

Uttar Pradesh Lok Sabha Analysis

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1. Abstract:

On **June 4th 2024**, the highly anticipated result of the Indian general election was declared. While the NDA got the majority of seats, it lost ground in many places, and the one in **Uttar Pradesh was more moderate**. UP, a virtual fortress for the BJP for the past decades was penetrated by the INDI alliance to the shock of everyone. The following paper examines this particular event and how it came to be. Firstly, the paper briefly introduces UP and its importance in Indian politics. Next, the paper delves into the elections held in UP for Lok Sabha throughout the years and the trends that have emerged. After that, the paper does a deep dive into the most recent **general election in UP**, the circumstances under which the election was held, the shocking result, and how it came to fruition based on **caste politics** and the different results from the various regions of UP. Following that, the paper analyses the election with the help of 3 different case studies of 3 different constituencies of UP and how analysis of their results holds the key to understanding how this election turned out the way it did. This is followed by an examination of the various strategies followed by the 2 blocs and how it has yielded vastly different results for them both. Finally, the paper sheds light on what the **future of UP** might hold and how its residents might be affected in coming years, along with the measures the incumbent needs to follow to ensure the results in the next election go in their favour.

Keywords- NDA, BJP, INDI Alliance, UP, Elections.

2. Introduction:

While the state of Uttar Pradesh is relatively new in our country's history, the area has a vibrant heritage. Mathura, the birthplace of Lord Krishna, is located in this area. Ayodha, the capital of Lord Rama's kingdom lies here along with numerous other empires who have called this area their home. With over 25.7¹ Crore calling it home, U.P. stands as the most populous state in India, being more populated than all but 4 countries. Lok Sabha elections in the U.P. have always been of severe importance. It's commonly said that '**the way to Delhi is through UP**', and a party that does well in the state generally goes on to rule India. This is because it elects **80 MPs** in the 543-member lower house of parliament (the Lok Sabha). This is why it was considered to be the key to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's

¹ [World population review](#)

re-election bid as he sought to return for a third consecutive term with BJP getting a thumping victory in the state for the past two elections some pundits had already called the state for the incumbent even before the first vote was cast. On 3rd June when the exit polls were released they all but confirmed the victory of the BJP in the state with almost all news channels forecasting the party to receive 60+ seats. However, as the northern state began counting votes at the dawn of 4th June the actual results turned out to be quite shocking. What was thought to be an easy victory for the Prime Minister's party turned into a race too close to be called. By the evening the victors had emerged and it wasn't the incumbent party but in fact, it was the opposition, the **INDI alliance**, who won **43** out of the possible 80 seats with **NDA** contending for just **36** seats, 30 less than its tally in 2019. The reasons for this unexpected result are multifaceted with caste, religion, income, and even gender playing a crucial role in BJP's reckoning. The already fragmented and polarized environment of the state was taken full advantage of by the opposition alliance who ensured that it would emerge as the victor when the dust settled on this election.

3. History of Uttar Pradesh Lok Sabha Elections:

The state of Uttar Pradesh came into existence on **24th January 1950** when the United Provinces were merged with the princely states of Awadh and Agra along with some parts of Delhi. As was the case with most Indian states of that time, abject poverty had become a staple among the vast majority of its population. All of this didn't matter as following the principle of universal adult franchise, every single resident of the state was allowed to vote in the first Lok Sabha elections in 1951-52.

a. Pre-1989: INC Dominance:

The 1951-52 Lok Sabha elections were a landslide victory for the Indian National Congress (INC) in Uttar Pradesh and throughout the country. With the state registering a voter turnout of 38.41%², INC won 81 out of the possible 86 seats available for U.P. This trend continued for almost **4 decades** with the **INC always grabbing more than 50% of the seats** in U.P. The sole exception to this was in 1977 when Shri Moraji Desai's Janata Party won all of the 85 seats due to the people's apathy towards Smt. Indira Gandhi and her 2-year long national emergency during which the rights of people including those from the U.P were violated. But even after such atrocious acts, when the Janata Party fell in 1980 and elections were held the people of U.P. vehemently voted in favour of Smt. Gandhi. The reason for this was the same throughout India. Many of the rural population were uneducated and saw a familiar

² [ECI election report](#)

face in the INC. This combined with a more unitary government under Smt. Indira Gandhi ensured that the power stayed with the party. As for the 1984 elections, Shri Rajiv Gandhi was riding a sympathetic wave following the death of his mother and former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi which made him win the elections throughout India.

b. 1991-1999: Emergence of BJP in UP:

The years 1989 to 1998 were a **period of transition**. Congress dominance weakened across India, as parties based on regional, religious, caste, and class identities won elections and ran governments in state after state. On top of this, there was a political interregnum between 1992 and 1997 when the party was not led by any member of the Nehru-Gandhi family. With Shri Rajiv Gandhi's aura disappearing following the Bofors Scam, the unstable yet effective coalition of Janta Dal won the majority seats from U.P. As it inevitably collapsed and elections were called in 1991, a new powerhouse emerged in the U.P. for the first time. Though INC came to power in the country, in U.P. there was a different story unfolding. In the general elections of 1991, the **BJP** expanded its support more than any other party did, establishing itself as a viable national Hindu party with a presence in several states of the Indian Union. This was particularly evident in U.P. where the party increased its share of the vote from 7.6 per cent (eight seats) in 1989 to 35.3 per cent (fifty seats) in 1991. This was followed by 52 and 59 seats in the 1996 and 1998 elections. The reason for this was that the **Ram Mandir issue** was at the forefront of Indian politics at the time. BJP positioning itself as the Hinduist party ensured that it got votes from Hindus all around India and especially U.P. The entire network of RSS-affiliated organizations throughout the country moved into the electoral fray with the conquering message: '**Ram, roti aur insaaf**'. It pitched itself as an alternative to Congress (I) and the Janata Dal, and as a party, it was not focused on any family name. Even after the demolition of the Babri masjid, while the BJP lost the state assembly elections in UP, the common feeling of Hinduism was enough to propel the BJP into the majority seats in the 1996 and 1998 elections.

c. 1999-2014: Samajwadi Party Stronghold and decrease in BJP's vote share:

During the 1990s, even though BJP got more upper-caste support than all other parties and made inroads into the constituency of Backward Classes, it did poorly among **Scheduled Castes** and **Scheduled Tribes**, constituencies that it had long attempted to cultivate. Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav, a veteran politician knew this fact and used it to his advantage to create a political party that became a force to be reckoned with in U.P. The electoral politics of Uttar Pradesh was in a volatile situation throughout the 1980s. As the Hindu vote turned more and more towards the BJP, the newly formed

Janata Dal was able to project itself as the party that cared for the minorities. The Janata Dal in UP was able to post an effective performance in 1989 with a combination of backward castes and Muslims. Once the **Samajwadi Party** came into being after its split with the Janata Dal, Shri Mulayam Singh was able to gather these sections together and get their votes. To do this the SP used a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, it attempted to build a solid bloc of Muslim votes and for that purpose, visualized an undifferentiated Muslim community. It then juxtaposed this section of the society in terms of the threat emanating from the BJP. On the other hand, the SP sought to classify Hindu society into two sections, the forward and the backward classes. It hoped to be the sole representative and protector of the backward community. As seen in the below table this tactic worked wonders for the SP with its seats increasing from 20 in the 1998 elections to 26 in 1999.

