

# **Analysing Chhattisgarh Lok Sabha Result 2024**

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## **1. Abstract**

This research paper analyses the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Chhattisgarh, focusing on voting patterns, caste dynamics, and party performance across the state's 11 constituencies. The study explores the historical voting trends from the 2014 and 2019 elections and examines the impact of caste-based strategies employed by major political parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress (INC). Key findings highlight the BJP's continued dominance, bolstered by effective voter outreach, strategic candidate selection, and national appeal, particularly under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The paper also discusses the implications of increased voter turnout, shifting caste loyalties, and the emerging importance of tribal and OBC communities in shaping electoral outcomes. By analysing exit polls and election results, this study offers a comprehensive overview of the political landscape in Chhattisgarh and outlines the challenges the Congress faces in balancing its appeal among diverse social segments.

**Keywords:** Chhattisgarh Lok Sabha Election 2024, Voting Patterns, Caste Dynamics, BJP vs Congress, Electoral Analysis, Tribal and OBC Influence, Political Strategy, Election Results, Voter Turnout, Caste Census Impact.

## **2. Introduction**

After separation from Madhya Pradesh in the year 2000, Chhattisgarh emerged as a new state. Talking about the electoral battle, there are many regional parties in this state, but from the beginning, the main contest here has been between the BJP and the Congress. The Election Commission of India, on 16th March 2024, announced the schedule of the 2024 Indian General Election, with Chhattisgarh scheduled to vote from 19 April 2024 and concluding on 7 May 2024 to elect **11 members** of the 18th Lok Sabha. The 11 Members are selected from 11 constituencies, which are **Bastar (ST), Bilaspur, Durg, Janjgir-Champa (SC), Kanker (ST), Korba, Mahasamund, Raigarh (ST), Raipur, Rajnandgaon and Surguja (ST)**. As per the 2011 Census in Chhattisgarh, the SC Voters are approximately 32,74,269 which is around 12.8% of the Total Population. Similarly, the ST Voters in the whole of constituencies are 78,22,902 which is approx. around 30.6% of the Total Population. The constituencies have 23.2% of its population living in urban areas while 76.8% are living in rural areas.

Votes were cast in three phases for 11 Lok Sabha seats of Chhattisgarh. In the first phase, on April 19, only the Naxal-affected Bastar seat was voted. In the second phase on April 26, voters in three seats - Rajnandgaon, Mahasamund and Kanker - used their franchise. In the third phase held on May 7, voting was held in seven seats - Surguja, Raigarh, Janjgir-Champa, Korba, Bilaspur, Durg and Raipur. During the first phase of voting, people of 56 villages in Bastar voted for the first time in polling stations set up in their villages. The voter turnout in this phase was 84.67 per cent. Rajnandgaon Lok Sabha seat has become the focal point, where Congress leader Bhupesh Baghel, the State's former Chief Minister (2018-23), is pitted against the sitting BJP MP Santosh Pandey, who is an RSS protégé. The election outcome is likely to impact Baghel's

political fate. In the second phase, 74.07 percent of voting was recorded. In the third phase, 71.06 percent of voting was recorded. The exit polls on June 1 have brought good news for the BJP. This time BJP seems to be getting an edge compared to the last election. According to the exit poll, BJP will get 10 seats this time while Congress will get one seat. If the projections translate into results, it is a big setback for the grand old party of the country. In 2019, the BJP won 9 seats.

### **3. Caste Analysis of Chhattisgarh & Seats**

Chhattisgarh's caste composition is complex in the sense that there is no single caste group that is numerically predominant such as the Marathas in Maharashtra or the Jats in Haryana and the Lingayats of Karnataka. Chhattisgarh's electoral landscape is shaped by diverse caste groups, each wielding significant influence. The Gonds, the largest scheduled tribe ST (17% of the population), initially supported the BJP but shifted to Congress in recent years. Telis/Sahus (14%), an OBC group, have been crucial swing voters, initially favouring BJP but later supporting Congress under Bhupesh Baghel's leadership. Kurmis (5.34%), another OBC community, has consistently backed Congress, with Bhupesh Baghel emerging as a prominent leader. The Oraon tribe, largely Christianized, has favoured Congress since 2013. Aghariyas and Yadavs have shown mixed support, while Kanwars (3.91%) switched from Congress to BJP in 2013. Upper castes like Brahmins and Baniyas have remained loyal BJP supporters. The Rajput community, though small, has also consistently backed the BJP since 2003. These caste dynamics play a crucial role in shaping electoral outcomes in Chhattisgarh, with parties constantly strategizing to maintain or gain support from these various groups. Baghel has been projecting himself as a leader from the OBCs, which constitutes over 40 per cent of the State's total population.

