassala, Kovalam, Neyyattinkara and Vattiyoorkavu. According to the Census of 2011, there are approximately 129,273 Scheduled Caste (SC) voters constituting 9.5% of total voters to the electorate and approximately 5,443 Scheduled Tribe (ST) voters which constitute 0.4% of total voters. Similarly, the Muslim voters are approximately 123,830 which is 9.1% and the Christian voters are 190,508 which makes up 14% of the vote share. The constituency consists of the majority of Hindu voters of 1,045,073 which constitutes 76.8% of the total voters. It is this diversity in the electorate which plays a crucial factor in the dynamic nature of the constituency election. In this constituency, the Indian National Congress has won the election nine times, while the CPI won the seat four times. BJP has not been able to win in this parliamentary constituency in any of the Lok Sabha elections. The voting is influenced by several crucial factors like religion and caste. This constituency is highly dominated by the Hindu Nair community and Brahmin community. These communities have a greater influence on the voting of the Thiruvananthapuram constituency. Adding to these the Nadar community among Christians also plays a significant role in deciding the result of the constituency. Thiruvananthapuram is a constituency which has plenty of temples and the influence of the royal family is still there in the constituency. Even Though these factors form a fertile ground for the growth of RSS ideology in the constituency, till now BJP has not been able to win an election in this constituency. A major reason for this is because the other parties like CPI and INC were able to consolidate a share of votes from all religions, including the upper-class communities. At the same time, the BJP has failed to consolidate the vote shares other than the Hindu votes, which are mainly the upper-class votes.

## Past Elections Analysis



## II. Lok Sabha 2014 Election Analysis

In the 2014 Lok Sabha election Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency witnessed a triangular fight. During this election, Dr Shashi Tharoor was nominated by the Indian National Congress (INC), Shri. O Rajagopal was nominated by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Doctor Bennet Abraham was nominated by CPI, and Shri Ajit Joy was nominated by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). In this election, Dr Shashi Tharoor won the election with a margin of 14501 votes and defeated Shri O. Rajagopal of BJP. In this election, the BJP was leading in 4 assembly segments and INC was leading in 3.

Thiruvananthapuram is a constituency highly populated by Hindus among which a large chunk of this constitutes upper caste Nair and Brahmin communities. While both candidates of BJP, as well as Shashi Tharoor, were from the Nair community both were successful in consolidating votes from upper caste communities in Thiruvananthapuram and thereby splitting the Nair vote in the constituency. Shashi Tharoor was also able to consolidate a share of Muslim and Christian votes in the region which gave an upper hand. Similarly, the CPI candidate Doctor Bennet Abraham was from the Nadar community of Christians, which helped the CPI candidate Doctor Bennet Abraham to consolidate the Nadar community votes and Christian votes. The candidate of the

Aam Aadmi Party was able to consolidate a share of the Christian vote and other votes because of the AAP wave during this period.

In the Thiruvananthapuram constituency, there was tight competition between Dr Shashi Tharoor and Shri O. Rajagopal. Thiruvananthapuram had a greater influence on the royal family and there are a large number of temples present in the region. Hence it has been a fertile soil for the growth of RSS ideology. Dr Shashi Tharoor of INC was able to Consolidate upper Caste Hindu votes as well as a share of Christian and Muslim votes which resulted in his victory

### **III. Lok Sabha 2019 Election Analysis**

The Parliament election of 2019 witnessed the domination of the Indian National Congress in the Thiruvananthapuram Constituency. In this election Indian National Congress nominated Dr Shashi Tharoor, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) nominated Shri Kummanam Rajashekharan (General Category- Nair) and the Communist Party of India nominated Shri C. Divakaran (OBC category -Ezhava). In this election, Shashi Tharoor won the election with a lead of around 100,000 votes. In this election, INC led in 6 assembly segments and BJP led only in one.

In this election also both the candidates, Dr Shashi Tharoor and Shri Kummanam Rajashekaran were able to consolidate the Nair Community votes in the region. But Shashi Tharoor was successful in consolidating a major share of the upper caste Hindu votes along with the Christian and Muslim votes in this region. The absence of Aam Aadmi candidates and SDPI candidates helped Dr Shashi Tharoor to get such a huge margin. While Shri C. Divakaran from the Ezhava community, was able to consolidate the Ezhava community vote and share of Christian votes also.

The increase in the margin of Dr Shashi Tharoor in this election is due to multiple reasons. Firstly he was able to consolidate votes from Hindus as well as non-Hindus. Secondly, it is this time Kerala has witnessed an anti-BJP wave and many of the neutral votes were supporting INC. Thirdly Shri Kummanam Rajshekaran was not able to gain the reputation and public image which O. Rajagopal has gained.

### **IV. Current Political Situation**

The Parliament election of 2024 has brought a new dimension to Thiruvananthapuram constituency. Initially, it was perceived that the competition in this particular constituency was only between the strong candidates like Dr Shashi Tharoor who has been the MP for 15 years and Shri Pannyan Raveendran who won the election in the same constituency in the year 2005. But the candidature of Shri Rajeev Chandrashekhar has further intensified the competition which resulted in a triangular race.

Shri Rajeev Chandrashekar has recently announced the start of 10 AI labs in the colleges of Trivandrum. These steps will have a greater influence on the youth as the youth is severely affected by unemployment in the state. The candidature of Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar was part of BJP's plan to expand its influence in the southern side. Being a border state to Tamil Nadu and the presence of the Tamil population, this constituency is also relevant for BJP for its influence over Kerala as well as Tamil Nadu. If Shri Rajeev Chandrashekar wins the election, it will directly benefit at many levels if the BJP wins the election at the national level. While it's being said that it is the last election participation of Dr Shashi Tharoor, winning in this constituency is a major factor in keeping his reputation. While both candidates are from the Nair Community, both will be able to consolidate the Nair votes. This will lead to splitting in nair votes in the constituency. Dr Shashi Tharoor and Shri Rajeev Chandrashekar are trying hard to get hold of the community votes with the help of Nair community leaders like Sukumaran Nair. Dr Shashi Tharoor has small leverage of having a share of Christian votes and Muslim votes. While Pannyan Raveendran will be able to consolidate votes from Christians as well as lower caste votes along with a share of Muslim votes.

The outcome of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Thiruvananthapuram remains highly unpredictable. The voting is influenced by multiple factors including personal reputation, caste dynamics and the shifting political landscape. It underscores the importance of grassroots campaigning, consolidating votes from different sections of people, coalition-building, and addressing key issues such as unemployment to sway voters in this hotly contested constituency. Thus the Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency is going to witness a triangular race in the upcoming Lok Sabha Election.