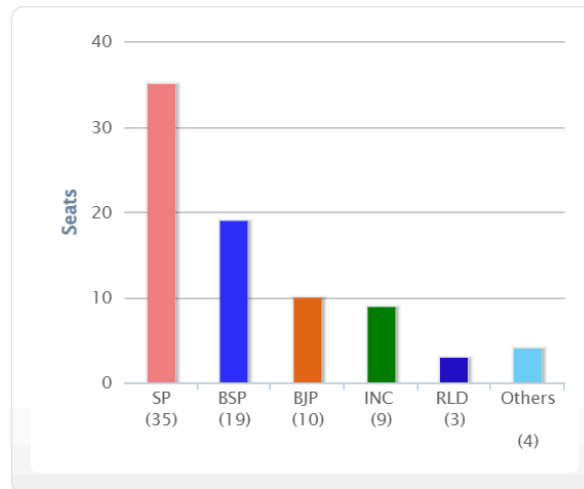
**Seat and Vote Share of LD/SP in Lok Sabha
and Assembly in UP (1980-2002)**

Party Name of SP	Year	Lok Sabha		UP Assembly	
		Seats	Vote (Per Cent)	Seats	Vote (Per Cent)
LD	1980	29	28.9	59	21.5
LD	1984	2	21.6	–	–
LD	1985	–	–	84	21.43
JD	1989	54	35.9	208	29.71
SJP/JNP (JP)	1991	4	10.1	34	12.52
SP	1993	–	–	109	17.82
SP	1996	16	20.8	110	21.8
SP	1998	20	28.7	–	–
SP	1999	26	24.06	–	–
SP	2002	–	–	143	25.41

[Source-jstor](#)

It subsequently won 35 seats in the 2004 elections all the while BJP's seat share kept on decreasing from 59 in the 1998 elections to 29 in 1999 to just 10 in 2004 and 2009.

2004 UP General Elections



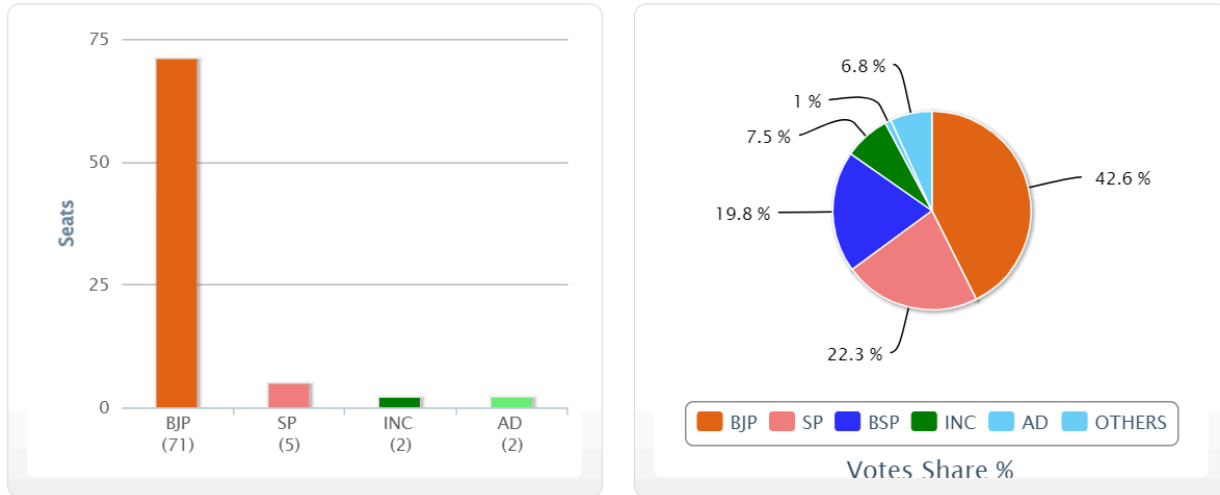
[Source-India Votes](#)

d. 2014-2024: Resurgence of BJP:

Uttar Pradesh formed the fulcrum of the **BJP's** astonishing win in the **2014** elections, with the party winning an eye-popping **71 seats**, which was more than the UPA's overall tally in the elections and much higher than the party's previous peak of 57 seats in the 1998 elections. Almost **42% of the voters** comprise **Dalits (SCs), Yadavs (OBCs), and Muslims** who tend not to be natural BJP voters. BJP's catchment area was only 58% and its vote share and seat share had been declining over the years.

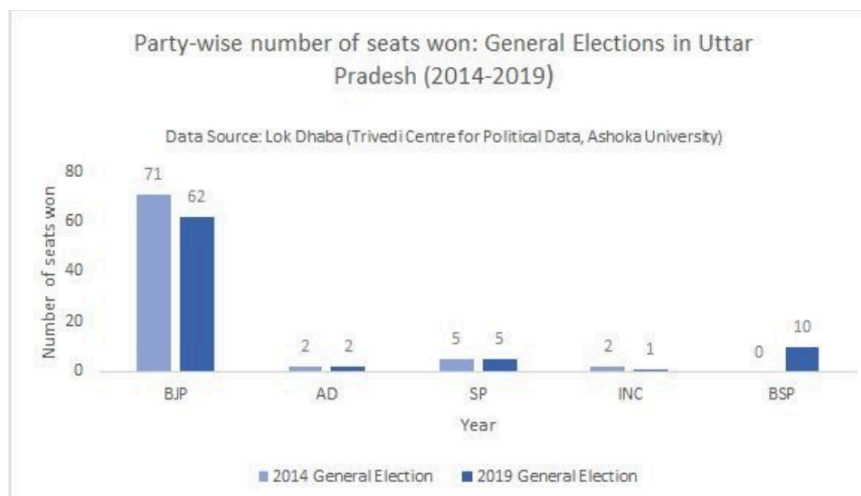
The credit for this surprise win can be given to **Shri Amit Shah**. To reach out to the maximum number of people quickly, he conducted programs on 13,000 college campuses to register volunteers. He conducted extensive due diligence on every candidate before finalizing names and was ruthless during ticket distribution. His criteria were simple: deny tickets to those who had contested but never won elections and give tickets to those who belonged to the constituency as they would be approachable. Social equations were also taken into account. **Therefore, the party, gave the largest chunk, 28 out of 80 tickets to OBCs, 19 to Brahmins (General), and 17 to Thakurs (general). Tickets were also given to representatives of backward communities such as Nishad (OBC), Bind (OBC), and Khushwaha (OBC)** who don't dominate a particular constituency but are present in large numbers along the Ganges to help consolidate votes across constituencies. The result of such thorough planning can be seen in the below graphs.

2014 General Election



[Source-India Votes](#)

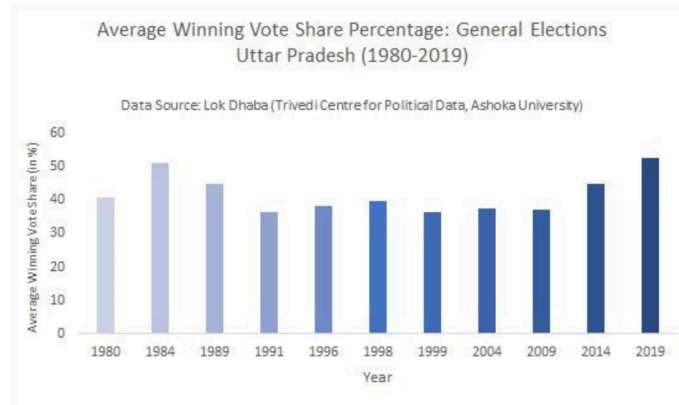
Despite this stellar performance in 2014, in the hotly contested general elections of **2019**, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was expected to perform poorly in Uttar Pradesh. The alliance between the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) was expected to break the saffron party's hold on the state, but it did not prove to be so. The **BJP won 62 seats**, with its ally Apna Dal winning another two. The SP-BSP alliance secured just 15 seats.



[Source-The Wire](#)

As seen in the below graph, the average **winning vote share crossed the 50% mark**. This had happened for the first time since 1984. It suggests that the winners did not just reap the benefit of

fragmentation of votes – a common feature of the first-past-the-post system – but decisively won with overwhelming popular support.



[Source- The Wire](#)

The election was a bipolar competition between the NDA and the Mahagathbandhan. In 78 of the 80 seats, the BJP (or Apna Dal) and Mahagathbandhan candidates were in direct competition with each other. The two other seats are Raebareli and Amethi, the traditional Congress bastions, where Mahagathbandhan did not field their candidates. Despite this, **Congress lost its vote share** between the two general elections, rubbishing the much talked about ‘Priyanka Gandhi effect’. The BJP managed to uproot Congress from Amethi, resulting in a defeat for Congress president Shri Rahul Gandhi. Therefore, the Congress was a distant third in almost all the seats it contested.

The common perception after the 2019 elections was that the NDA had occupied a hegemonic position in the state. It had not just managed to win 64 of the 80 seats, but in most seats, its vote share was 15% above its opponents. This misconception faced a rude awakening in the 2024 election.