#### 4. 2014 Lok Sabha Election Analysis

Constituency	Winner (Party)	Surpassed (Party)
1. Bastar (ST)	Dinesh Kashyap (BJP)	Baliram Kashyap (BJP)
2. Bilaspur	Lakhan Singh Sahu (BJP)	Dilip Singh Judev (BJP)
3. Durg	Tamradhwah Singh (INC)	Saroj Pandey (BJP)
4. Janjgir-Champa (SC)	Kamla Patle (BJP)	Shrimati Kamla Devi Patle (BJP)
5. Kanker (ST)	Vikram Dev Usendi (BJP)	Sohan Patel (BJP)
6. Korba	Dr Banshilal Mahto Won (BJP)	Charan Das Mahant (INC)
7. Mahasamund	Chandu Lal Sahu (BJP) (Retained).	Chandu Lal Sahu (BJP)
8. Raigarh (ST)	Vishnu Deo Sai (BJP)	Vishnu Deo Sai (BJP)
9. Raipur	Ramesh Bais (BJP)	Ramesh Bais (BJP)
10. Rajnandgaon	Abhishek Singh (BJP)	Madhusudan Yadav (BJP)
11. Surguja (ST)	Kamalbhan Singh Marabi (BJP)	Murarilal Singh (BJP)

BJP=10/INC=1

The 2014 Lok Sabha elections in Chhattisgarh were a resounding victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which won 10 out of the 11 seats. The Indian National Congress (INC) managed to win only one seat. Other parties secured zero seats. Despite the emergence of regional parties in various parts of India in the 1990s, tribal communities continued to support the Congress party in large numbers. However, in the 2014 Lok Sabha election, the BJP surpassed the Congress in attracting a larger number of Scheduled Tribe (ST) voters. The BJP saw an increase of 13 percentage points in its vote share compared to the previous Lok Sabha elections, whereas the Congress saw a decline of 10 percentage points. Chhattisgarh — with a tribal population of 31 per cent gained good votes for BJP. The BJP's dominance was evident in the vote share, with the party securing 48.74% of the total votes, while the INC trailed behind with 38.37%. The BJP performed exceptionally well in tribal-dominated seats, winning 6 out of 7 seats, indicating a significant shift in the tribal vote bank towards the party.

The voter turnout in the 2014 elections was 69.39%, a significant increase of 14.10% from the previous election. This increase in turnout was largely attributed to the BJP's aggressive

campaign and the popularity of its prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi. The BJP's victory margin ranged from 1,217 to 2,35,911 votes across the constituencies, indicating a strong performance by the party. The INC's poor performance was attributed to various factors, including anti-incumbency, lack of strong leadership, and the party's inability to connect with the voters. The only seat won by the INC was Durg, where Tamradhwaj Sahu won by a narrow margin of 16,848 votes. Overall, the 2014 Lok Sabha elections in Chhattisgarh marked a significant shift in the state's political landscape, with the BJP emerging as the dominant force.

## 5. 2019 Lok Sabha Election Analysis

Constituency	Winner (Party)	Surpassed (Party)
1. Bastar (ST)	Deepak Baja (INC)	Dinesh Kashyap (BJP)
2. Bilaspur	Arun Sao (BJP)	Lakhan Singh Sahu (BJP)
3. Durg	Vijay Bhagel (BJP)	Tamradhwah Singh (INC)
4. Janjgir-Champa (SC)	Guharam Ajgalley (BJP)	Kamla Patle (BJP)
5. Kanker (ST)	Mohan Mandavi (BJP)	Vikram Dev Usendi (BJP)
6. Korba	Jyotsna Chandras (INC)	Dr Banshilal Mahto Won (BJP)
7. Mahasamund	Chunni Lal Sahu (BJP)	Chandu Lal Sahu (BJP).
8. Raigarh (ST)	Gomati Sai (BJP)	Vishnu Deo Sai (BJP)
9. Raipur	Sunil Kumar Soni (BJP)	Ramesh Bais (BJP)
10. Rajnandgaon	Santosh Pandey (BJP)	Abhishek Singh (BJP)
11. Surguja (ST)	Renuka Singh Saruta (BJP)	Kamalbhan Singh Marabi (BJP)