4. Analyzing the 2024 Uttar Pradesh Lok Sabha Elections:

a. Background:

The election in UP was a month-and-a-half affair with voting taking place in all 7 phases from 19th April to 1st June. Before the election, the environment in UP was strongly in favour of the incumbent government with many calling for a landslide victory for BJP. This prediction wasn't without substantial backing. Before the implementation of the moral code of conduct, there was a mad rush by the state government to introduce as many schemes as possible. On March 12, Shri Yogi Adityanath

(general) laid the foundation stones for projects worth more than **Rs.11,000 crore** in Lucknow. His government announced a **100 percent rebate on electricity bills** on tube wells that farmers use, a concession that is estimated to provide relief to **14.73 lakh beneficiaries in rural areas and 5,188 in urban areas**. On that same day, at a public meeting in Lucknow, Shri Adityanath said: “More than Rs.3,500 crore has been distributed to 15 lakh poor in the State, 56 lakh people have received free houses under the PM Awaas scheme, and 15 crore people have benefited from the free ration facility”³, highlighting the work done by the BJP government during the past 5 years. On top of this BJP was riding on the waves of the highly publicized Ram Mandir opening and the implementation of **CAA rules**. Still, the BJP wasn't sure about its position in the state. Hence as a precaution, it assembled a coalition with smaller parties such as the Rashtriya Lok Dal.

The opposition, on the other hand, was determined to fragment the BJP Hindu consolidation by mobilising OBC voters around the **caste census gambit**. When Shri Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra entered Uttar Pradesh in February, he called upon people to “fight for a caste census”. In Raebareli, he said that until the caste census was held, “justice will elude 73 percent of the population”. They also focused on issues such as economic anxiety, farmers' distress, and alleged erosion of constitutional and democratic institutions during BJP rule with leaders claiming that the 2024 polls were a vote to save Indian democracy which is under grave threat under the BJP dispensation.

b. Results:

The **exit polls** of the election were released a day before the announcement of the results. The results of the polls are given in the below table. All the exit polls predicted a **clear victory for NDA** and almost all the polling agencies predicted BJP to enjoy a sweeping victory.

³ [the statesman](#)

Exit Polls Results

Polling agency	NDA	INDIA	BSP	Others	Lead
Republic-PMarq	69	11	0	0	NDA
DB Live	46-48	32-34	0	0	NDA
IndiaNews Dynamics	69	11	0	0	NDA
India TV-CNX	62-68	12-16	0-1	0	NDA
India-Today Axis My India	64-67	13-16	0-1	0	NDA
Jan Ki Baat	68-74	6-12	0	0	NDA
News Nation	67	13	0	0	NDA
News24-Today's Chanakya	68	12	0	0	NDA

[Source-Wikipedia](#)

The election commission declared the results of the elections on 4th June. The initial news shocked everyone. UP which was considered a fortress for the BJP had been captured by the INDI alliance. **The opposition captured 43 out of the 80 seats**, with **SP itself capturing 37 seats**, 32 more than their tally in the previous election. **NDA was relegated to 36 seats**, 28 less than its previous tally. The **INDI alliance earned 43% of all votes** which was similar to NDA's vote share but it was 19 percentage points more than their previous tally. BJP's ally RJD won 2 seats and Apna Dal (sonelal) another NDA ally won 1 seat. The big news was coming out of **Amethi** where cabinet minister **Smt. Smriti Irani lost to Shri Kishori Lal Sharma (general)** by a margin of more than 1.5 lakh votes. SP had captured Faizabad, the constituency containing Ayodhya city. On the other hand, the **Smt. Mayawati (SC)-led BSP** suffered a major blow, **failing to secure a single seat** and reaching its lowest point with a vote share of 9.3%.

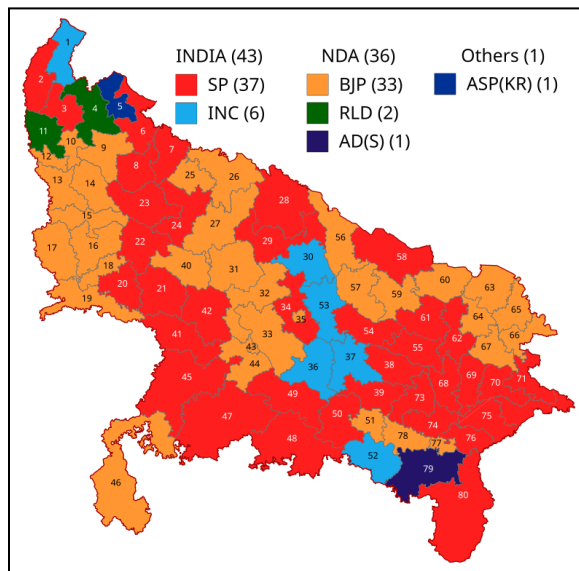
The anti-incumbency significantly hit the saffron party's results in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in UP, leading to the **defeat of 27 out of its 49 sitting MPs**. The BJP had re-nominated 54 candidates who had run in 2019, but 31 of them were unable to secure a win this time. Of these candidates, 33 MPs were in the race for their third term or more, and 20 of them lost their seats including Union ministers such as Smt. Smriti Irani from Amethi and Shri Ajay Mishra Teni (general) from Kheri, along with Shri Kaushal Kishore (SC) from Mohanlalganj, Shri Mahendra Nath Pandey (general) from Chandauli, Smt. Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti (OBC) from Fatehpur, Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma (SC) from Jalaun, and Shri Sanjeev Balyan (OBC) from Muzaffarnagar. High-profile leaders like eight-term MP Smt. Maneka

Gandhi (Sultanpur) and Shri Rajveer Singh (Etah) (OBC), son of ex-CM Shri Kalyan Singh also faced defeat. Other significant losses included Shri Lallu Singh (Faizabad) and Shri Subrat Pathak (Kannauj).

Elsewhere Shri Rahul Gandhi had won from Rae Bareilly and SP chief Shri Akhilesh Yadav also secured a win in the Kannauj constituency. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had won from Varanasi and defense minister Shri Rajnath Singh (general) had won from Lucknow albeit with a smaller margin than they had won in the previous election. In Meerut, the BJP fielded Ramayana star Shri Arun Govil, who successfully won the seat against Shri Devvrat Tyagi of the Bahujan Samaj Party and Shri Atul Pradhan of the Samajwadi Party.

The **formulation of the PDA (Pichda, Dalit (SC), Alpsankhyak)** played a crucial role in unifying various communities. Notably, the party succeeded in attracting Dalit voters, particularly from the Jatav(SC, chammar) community, who were previously considered traditional BSP supporters. This newfound "social engineering" strategy proved to be a game-changer for the Samajwadi Party.

Seat distribution in UP after the 2024 general elections

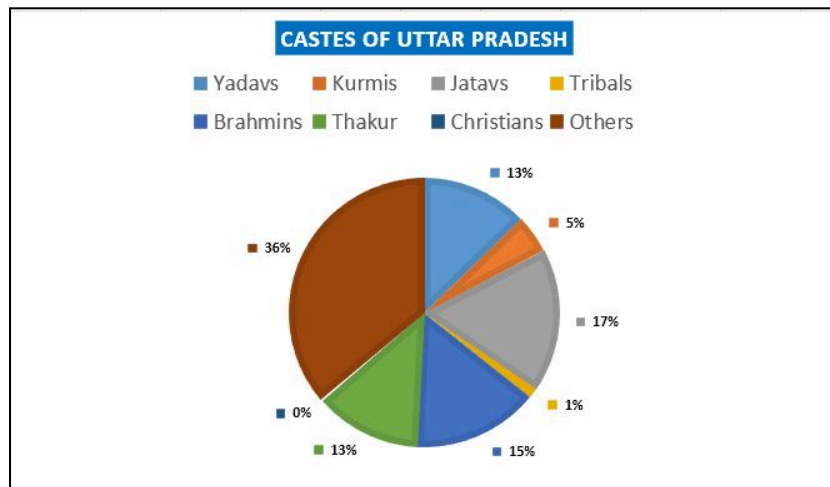


[Source-Wikimedia commons](#)

c. **The caste equation:**

i. **Before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections:**

In Uttar Pradesh politics caste is always successful in doing political mobilization. Different political parties plan their strategies around caste-equations. For this reason, it is said that if Uttar Pradesh is the political kingmaker, caste is the king. As per the **2011 Socio-Economic and Caste census**, the population of UP consists of **14.2 percent Upper Castes, 44 percent OBCs, and 20.8 percent SCs**. Amongst the subcastes, **13 percent are Yadavs (OBC), 5 percent Kurmis (OBC), 17 percent Jatavs (SC), 15 percent Brahmins (General), and 13 percent Thakurs (general)**. Thus, **Brahmins, Thakurs, Rajputs (general), Kurmi, Yadavs, Jats (OBC), and Baniyas (OBC)** are the major castes of the state. Since 1975 U.P. has witnessed development in all areas with rapid modernization and economic growth. This has led to the caste-based mobilization of lower castes into politics.



[Source-infoelections](#)

In the 1990s, the BJP, touted to be a party of upper castes, embarked on a process of uplifting backward caste leaders in the party such as Shri Kalyan Singh in Uttar Pradesh and Shri Narendra Modi in Gujarat among others. As the decline of the Congress set in, the BJP captured the **upper caste vote** in Uttar Pradesh. The rise of Shri Mulayam Singh (OBC) and his Yadav politics helped the BJP get a foothold among the **non-Yadav OBC**. However, The BJP could only reach this core base. Among Yadavs, Muslims, and Dalits, the BJP faced a '**no entry**' situation. This was until 2019 when the BJP made significant headway in UP. This was because of its innumerable micro coalitions at the social level. Therefore, apart from its core voter base, the BJP breached the OBC vote bank, garnering significant support from communities like the **Baniya, Kurmis, Koeris (OBC), and Mauryas (OBC)**; who are amongst the Most Backward Castes. **Jats**, who historically didn't vote for BJP, came out in huge numbers and according to the post-poll survey, **91 percent** of them voted for BJP. The party also

involved communities like the **Nishads (OBC)** among others and most significantly the non-Jatav Dalits, thus nullifying the Bahujan Samaj Party's undisputed hold over the politics of the region. In general, the BJP's strategy delved into the idea of '**Samagra Hindutva**' which meant that it integrated the OBCs and scheduled castes within the Hindutva fold.

The Bahujan Samaj Party formed in 1984, is a party of the **Scheduled Castes (SC)** but it also seeks the support of backward classes and minorities. BSP has a clear identity base and militant ideology. The BSP is the political expression of a social action movement founded by Shri Kashi Ram (SC). He described the party as an Ambedhkaritic rather than Gandhian party i.e. it believes in confrontation with the upper caste to gain their share of power.s. The party has the stamp of a 'single caste party' as it has a very strong base among the **Jatav** but not among the non-Jatav Dalits. This was further solidified in the 2019 elections when the BSP was able to hold on to its core Jatav vote, but it failed to ensure the backing of non-Jatav Dalits for the alliance, as nearly half of them voted for BJP candidates.

As for the support base of the Congress and the SP, it was somewhat complex. The Congress got more support among the **middle classes**, while the SP had more support from the **relatively rich**, though the **poor** also supported it in large numbers. This posed a challenge to both Congress and SP. They received support from diverse social classes whose interests were difficult to reconcile. Throughout the turbulent decade of the 1990s, Mulayam Singh steadfastly cultivated the support of the **Muslim** community of UP. Faced with a fanatical BJP and a directionless Congress, the Muslim community in the state was forced to rally behind the SP. The backing of the Muslim community along with its core base of the **Yadav** community made SP a stalwart in UP, However, in 2019 this changed. The consolidation of the Yadavs was not as strong as it should have been with just **three-fifths** of them voting for the party, down from the **three-fourths** voter share it received in the 2017 Assembly election. The consolidation of the upper castes, the Kurmis and Koeris, and the lower Other Backward Classes (OBCs) behind the BJP was far stronger than the consolidation of Jatavs, Muslims, and Yadavs which ultimately led to its defeat.

	Party voted for Lok Sabha 2019 (Uttar Pradesh)			
	Congress (%)	BJP+ (%)	MGB (%)	Others (%)
Brahmin	6	82	6	6
Rajput	5	89	7	-
Vaishya	13	70	4	13
Jat	2	91	7	
Other Upper caste	5	84	10	1
Yadav	5	23	60	12
Kurmi+Koeri	5	80	14	1
Other OBC	5	72	18	5
Jatav	1	17	75	7
Other SC	7	48	42	3
Muslims	14	8	73	5
Others	1	50	35	14

[Source-Lokniti-CSDS Post Poll Survey in Uttar Pradesh](#)

ii. The 2024 Lok Sabha elections:

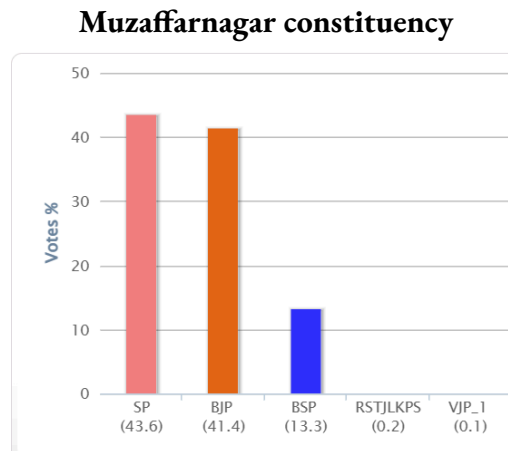
The key takeaway from the 2024 UP general elections was that **caste identity triumphed over religious polarisation** in Uttar Pradesh as the INDIA bloc's promise of **saving employment and reservation** outshone NDA's narrative of **Ram, ration, and shashan**. **Caste played a key role in this election from the Thakur (general) leaders who had accused the BJP of taking their community for granted to the Jats (OBC) and Gurjars (OBC) who joined the BJP just ahead of the polls to the infighting between the Rajputs (general) and the Bahubalis (strongmen) from the Kshatriya clans**. This discontent within the BJP was one of the reasons for the BJP's downfall in constituencies such as Kaushambi, Pratapgarh, Jaunpur, and Machhli Shahar.

On the other side of the political aisle, the caste calculus of "U.P. ke ladke" (sons of U.P.) worked as Congress leader Shri Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Shri Akhilesh Yadav complemented each other. The SP supremo saw the ground reports and read the mood of the Muslim and Dalit (SC) voters before he left 17 seats for the Congress and the grand old party came out on top in six constituencies. In addition to this, the **SP gave only five tickets to Yadav (OBC) candidates**, all of whom hailed from party president Shri Akhilesh Yadav's family. Similarly, of the 17 reserved seats, the party allocated many tickets to the non-Jatav Dalits (SC). This was a departure from the past where the **Muslim and Yadav (OBC) communities would get over 40% of tickets** from the SP. In this election, the party gave 26 out of 63 tickets to non-Yadav backward communities in U.P. with nominees hailing from **Kurmis**, an influential non-Yadav OBC social group getting nine tickets, the **Nishad** (OBC) community getting four tickets and the **Kushwaha** (OBC), **Maurya** (OBC), and **Shakya** (OBC) communities getting six tickets. On top of this, it fielded two SC candidates from general seats which proved to be a smart move as Shri Awadhesh Prasad (SC) bagged the prestigious Faizabad-Ayodhya seat, and though its other candidate, Smt. Sunita Verma (SC) lost to BJP's Shri Arun Govil in Meerut by a thin margin, but her presence sent a message across western U.P. that Jatavs (SC, Chamar) and Yadavs (OBC) could fight for a common cause.

d. Region Wise distribution:

- i. **Western UP:** In the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s reduced score in Uttar Pradesh, the Western and adjoining central parts of the State played the role of a wind vane. The region was affected by farmers' agitation and protests against the treatment meted out to the women wrestlers. Knowing this BJP bought RLD into its fold but this didn't pan out in the way BJP would have wanted to. Despite the RLD's muscle and the BSP out of the INDIA bloc, **of the 10 seats in western UP, the BJP has won only 4 seats compared to its tally of 6 in 2019**. The biggest upset came from Muzaffarnagar, where,

in the clash between two Jat (OBC) powerhouses, SP's Shri Harendra Malik defeated Union Minister Shri Sanjeev Balyan (OBC) in a close contest. Shri Balyan's supporters have accused the RLD of not going full tilt to ensure the victory of the BJP's Jat face, who defeated the then RLD chief Shri Ajit Singh in 2019. Shri Balyan's task was made all the more difficult by the BSP, which fielded a Prajapati candidate (OBC) who secured around 1.40 lakh votes.