BJP=9/ INC=2

The 2019 Lok Sabha elections in Chhattisgarh saw a repeat of the 2014 verdict, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) winning 9 out of the 11 seats. The Indian National Congress (INC) won 2 seats, with a slight improvement in its performance compared to the previous election. The BJP's dominance was evident in the vote share, with the party securing 50.7% which it increased from 33% of the total votes, while the INC trailed behind with 40.9%. Other Parties such also contested on 11 sear securing zero votes. The BJP performed well in both tribal and non-tribal areas, indicating a strong hold on the state's electorate. Notably, the BJP's victory

margin increased in several seats, highlighting the party's growing popularity in the state. As the post-poll survey findings indicate, the BJP improved its performance across the social spectrum, except the Adivasis who seem to have stayed with the Congress. In particular, the BJP managed to push the Congress way behind among young voters (18-25 years of age), women, college-educated youth, upper castes, OBCs (despite having an OBC Chief Minister), Dalits and the urban voters. The 20 percentage point lead taken by the BJP over the Congress among women is particularly noteworthy. The INC's wins were limited to the Korba and Bastar seats, where Charan Das Mahant and Dipak Baij, respectively, emerged victorious. The 2019 elections also saw a significant increase in voter turnout, with 71.64% of the electorate casting their votes, a rise of 2.25 % from the previous election with male votes being 72.30% and female voters turning out to be 70.55%. Additionally, the BJP's strong performance can be attributed to its effective campaign, which focused on national security, development, and the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The INC, on the other hand, struggled to capitalize on the state's assembly election victory in 2018, failing to translate it into a Lok Sabha win.

**Past results**  
 The table lists the 2019 election winners, runners-up and their vote shares in the seven constituencies going to the polls in Chhattisgarh

Constituency	Party (winner)	Vote share	Party (runner-up)	Vote share
Bilaspur	BJP	52.47	Cong.	40.75
Durg	BJP	61.02	Cong.	32.86
Janjgir-Champa	BJP	45.91	Cong.	39.24
Korba	Cong.	46.03	BJP	43.72
Raigarh	BJP	48.76	Cong.	43.87
Raipur	BJP	60.01	Cong.	35.07
Surguja	BJP	51.82	Cong.	39.5

**6. Voting Pattern for Vidhan Sabha Seats**

The 2023 Chhattisgarh assembly elections revealed a significant setback for the Congress party, particularly among its candidates from privileged castes. Despite the party's strong advocacy for a caste-based census, all eight of its Brahmin candidates faced defeat. In total, 13 out of 15 Congress nominees from privileged castes lost their seats, including prominent figures like Deputy Chief Minister TS Singh Deo and cabinet ministers Ravindra Choubey and Jai Singh Agrawal. Political analysts suggest that the party's focus on wooing Other Backward Classes (OBC) may have backfired, alienating voters in both general and tribal reserved constituencies. Only two Congress candidates from privileged castes, Raghvendra Singh and Atal Shrivastav,

managed to secure victories. In the poll run-up, top Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and CM Bhupesh Baghel, had promised to conduct a caste census in Chhattisgarh if the party retained power in the state. However, Congress's pro-OBC stance, highlighted by promises of a caste-based census, seems to have divided the "upper caste" voters into a general category, leading to a significant shift in voter preferences, said R Krishna Das, a poll analyst.

In contrast, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) fielded 18 candidates from "upper castes" and emerged victorious in 16 seats, with five out of seven Brahmin candidates securing victories. The BJP's candidate selection and Hindutva plank struck a chord with voters, particularly in unreserved seats, where the party's appeal to Hindu identity and national security resonated deeply. Of the 29 OBC candidates of the Congress, 16 emerged victorious. On the other hand, 19 of the 31 OBC candidates fielded by the BJP won elections. Making deep inroads in Adivasi areas, the BJP won 17 of the 29 Assembly seats in the tribal belt in the 2023 Assembly election. After the election, the party gave the State its first tribal Chief Minister, Vishnu Deo Sai (ST). The State has over 33 per cent Adivasi population. In the past, Raman Singh (General) served as the State's Chief Minister for 15 years. In the 2023 State Assembly election, the BJP won 54 of the 90 Assembly seats, even though it contested without a chief ministerial face. It had a vote share of 46.27 per cent. The Congress won 35 seats, with a 42.23 percent vote share. The BJP's success in these areas can be attributed to its effective outreach programs and targeted development initiatives, which addressed the specific needs and concerns of tribal communities. The election also witnessed an increase in voter turnout in several constituencies, indicating heightened voter engagement and a sense of urgency among the electorate. The BJP's victory can be attributed to its ability to consolidate the OBC community and the dominant Brahmin community, while the Congress struggled to strike a balance in its appeal across diverse social segments, ultimately leading to its downfall.