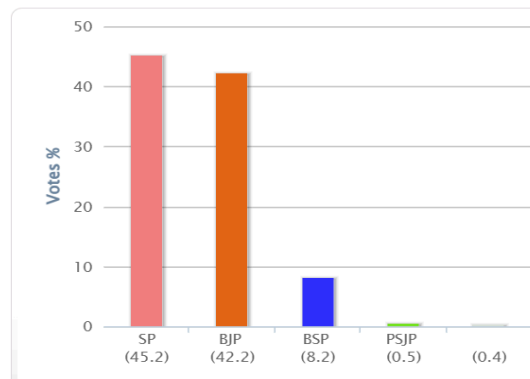
[Source-India Votes](#)

Shri Akhilesh Yadav's call to save democracy and reservation seemed to have reached the grassroots, and the BJP could not find a counter to slay the doubts that took root in the voters' minds in this Mandal belt.

An important takeaway from this region is that even in the seats that the BJP did win, its victory margins have come down drastically due to anti-incumbency feelings. For instance, in Aligarh, BJP's Shri Satish Gautam won the seat for the third time by only around 15,000 votes. In 2019, the margin was around 2.25 lakh votes. Similarly, in Meerut, where Shri Arun Govil was brought in to tide over the anti-incumbency of the outgoing candidate and create a Hindutva wave in the region managed to secure the seat by around 10,000 votes after a hard-fought battle

- ii. Bundelkhand:** Considered UP's most backward and driest region, threw the most telling verdict for the BJP. **Of the region's five seats - Jalaun, Jhansi, Hamirpur, Banda, and Fatehpur, BJP managed to win only one -- Jhansi.** The party had swept the region winning all five seats in 2019. The most noteworthy result here was in Fatehpur, where former SP state president Shri Naresh Uttam Patel (OBC) defeated the Union Minister Smt. Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti (OBC).

Fatehpur Constituency



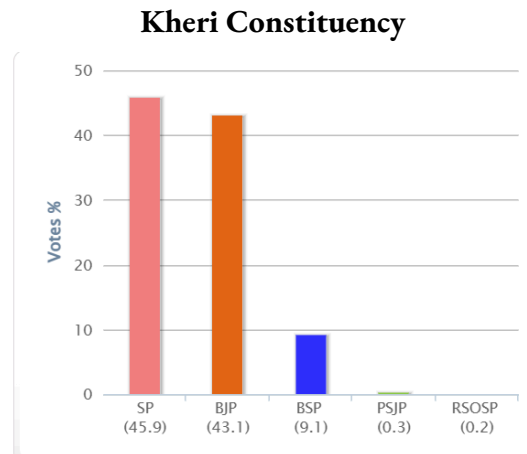
[Source-India Votes](#)

In 2014, the Bundelas showed unwavering support to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in the hope of development in their region. The prime minister too did not disappoint. By 2019, the Arjun Sahayak Nahar Project in Mahoba and Bundelkhand Expressway came into reality. Work on the Defence Corridor has also started in Chitrakoot. This showed the Bundelas that there was a brighter path toward their future but resentment against the incumbent candidates overpowered their dream for a better future. For example, in Jalaun, Union Minister Shri Bhanu Pratap Verma's (SC) weak presence in the area cost him his seat.

iii. Rohilkhand: The region which has Badaun and Bulandshahr among its 11 seats gave no relief to the party either. **BJP won four seats from here**, down from nine last time. SP won seven seats in this region. The reason for BJP's poor performance in this region can be attributed to some major local issues like stray cattle which were not addressed by the state government, despite the PM Shri Narendra Modi promising to find a solution to it during the 2022 state elections. A BJP MLA from the Rohilkhand region said that the stray cattle issue has come to a head with no solution. The rural public used to give the BJP workers an earful when they would go for campaigning and this, along with issues like price rises, and paper leaks blunted the positive factor of Labharthi schemes.

An interesting case in this region is of Union Minister Shri Ajay Mishra Ten i(general). He lost the region's Kheri seat to the Samajwadi Party (SP) candidate Shri Utkarsh Verma 'Madhur' (OBC) by 34,329 votes. This Lok Sabha election is the first one since the Lakhimpur Kheri violence in October 2021, when a vehicle allegedly associated with Shri Mishra's convoy mowed down four farmers protesting against the then-farm laws, with his son being the main accused in the case. Despite widespread resentment over the incident, the BJP continued to support Shri Mishra. Besides this reason, **Lakhimpur Kheri which is often referred to as Uttar Pradesh's sugar bowl, has a**

diverse electorate of over 18.6 lakh voters. According to internal political party surveys, around 7 lakh voters belong to Kurmi (OBC) and other OBC communities, 2.5 lakh are Dalits (SC), 3 lakh are Brahmins, 2.65 lakh are Muslims, and about 1 lakh are Sikhs. Local farmers have voiced various concerns, mostly economic saying that the Rs 6,000 annually from the government is not enough to even procure fertilizer for one crop season. They say that the cost of everything has increased but the prices they get for our produce have not.



[Source: IndiaVotes](#)

iv. Purvanchal: In Uttar Pradesh, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) faced its biggest setback in the Purvanchal region in eastern U.P. with the ruling party **winning only nine out of the 27 seats** in the region. The winning constituencies included Varanasi and Gorakhpur which are synonymous with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and CM Shri Yogi Adityanath. SP got 16 seats, while Apna Dal and Congress secured one seat each, from this region.

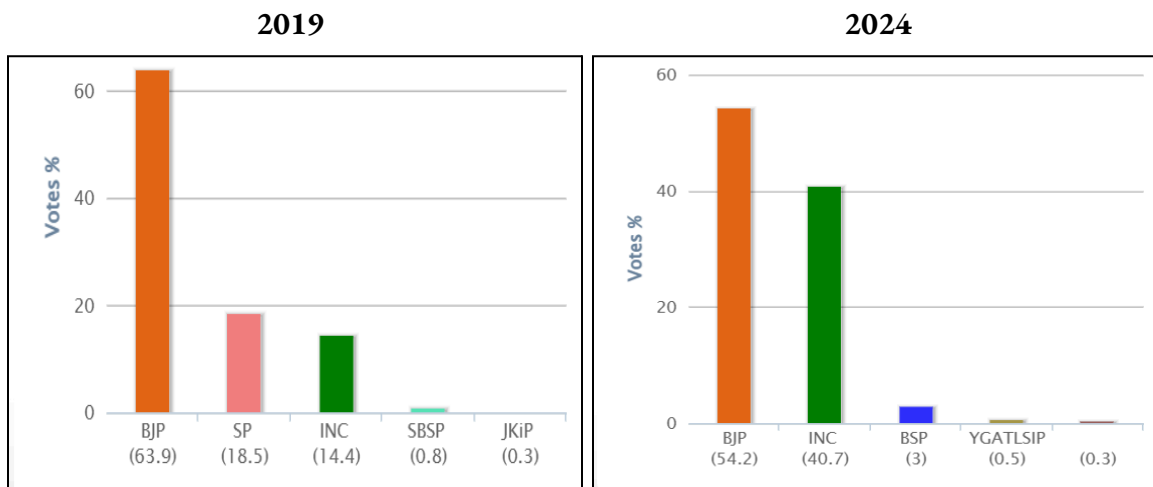
The robust social alliance formed by the Samajwadi Party (SP) with 70% tickets to non-Yadav OBC candidates in the region led to its victory. **Out of 27 seats, the Nishad (OBC) community got two tickets, while communities like Kurmi (OBC), Kushawaha (OBC) Shakya (OBC), and Rajbhar (OBC) were given 13 tickets.** It paid off with 11 candidates from these social segments emerging victorious in Purvanchal. In addition to this, the SP president vehemently pushed the **Caste Census** pitch in the region during the campaign describing it as essential for the overall development of the society.

On the Jaunpur Lok Sabha seat, Shri Babu Singh Kushwaha (OBC) of the SP defeated Shri Kripashankar Singh (general) of the BJP by 99,335 votes, while in the Chandauli Lok Sabha seat, Shri Birendra Singh of the SP defeated Union Minister Shri Mahendra Nath Pandey (general) by 21,565

votes, likewise on the prestigious seat of Ballia where the BJP field former PM Shri Chandra Shekhar's son Shri Neeraj Shekhar (general), the SP emerged victorious by 43,384 votes.

In the hotly contested Ghazipur seat, the BJP's Shri Paras Nath Rai tested defeat against Shri Afzal Ansari of the SP by 1,24,861 votes. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's victory margin in Varanasi was reduced by almost 65 percent in comparison to the 2019 polls. While Shri Modi won the seat by 1,52,513 votes in the 2024 election, in 2019 he won by over 4,79,000 votes.

Varanasi Constituency



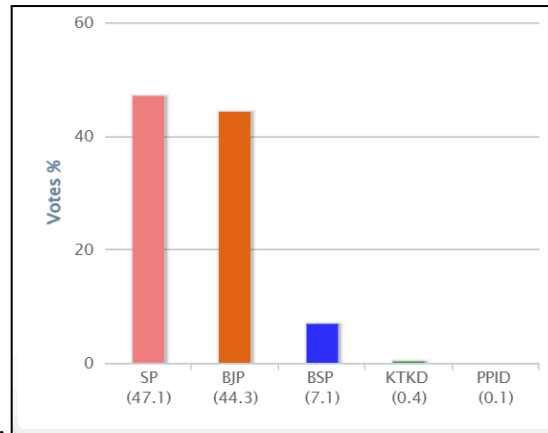
[Source-India Votes](#)

[Source-India Votes](#)

v. **Braj:** The region which consists of Mathura and Hathras constituency was less harsh on the **ruling party**, which **won six out of 8 seats from the region**, down from seven in 2019. SP won two seats here. Shri Rajkumar Chahar, who had won a record victory in the last election from Fatehpur Sikri seat, has barely managed to save the seat. Smt. Hema Malini (general) scored a hat-trick with a victory in Kanha's city Mathura. She defeated her nearest rival Congress' Shri Mukesh Dhangar (OBC) by a huge margin of 2.89 lakh votes.

The two seats which the BJP lost from Braj were Firozabad and Etah. In the Etah parliamentary seat, SP's Shri Devesh Shakya (OBC) defeated BJP leader Shri Rajveer Singh (OBC), son of the former Chief Minister of UP Shri Kalyan Singh, by 28,052 votes. Shri Rajveer had been winning here for two consecutive times. This time he was trying to score a hat trick, but SP's bet on Shri Devesh Shakya paid off. SP candidate Shri Akshay Yadav (OBC) won the Firozabad Lok Sabha seat. He defeated BJP's new face Shri Vishwadeep Singh by a margin of 89 thousand votes

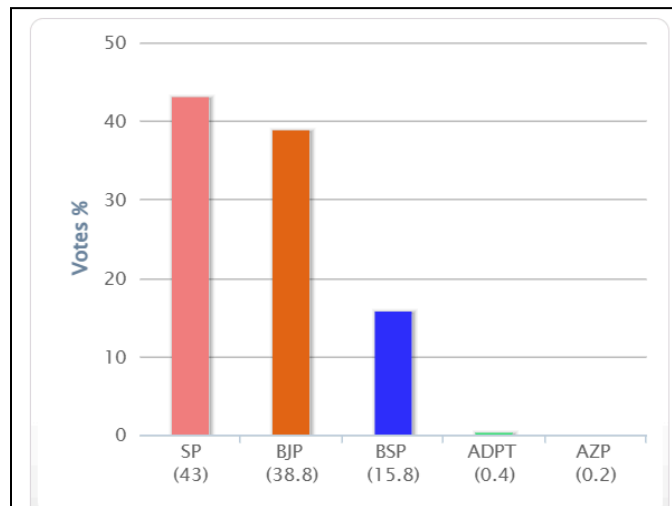
Etah Constituency



[Source-India Votes](#)

vi. **Awadh: Of Awadh's 20 seats**, which include key constituencies such as Amethi, Raebareli, and Lucknow, the **BJP could win only nine**, while **SP and Congress won seven and four seats respectively**. The biggest blow in the region came from Faizabad, the region containing the city of Ayodhya where the newly constructed Ram temple, sent the BJP candidate packing despite a vociferous campaign by the party in the name of Ram. Smt. Maneka Gandhi and Smt. Smriti Irani, both big leaders from the party, lost Sultanpur and Amethi. Smt. Irani's defeat hurt the party more, delivered as it was by a Congress debutante. **The margin of Shri Rajnath Singh's victory in Lucknow too narrowed to about 1.5 lakh from 3.47 lakh in 2019.**

Sultanpur Constituency



[Source- India Votes](#)

5. Case Studies:

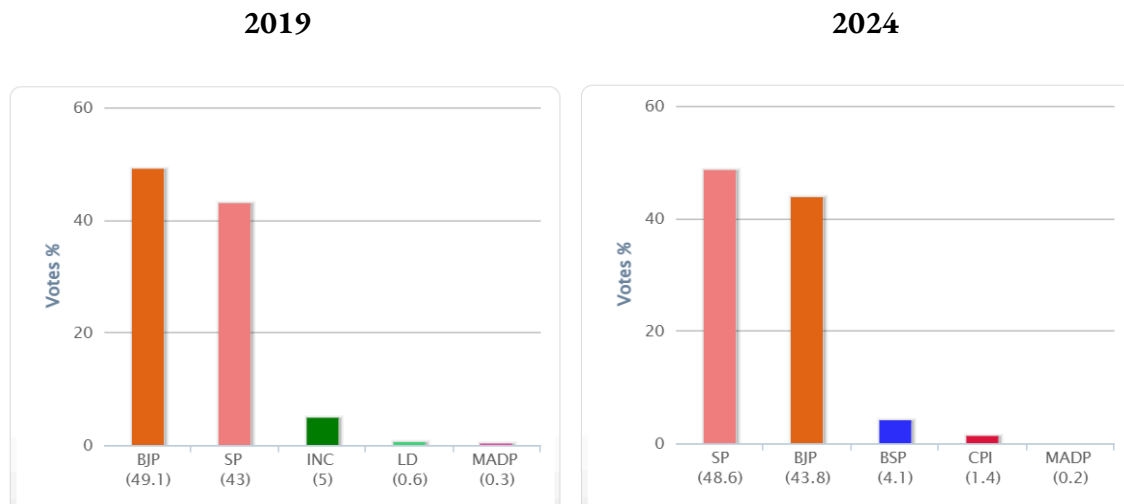
a. Faizabad:

The case of Faizabad is a curious one. The constituency which **consists of Ayodhya city** had a BJP MP, Shri Lallu Singh, for the 10 years before the 2024 election. The fact that the sitting MP for the past 10 years was a BJP leader combined with the newly made and long-anticipated Ram Mandir made everyone think this constituency was an easy win for the BJP. In January, when Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya many saw this as an event that would fetch electoral benefits for the BJP. While **overconfidence** is certainly a factor in BJP losing Faizabad the bigger **reason was the narrative that the opposition spread according to which the Constitution and our democracy were in jeopardy** if the BJP came into power. BJP's blunder occurred when its candidate from Ayodhya, Shri Lallu Singh said in a rally that his party would change the constitution if it got more than 400 seats. This provided a boost for the INDIA bloc who went as far as to say that the BJP would remove reservation if elected to power. Ayodhya which has the highest number of OBC voters was in BJP's pocket due to it riding the "Modi wave" but as soon as the caste narrative entered the conversation no amount of hype or religion-based politics could overcome this tall barrier. Along with **the OBCs who formed 52% of the electorate, the Dalits (SC) made up 16%, the general category made up 25%, Hindus made up 76% and Muslims made up 22%.**

A major section of the OBCs, SCs, and Muslims voted for the Samajwadi Party. Previously separated by their differences they came together to elect the SP candidate in this election. **The votes of the Brahmins were split** between the BJP and the BSP who fielded Shri Sachidanand Pandey (General, Brahmin) thus decreasing BJP's vote share. **The BJP was able to consolidate a major section of the Hindu voters as expected but even amongst them there was a 3% dip** in their votes as compared to the previous election

Along with this, there was widespread resentment among locals for not getting **compensation** after their lands were taken for the development of Ayodhya. While the BJP overlooked this resentment, the opposition took full advantage of it making it their focal point in Faizabad. Adding to this there was a strong **anti-incumbency** feeling against Shri Lallu Singh because he refused to focus on the local issues such as potholed roads, poor electricity supply, inadequate sanitation facilities, and constant traffic jams. This led to even the BJP's local cadre requesting the party to change their candidate in Faizabad. Shri Lallu Singh campaigned solely under the name Shri Narendra Modi which ultimately wasn't enough.