## **7. Exit Poll and Result of 2024 General Elections**

The political landscape in Chhattisgarh for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections presents a complex interplay of strengths and challenges for both the BJP and Congress. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Chhattisgarh aims for a clean sweep of the state's 11 Lok Sabha seats, banking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity and the BJP-ruled state government's pro-farmer and women-centric schemes. In these constituencies, nationalism as a narrative has been dominant in these areas, but both the key players — BJP and Congress have attempted to add more issues to the mix. Congress faces the daunting task of making a comeback despite a beefed-up organisational setup in the state at the booth level. Charged up by Modi's call of 'Abki bar 400 par', the BJP, which won 54 seats in the 90-member Chhattisgarh assembly last year, has declared that it will bag all 11 Lok Sabha seats in the state. Allegations of scams on multiple fronts, differences among senior leaders and a swing of tribal votes in favour of the BJP snatched power from the Congress in the assembly polls last year.

The BJP holds a significant advantage due to Prime Minister Modi's enduring popularity, which played a crucial role in their recent assembly poll victory. While the BJP has tried to focus on topics like the Ram Temple, abrogation of Article 370 and India's "relative rise" globally with hyper-local issues like corruption allegations against the previous Congress government and the purported success of its schemes like Mahtari Vandan Yojana, the Congress hopes to improve its patchy electoral record in Lok Sabha elections with schemes like providing ₹1 lakh annually for eligible families and a social justice plank that the party is attempting elsewhere in the country.

Historically, BJP has performed well in the state's Lok Sabha elections, securing nine seats in 2019 despite losing the 2018 state polls. The current Vishnu Deo Sai government's efforts to fulfil 'Modi ki guarantee' promises, including financial aid to women and farmers, further bolster their position. However, the BJP faces challenges such as the absence of a strong local leader and criticism over national issues like inflation and unemployment. On the other hand, the Congress banks on the legacy of welfare schemes from their previous state government, the appeal of 'Chhattisgarhiyawad' (regional identity), and former CM Bhupesh Baghel's popularity as a local leader. Congress is also focused on its Nyay guarantees and accused the BJP of trying to change the Constitution and end reservation. In the tribal belts, its senior leaders also spoke about rights over 'Jal, Jungle and Jameen'. Their strengthened organisational structure down to the booth level is an asset. Yet, the party grapples with internal factionalism and allegations of scams against the Baghel administration.

This election, however, is drawing attention for reasons beyond the candidates themselves. First, Raigarh has been represented four times by current Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai of the BJP in the past. O.P. Choudhary, a powerful Minister in the Sai cabinet, also hails from Raigarh as does Devendra Pratap Singh, a member of the erstwhile Raigarh State royal family and was recently elected to the Rajya Sabha as BJP nominee. The party is also confident about Raigarh and Surguja (another reserved constituency for STs) due to its performance in last year's Assembly polls where it swept the Surguja region, winning all 14 seats. Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a public meeting in Surguja in which he reiterated his government's "commitment to tribal welfare".

From an electoral record point of view, Janjgir-Champa, here the Congress won all the Assembly segments in last year's State elections and has now fielded former Minister Shiv Kumar Dahariya against BJP's Kamlesh Jangde. Although the BJP has been consistently winning this seat since 2004, the Congress feels that its social justice plank might provide it an opening here.

In neighbouring Korba, sitting MP Jyotsna Mahant has been renominated by the Congress. Observers believe that by fielding Saroj Pandey, a senior State leader from the BJP, the party has given itself a better chance compared to the last elections. And while Korba is the pocket borough of Charan Das Mahant, Ms Mahant's husband and the Leader of Opposition in the Chhattisgarh Assembly, the MP herself is facing some questions due to her limited visits to the constituency in the past five years, say sources on the ground.