The Samajwadi party too should get its share of its credit as its **two-fold plan of pocketing the rural voters and fielding a Dalit candidate worked miraculously in Faizabad**. Shri Akhilesh Yadav himself held meetings in the rural areas of Milkipur and Bikapur to make them aware of the local issues such as land acquisitions and jobs which their city counterparts faced. The SP candidate from Faizabad was Shri Awadesh Prasad (SC, Pasi), a Dalit veteran of the party, serving as an MLA from the Milkipur district for the past 9 terms. This got the SP the crucial support of the Dalits, especially from the Pasi community, who form the largest voter group and to whom Shri Awadesh Prasad belonged. This support on top of their already strong base of Muslims and Yadavs sealed the fate of the BJP in Faizabad. The BJP not only lost Ayodhya but also all the seats adjacent to the temple town - Basti, Ambedkarnagar, and Barabanki. The Ayodhya result is not only being seen as the defeat of the BJP but also the defeat of their Hindutva vision.



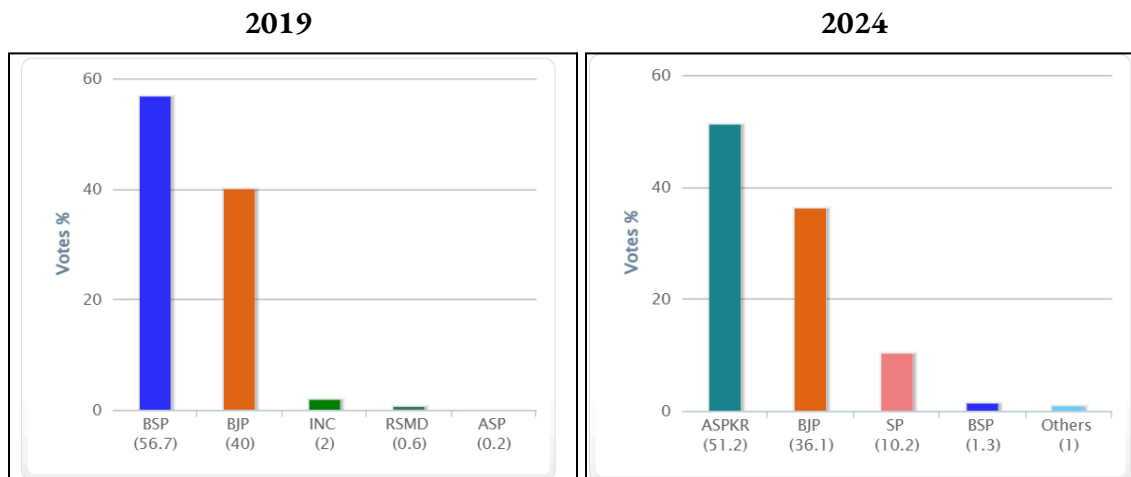
[Source-India Votes](#)

b. Nagina:

Nagina Lok Sabha constituency came into existence in 2008, as a part of the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies based on the recommendations of the Delimitation Commission of India constituted in 2002. It is one of the 17 seats of UP which are **reserved for the scheduled caste**. It has therefore been a very **volatile constituency**, having an MP from SP in 2009, then BJP in 2014, and finally from BSP in 2019. As seen from the below graph, in 2019 BSP won by a significant margin of more than 16 percent. Before the 2024 elections there were no predictions for the constituency as it was a wildcard. There was one newcomer on the block in the Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) whose leader Shri Chandrashekhar Azad (SC) was contesting from the constituency.

ASP (KR) was formed in 2020 with Shri Azad initially planning to contest as part of the INDIA bloc from the Nagina seat. He was active in the area with RLD, even helping its candidate win a by-poll election. Even after the RLD chief Shri Jayant Chaudhary (OBC) withdrew from the INDIA bloc to join the NDA it was expected that he would get the ticket to contest in Nagina. However, the Samajwadi Party's declaration of a candidate from the Nagina themselves effectively ended the probability of an alliance with the Dalit-centric Azad Samaj Party. The reason for this was that Shri Akhilesh Yadav was not ready to yield to 'pressure tactics' by any smaller party following the exit of the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) from the Opposition alliance. He thought that his party had an effective command over the **Muslims who form more than 50% voter share and the Dalits (SC) who form a 21% voter share in Nagina. Hindus are a minority here with their number ranging from 40-45%. The remaining voters include Chauhan, Saini, and some other backward-class voters.**

Unfortunately for him, he turned out to be wrong. **Shri Azad's hold over Dalit youth overcame his party's lack of influence in the area. A major section of the Dalits and the Muslims chose to vote for the new blood, Shri Azad.** The result of the election can be seen in the below graph.



[Source-India Votes](#)

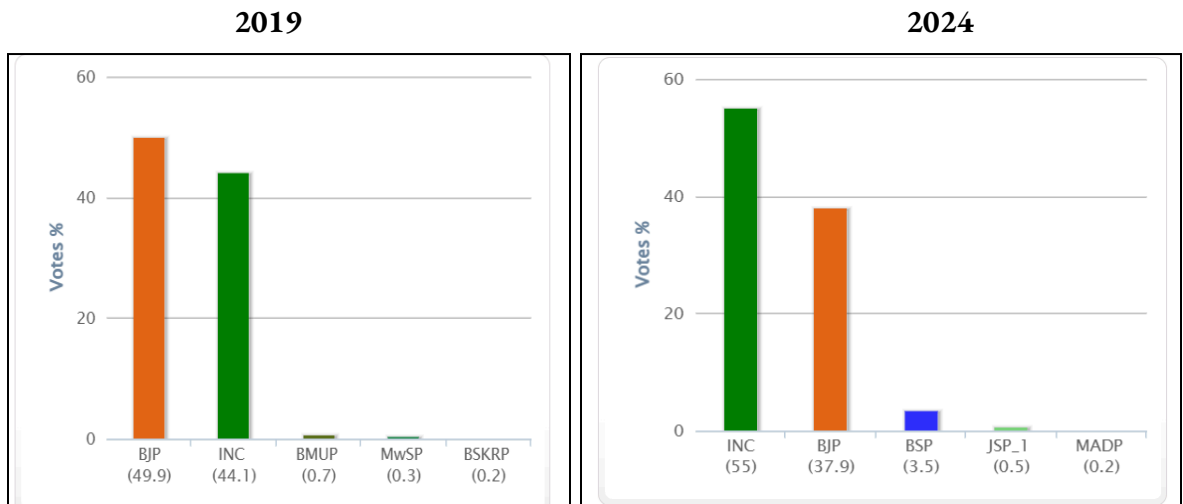
Shri Chandrashekar to his credit has stuck to his word about the upliftment of the backward classes, choosing not to join either bloc. He has said he would maintain equal distance from both alliances and continue to raise his voice if there is any injustice done to the underprivileged and deprived sections in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or the Opposition-run States. Shri Azad's victory in Nagina has stirred the pot of Dalit politics in the State. This election could be a glimpse into the future of politics in UP which could see the return of "Bahujan" politics.

c. **Amethi:**

Amethi like its neighbor constituency Rae Bareilly has been historically considered to be a **bastion of the INC** and the home constituency of the Nehru-Gandhi family. It was represented by Shri Sanjay Gandhi until he died in 1981, then by Shri Rajiv Gandhi until he died in 1991, and then by his widow Smt. Sonia Gandhi from 1999 to 2004 followed by her son Shri Rahul Gandhi from 2004 to 2019. Despite such a long history, it came to no one's, not even to Shri Rahul Gandhi's surprise when he was defeated in 2019 by Smt. Smriti Irani. This was because of the work that she undertook in Amethi since her defeat in 2014 like constructing a 200-bed hospital expanding the railway line and establishing manufacturing plants for rifles and Rail Neer. After she took office she continued to improve the city's infrastructure spending **Rs. 550 Crore on railway development**, she procured allotment to construct a **medical college** in the city along with increasing the budget allocation on the construction of the roads. Despite this, she lost by over a lakh votes in 2024. She is partly to be blamed for her loss as she didn't fulfill her promises like delivering cheaper sugar to her constituents and focusing on the politics of religion. Still, the INDIA bloc should also get its fair dues.