Major urban pockets such as the capital Raipur, Bilaspur and Durg, where the BJP has traditionally done well and almost swept the Assembly polls are also going to elections in this phase. It is in Raipur that Brijmohan Agrawal, State Minister and a veteran with around three decades of experience in the State Assembly, is contesting a parliamentary election for the first time and is up against Vikas Upadhyay, a former one-time MLA.

Former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel — who was focusing on Rajnandgaon where he is the candidate and where polling was held in the second phase — has now been more active in other seats. Despite him contesting from a different seat, his shadow looms large in his home turf of Durg where the BJP has fielded sitting MP Vijay Baghel — who lost to his relative, former CM Mr. Baghel from Patan Assembly segment last November — and is said to be ahead of Rajendra Sahu, his opponent from the Congress. In Bilaspur, the BJP has nominated Tokhan Sahu as their candidate from this place, while Devendra Yadav is the candidate from the Congress, but the former is reliant on the face of Mr. Modi to maintain its winning record.

This dynamic political scenario sets the stage for an intriguing electoral contest in Chhattisgarh. In the Exit Poll, it was predicted that there would be a clean sweep for the BJP as they would win 10 seats. It was expected that Congress would win 1 or 2 Seats from Jangir Champa or Korba. Jangir Champa because the SC population is in the majority and in the Vidhan Sabha Election out of 10 SC seats, Congress won 8 Seats. Also, Rahul Gandhi in his campaigns mentioned the agenda of changing the constitution has struck with the SC people. Speaking of Korba, Jyotsna's popularity could help Congress.

#### Final result

Constituency	Winner (Party)	Surpassed (Party)
1. Bastar (ST)	<b>Mahesh Kashyap (BJP)</b>	Deepak Baja (INC)
2. Bilaspur	<b>Tokhan Sahu (BJP)</b>	Arun Sao (BJP)
3. Durg	<b>Vijay Bhagel (BJP) (retained)</b>	Vijay Bhagel (BJP)
4. Janjgir-Champa (SC)	<b>Kamlesh Jandge (BJP)</b>	Guharam Ajgalley (BJP)
5. Kanker (ST)	<b>Bhojraj Nag (BJP)</b>	Mohan Mandavi (BJP)
6. Korba	<b>Jyotsna Chandras (INC)</b>	Jyotsna Chandras (INC)
7. Mahasamund	<b>Roop Kumari Choudhary (BJP)</b>	Chunni Lal Sahu (BJP)
8. Raigarh (ST)	<b>Radheshyam Rathiya(BJP)</b>	Gomati Sai (BJP)
9. Raipur	<b>Brijmohan Agrawal (BJP)</b>	Sunil Kumar Soni (BJP)
10. Rajnandgaon	<b>Santosh Pandey</b>	Santosh Pandey (BJP)

Constituency	Winner (Party)	Surpassed (Party)
	(BJP)(retained)	
11. Surguja	Chintamani Maharaj (BJP)	Renuka Singh Saruta (BJP)

BJP=10/INC=1

The Bharatiya Janata Party won 10 out of the total 11 Lok Sabha seats in Chhattisgarh with a vote share of 53.2% as the general election results. INC won only one seat from Korba with a vote share of 36.5%. Seats like Bilaspur, Durg, Surguja and Raigarh, as mentioned before, have been with the BJP for the past couple of decades. For other seats, the following analysis provides a look at each of Chhattisgarh's 11 Lok Sabha constituencies,

**a. Bastar (ST)**

The Bastar constituency, the contest for the Naxal-affected and reserved for Scheduled Tribe (ST) candidates, covering the districts of Bastar, Kondagaon, Narayanpur, and Kanker, had Shri Mahesh Kashyap (ST - Bhatra) of the BJP candidate and Shri. Kawasi Lakhma (ST) of the INC candidate. Mahesh Kashyap emerged victorious with 4,58,398 votes, defeating Kawasi Lakhma who secured 4,03,153 votes. Being former Minister Kawasi, lost from Bastar by a margin of 55,245 votes, a seat that the Congress had won the last time as did former Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu from Mahasamund. This time 48.50 percent of the voters have used their franchise.

**b. Bilaspur**

The contest in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur Lok Sabha seat was fierce. The Bilaspur constituency saw Tokhan Sahu of the BJP emerge victorious with 7,24,937 votes, while Devendra Yadav of the INC secured 560379 votes. The BJP's margin of victory was 1,64,558 votes. Bilaspur Lok Sabha seat recorded 60.05 per cent voter turnout. Whereas in the 2019 general election, 64.36 per cent of votes were cast in this seat.

**c. Durg**

Durg constituency, one of the high-profile seats of Chhattisgarh, saw Vijay Baghel of the BJP emerge victorious with 9,56,497 votes, while Rajendra Sahu of the INC secured 5,18,271 votes. The BJP's margin of victory was 4,38,226 votes. Durg Lok Sabha seat recorded a voter turnout of 67.91 per cent.

**d. Janjgir-Champa (SC)**

In the Janjgir-Champa constituency, the only seat reserved for Scheduled Caste (SC) candidates, (which covers the districts of Janjgir, Champa, Sakti, Jaijaipur, Pamgarh, and Durg). Shri Kamlesh Jangde of the BJP won with 678199 votes, defeating former minister Shivkumar Dahariya of the INC who secured 6,18,199 votes. The BJP's margin of victory was 60,000 votes. Here too, the Assembly trends were reversed as the Congress had won all the Assembly segments

in last year's polls. Janjgir-Champa Lok Sabha seat recorded a voter turnout of 63.08 per cent. Whereas in the 2019 general election, 65.58 per cent of votes were cast here.

**e. Kanker (ST)**

In the Kanker constituency, (Reserved for ST candidates, covers the districts of Kanker, Narayanpur, and Kondagaon) Bhojrag Nag of the BJP won with 5,97,624 votes, while Biresh Thakur of the INC secured 5,95,740 votes. The BJP's margin of victory was only 1884 votes. Key castes include ST (58.2%), OBC (21.1%), and SC (12.5%). The Congress has challenged the result in Kanker seat and complained to the State Election Commission against the polling officer for not accepting the application for recounting and not counting nearly 1,800 postal ballots. Notably, even in the last election, Mr. Thakur had lost by a margin of less than 7,000 votes and this time, over 18,000 voters chose the NOTA option. This seat recorded a voter turnout of 74.92 per cent and In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, it recorded a voter turnout of 74.27 per cent.

**f. Korba**

In the Korba constituency, which is a citadel of senior Congress leader and Ms Mahant's husband Charan Das Mahant, who is the current Leader of the Opposition in the Chhattisgarh Assembly, Jyotsna Mahant of INC won with 5,70,182 votes, while Saroj Pandey of the BJP secured 5,26,899 votes. The INC's margin of victory was 43,283 votes. While the "outsider" tag is understood to have dented the electoral prospects of Ms Pandey, who hails from Durg, it is also expected to have worked against several Congress candidates, including Mr Sahu, Mr Baghel and Devendra Yadav, a sitting MLA, who lost from Bilaspur. All these Congress leaders hail from Durg but contested elsewhere.

**g. Mahasamund**

The Mahasamund constituency (covers the districts of Mahasamund, Bilaigarh, Saraipali, and Basna) which the BJP has held since 2009, the saffron party has fielded a fresh face, Roop Kumari Choudhary who emerged victorious with 7,03,659 votes, while the Congress has nominated a seasoned politician from the dominant and polarised Sahu community, Tamradhwaj Sahu who secured 5,58,203 votes. The BJP's margin of victory was 1,45,456 votes. The community is said to be miffed with the BJP over ticket distribution. Mahasamund recorded a voter turnout of 71.42 per cent whereas In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, it recorded a voter turnout of 74.51 per cent.

**h. Raigarh (ST)**

The Raigarh constituency, also reserved for ST candidates, comprises the districts of Raigarh, Sarangarh, Kharsia, Dharamjaigarh, Lailunga, and Manendragarh. Radheshyam Rathiya of the BJP won with 8,08,275 votes, while Dr Menka Devi Singh of the INC secured 5,67,884 votes. Ms. Singh comes from the Sarangarh royal family and her late father Nareshchandra Singh was a noted figure in undivided Madhya Pradesh, even serving as the Chief Minister. Even having an influential background, BJP took the victory with 2,40,391 votes. This seat recorded a voter

turnout of 77.02 per cent whereas In the 2019 elections, 77.78 per cent of votes were cast. The highest voter turnout in this phase was recorded in this seat.