The coalition made by SP and INC ensured that it got both the backward caste vote as well as the other minorities' vote. In the Amethi Lok Sabha seat, the largest population is of OBC class. **About 34 percent of the voters in the Amethi Lok Sabha constituency are from the OBC class while the number of Dalit voters is about 26 percent. According to estimates, there are about eight percent Brahmin (general) and about 12 percent Rajput voters (general) here. The number of Muslim voters here is 20 percent. While a major section of the Muslims and the backward classes voted for the INC, the BJP's vote bank of the Rajput and the Brahims was divided between the two parties.**

This combined with the will of the people of Amethi to **move back to a familiar face who offered them freebies** like 1 lakh rupees to every economically weaker woman and reservation of more than 50% for the backward classes all but ensured INC's victory. The results of the election are as follows.



[Source-India Votes](#)

6. BJP's fatal mistakes and the INDI alliance's ingenious strategies in the election:

As mentioned previously, BJP's defeat in UP is not due to any one reason but due to a **combination of various reasons**. As soon as the results were announced the chief minister of UP, Shri Yogi Adityanath quickly attributed the loss to **BJP's overconfidence** about a win in the state. While that is a reason another reason was quickly seen after Shri Yogi's remarks.

Speaking of ticket distribution, the BJP had a well-defined ticket selection system based on ground inputs in the previous elections. That has changed. According to a BJP leader, the ticket distribution of this election was based on reports from some survey agencies and intelligence agencies. They defined their criteria, likings, and dislikes about ticket claimants and did not listen to word on the ground realities. The party had reports that workers in constituencies such as Kairana, Muzaffarnagar, Fatehpur Sikri, Mohanlalganj, Pratapgarh, Kaushambi, Allahabad, Jaunpur and Basti were not happy with the choice of candidates but it was overlooked.

Another reason was the BJP's **failure to increase its social base** in UP. In the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections and the 2017 and 2022 Assembly polls, the BJP re-invented its social engineering plan. A party that was seen as representing certain upper castes and certain families expanded its base by inducting people from different parties, and other social groups, promoting and elevating them. As a

result, the party did well in all the four elections. **This election it, on the one hand, lost its support base to SP and on the other did not expand its base. A BJP leader said “Our social engineering was governed by Central leaders and this time they were highly unaware and ignorant of the ground realities. While the SP expanded its base, the BJP reduced itself.”**

Finally, a reason that can be attributed to the BJP’s loss of seats is **dissatisfaction among youths** especially concerning **jobs**. The short-tenure **Agnipath scheme** that came with an uncertain future, and the leak of recruitment exam papers contributed to disenchantment among the youth on the lookout for jobs. **In constituencies such as Bareilly, Badaun, Agra, Allahabad, Bhadohi, Rae Bareli, Amethi, and Prayagraj, the grounds that used to be full of aspirants for jobs in the armed forces are mostly empty now. An estimated 48 lakh candidates, who had applied for police jobs, were stunned when the examination was canceled due to a paper leak.**

However, the elections in UP aren’t just a case of BJP’s poor planning it is also a perfect example of the opposition using ingenious tactics, some borrowed from the incumbent party, to ensure victory. For instance, as previously mentioned, the BJP re-invented its social engineering plan in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections and the 2017 and 2022 Assembly polls. This had reduced the SP to the status of a MY (Muslim+Yadav) party. But this time, Akhilesh Yadav borrowed the approach, giving tickets to only five Yadavs (OBC) in the SP list of 62 candidates. In the party’s list, there were **10 Kurmis and 6 Kushwaha-Maurya-Shakya-Saini** (OBC castes considered close to the BJP for several years), and Shri Shyamlal Pal, an OBC, as state party president during the polls. This worked wonders for the SP. In general leaders of the INDI alliance appeared to have succeeded in bringing together Muslims, OBCs, Dalits (SC), and even a section of upper castes in a few constituencies. **They did it by raising issues ranging from “the need to save the Constitution” to ending the Agniveer scheme, the promise of a 10 kg free ration to the waiver of farm loans.** With each phase of the elections, caste consolidation increased in favor of the SP-Congress candidates.

7. What is next for Uttar Pradesh:

While the elections for Lok Sabha might be over this is by no means the end of electoral politics in UP. For one thing, the perfect recipe to win UP has been made and utilized by the INDI alliance. In the next general election, one can expect there to be a lot of catering to the minorities and the backward classes. If BJP learns from its mistake, it might be a completely different party by the time the next general election comes around. Two of the party’s most crucial mistakes can be seen in Faizabad. Firstly, the BJP candidate from Faizabad rallied the crowd to vote for the BJP so that it could get “**char sau paar**” and

change the constitution. This played right in the hands of the opposition. Secondly, losing in Faizabad, regardless of the candidate's mistakes, showed the **lack of appeal in a communal vote** in UP. These reasons combined with the problems mentioned earlier like **complacency** and **poor ticket distribution** that got flak even from the party's inner circle guaranteed that the Prime Minister's party performed poorly in this swing state. Also, unlike in 2019, the Congress SP coalition succeeded in setting the narrative around issues like **unemployment**, which were exacerbated by paper leaks, all-around inflation, and the sense of the **Constitution** being in crisis. The opposition to its credit, took advantage of the BJP's mistake and played the caste card with the backward classes promising them more **reservation** and fear-mongering the public about a third term under Shri Narendra Modi.

With the focus now on the 2027 state assembly elections all eyes will be on CM Shri Yogi Adityanath. A big challenge for the CM going forward will be how to play his cards in the state's caste politics as well as in terms of the economy. His focus has to be on **job generation and getting investments in UP.** This is because the youth vote was a factor that went unambiguously in the INDIA bloc's favor across caste and community. **Question paper leaks** and the uncertainty of the short-tenure **Agnipath scheme** contributed a lot to the disenchantment among the youth. The two issues got a lot of traction during the campaigns of two young SP candidates, Pushpendra Saroj who is 25 and contested from Kaushambi, and Priya Saroj who is also 25 and contested from Machhlishihar. The two are now MPs and the future of the Samajwadi Party. They showed that catering to the youth regardless of their caste and religion is one of the keys to unlocking UP as they are likely to think outside of their community boxes especially when issues such as employment are at stake. How that pans out will be crucial to the future of UP politics

8. Conclusion:

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh witnessed a significant **shift in political dynamics**, with the BJP experiencing its most substantial setback since 2014. Meanwhile, the Congress and Samajwadi Party, both part of the INDIA bloc, emerged as the primary beneficiaries. The 2024 election results have challenged the long-held belief that Dalits (SCs) and Yadavs (OBCs) cannot unite in UP. According to caste assessments based on exit polls, the **Samajwadi Party secured 65% of the Scheduled Caste votes**, a remarkable 21% increase compared to the 2019 polls. **Surprisingly, 32% of Jatav (SC, Chammar) votes, traditionally committed to the BSP, went in favor of the Samajwadi Party.** This shift in voting patterns indicates a significant change in the political landscape of Uttar Pradesh, with the Samajwadi Party emerging as a formidable force capable of bringing together diverse communities. But make no mistake this is not BJP's first encounter with a disappointing

election. The party is built on the foundations of flexibility and adaptation. It did so when it transformed itself from a Hindu Nationalist party with its focus on the construction of the Ram mandir to a relatively less conservative party based on liberal ideologies like globalization all the while being the voice of all the Hindus, regardless of their caste. One can expect the same to happen now but with a special focus on the backward castes in UP. While the 2029 general elections still are some time away, UP will conduct its state legislative assembly in 2027. This will be the biggest litmus test of the BJP government, a positive result might be a sign of a fourth term under the current government but if it doesn't work out for the party even after tweaking its policy and electoral decisions it might be quite a while before we see a BJP government in UP again.

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