**i. Raipur**

From the Raipur constituency, the capital of Chhattisgarh (which covers the districts of Raipur, Raipur Rural, Abhanpur, and Arang) BJP candidate and State Minister Brijmohan Agarwal won with 10,50,351 votes, defeating Congress MLA Vikas Upadhyay who secured 4,75,066 votes. The BJP's margin of victory was 5,75,285 votes, one of the highest in the country. The Raipur Lok Sabha seat recorded 62.71 percent voting whereas, In the 2019 general elections, Raipur seat had a voter turnout of 66 per cent.

**j. Rajnandgaon**

In the Rajnandgaon constituency, Santosh Pandey hailing from BJP won with 7,12,057 votes, while Bhupesh Baghel, INC secured 6,67,646 votes. Mr Baghel lost by a margin of over 47,411 votes, a seat where the Congress performed better than the BJP in the Assembly Election winning five of its eight assembly segments back then. He, however, did manage to shrink the margin of defeat for Congress significantly from last time. The last time the Congress had won the Rajnandgaon seat was in the 2007 bypoll, about 17 years ago. Rajnandgaon recorded a voter turnout of 73.90 per cent whereas In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Rajnandgaon recorded a voter turnout of 76.04 per cent.

**k. Surguja (ST)**

The Sarguja constituency, reserved for Scheduled Tribe (ST) candidates, covers the districts of Sarguja, Jashpur, Kunkuri, Pathalgaon, Lundra, and Ambikapur. Chinntamani Maharaj of the BJP emerged victorious with 7,13,200 votes, defeating Shashi Singh Koram of the INC who secured 6,48,378 votes. The BJP won by a margin of 64,822 votes. Surguja Lok Sabha seat recorded a voter turnout of 75.26 per cent. Whereas in the 2019 general elections, 77.30 per cent votes were cast here.

The BJP, which won the Assembly election held last November, also improved its tally by one seat compared to 2019. After the results, the losses that the BJP suffered in other States, mainly Uttar Pradesh, leading to a decline in its overall tally, resonated in the celebrations that were not as emphatic as after the Assembly election results. State Congress President Deepak Baij said the election result in Chhattisgarh was not according to their expectations. “We expected better results. We are disappointed with the election results in the State, but not disheartened. Our workers and leaders fought a good fight. In future also, we will continue to fight for public concerns as a strong opposition in the State. The Congress party is committed to strongly raising the voice of the people,” he said.

**Reasons**

This election, which saw a series of anti-Naxal operations in the State's mineral-rich tribal areas, the BJP relied on the Modi wave and the construction of the Ram temple at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, while the Congress hammered on the BJP's alleged plan to change the Constitution

and end reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes failed to gain significant traction. Additionally, the BJP's focus on national security and development issues resonates with voters. In the Sarguja and Bastar belts of the State, which are two of the four seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes, the Congress' narrative on the BJP's "400 paar" slogan and its renewed thrust on its promise to give women Rs.15,000 annually under the Grah Lakshmi Scheme as a counter to the BJP's Mahtari Vandana Yojana, which promises Rs.12,000 a year to married women, had resonance on the ground.

## **8. Conclusion**

Based on a thorough analysis, it can be confidently concluded that the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Chhattisgarh were a significant contest, primarily between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress (INC). The BJP has historically dominated the state and is likely to continue. The BJP's strong presence in Chhattisgarh is largely due to its national leadership and the appeal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which has enabled the party to leverage central schemes and focus on development, thereby winning over a significant portion of the electorate. The INC faces significant challenges in winning seats despite having a substantial voter base. The party needs to improve its strategy to convert its vote share into more seats, particularly by addressing the caste dynamics and local issues that influence voting patterns. While caste factors play a role in Chhattisgarh's electoral landscape, they are often overshadowed by broader national and developmental issues. The BJP has been successful in consolidating votes across different demographic groups, including tribals, OBCs, and upper castes General. The BJP's consistent success in Chhattisgarh can be attributed to its series of development schemes aimed at various sections of society. These schemes have helped the party secure a significant voting share, often exceeding 50% in many constituencies. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, for instance, the BJP won 10 out of 11 seats in Chhattisgarh, with a vote share of 49.7%, largely due to the party's strong organisational presence. The INC managed to secure only one seat, with a vote share of 39.1%, indicating the INC's struggle to compete with the BJP's national appeal and local organisational strength. Given the historical trends and the BJP's continued strong presence in Chhattisgarh, it is highly unlikely that the INC or any other party will be able to significantly challenge the BJP's dominance after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Therefore, the INC and other opposition parties should carefully consider these factors when devising their strategies for the upcoming election.

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