



ELECTORAL DYNAMICS IN THE STATES OF INDIA

Edited by
Sandeep Shastri, Ashutosh Kumar
and Yatindra Singh Sisodia



ROUTLEDGE



Electoral Dynamics in the States of India

This volume presents a holistic picture of the electoral process in Indian states and the return of the incumbent BJP to power. Drawing on the 2019 elections, it presents the ground-level data to understand various aspects of elections: the nature of campaigning, caste, class and identity politics, electoral issues, poll strategies of different parties in the fray, electoral issues, electoral verdicts, the contestants, the leadership factor, and the formation of government, among other details.

The empirically rich essays in this volume underline the determinants of electoral behaviour by looking into the correlation between the background variables of voters and their voting choices. They also compare and contrast the 2019 election verdicts from the earlier elections held in the states under study.

Presenting a longer view of Indian state politics, this book will be an essential reference for scholars and researchers of politics, especially political processes, elections, political participation, governance, and South Asian studies. It will also be of great interest to bureaucrats, think tanks, and policymakers.

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13 Goa

BJP's electoral slide but political triumph

Alaknanda Shringare

Introduction

Since 1999 with the emergence of the BJP as a significant player in Goa, the state's electoral politics is marked by a visible bipolar competition between the two national parties, the BJP and the INC. If one reviews the state politics in Goa over the last decade, one can see the rise of BJP and the weakening of the INC. The state, which started its political journey with regional parties – the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and the United Goans Party (UGP) – witnessed change in the nature of party competition after it attained statehood in 1987. Though the INC was able to make some inroads into Goa's politics in 1977, the MGP was still the major player. The BJP made its entry into Goa's politics in the 1990s and soon became a key player in the politics of the state. With the emergence of the BJP, political power in Goa has alternated between the INC and BJP-led coalitions. Both the national parties emerged at the cost of regional parties – the INC by taking over the vote base of the UGP and the BJP made inroads into the vote base of the MGP. This was a major shift in the voting pattern of the voters who traditionally supported either the MGP or the UGP. In a state, which started its political journey with regional parties, the MGP and the UGP, where both these parties to some extent curtailed the elite power and majoritarian control over politics, the rise of a communal party like the BJP is a puzzle. What benefitted the rise of the BJP in Goa was corruption within the INC and the polarisation of INC votes due to defections.

2019 Lok Sabha polls

The Lok Sabha polls from Goa saw the restoring of the old status quo with the BJP retaining its North Goa seat and the INC wresting the South Goa seat from the BJP. The sharing of the two seats between the two national parties restores the earlier balance of power in Goa politics and marks a clear side-lining of the state-based parties. Contextualising this result by tracing the rise of the BJP in the politics of Goa would be in place and relevant.

Emergence of the BJP

From the 1989 assembly election in which BJP could not secure a single seat to becoming a party with a clear majority in 2012, the BJP has been largely benefitted by defections from the INC and dissatisfaction with its performance. Two major landmarks for the BJP in the politics of Goa were the 1999 and 2012 assembly elections. In the 1994 assembly elections, in alliance with the MGP, it won four seats. In the 1999 assembly elections and Lok Sabha elections held just three months after the assembly elections, the BJP was on its own and clearly benefitted from the eroding vote base of the MGP (Editorial 2000:3785) which won only four seats. Though the BJP won only ten seats in 1999 assembly elections it had made inroads in Goa as its vote share had risen from 9% to 26% (Sundaram 1999:2984). In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP made a significant mark in the politics of Goa by winning both the Lok Sabha seats. It is after a gap of almost three decades a Hindu candidate had won the South Goa seat. Traditionally, a Christian candidate won the South Goa seat as this constituency has the presence of large number of Christian population. It was in 1962 that a Hindu candidate was elected from this constituency to the Lok Sabha. It is believed that Churchill Alemao's (minister of tourism) angry outbursts against the priest at the Navelim church and a mass movement by people from predominantly a Catholic assembly constituency in South Goa against the setting up of an allegedly polluting unit, Meta Strips, swung some Catholic votes against the INC (Sundaram 1999:2984).

The long efforts of the BJP to form government in Goa became a reality in the year 2000 when by engineering a split within the INC, Manohar Parrikar became the chief minister. The backdrop for this was in the 1999 assembly elections. In these polls, the INC won a decisive majority. Soon after the government formation dissidence grew in the party and to be sure of his strength, Luisinho Faleiro engineered a split in the MGP. Ramakant Khalap of the MGP, along with one more member joined, the INC. This act created internal dissensions in the INC. The BJP used the occasions to its advantage and collaborated with the rebel Congressmen, Francisco Sardinha, who dislodged the three-month government of Luizinho Faleiro and formed the government with the support of the BJP. Soon the BJP withdrew its support to his government. This time around, the BJP engineered another split in the INC and four INC MLAs crossed over to support the BJP to form its first government in the state. The BJP received additional support from the MGP and independents.

In the 2002 assembly elections, by winning 17 seats, the BJP once again formed government with the help of two members each from the United Goans Democratic Party (UGDP) and the MGP and one independent. However, the government did not complete its full term as three of its party members resigned from the party and won the by-elections on the INC ticket. By winning four out of five seats in the by-elections, the

INC formed the government with the help of the MGP in the year 2005. Between 2005 and 2012, the BJP was in the opposition. In the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, taking over the MGP voters, the BJP once again won the North Goa seat but could not retain South Goa. An alliance with the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) helped the INC to win the South Goa seat as the INC votes were not divided. National Election Studies (NES) 2004 survey data shows that eight of every ten Christians voted for INC alliance, while two thirds of the Hindus voted for the BJP (Rodrigues et al. 2004:5533).

The 2012 assembly elections gave the BJP its biggest victory in Goa. It came to power with full majority. Corruption and family raj within the INC led to a drift of the traditional vote base of the INC towards the BJP. The BJP for the first time was able to make inroads into the Christian vote base of the INC in South Goa. Apart from the dissatisfaction with the INC, the BJP benefitted from the presence of political parties which acted as spoilers for the INC. These included the UGDP and Goa Vikas Party (GVP) formed by Mickky Pacheco, a political heavy weight from South Goa, both of whom fought against the INC. UGDP and GVP divided INC votes in some of the assembly constituencies and helped the BJP to improve its chances.

In the run up to the 2012 assembly election, Mathany Saldana¹ joined the BJP, which increased the winning prospect of the BJP. The 2012 assembly elections also saw the highest voter turnout ever in Goa (83%) in which the BJP-MGP alliance emerged victorious with a 41% vote share bagging 24 seats in the assembly. The BJP on its own won 21 out of 28 seats it contested. After winning a majority in the assembly election of 2012, the BJP was confident of its victory in 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

2014 Lok Sabha elections and the subsequent state assembly polls

In the 2014 election, the main contest for the BJP was in South Goa, which traditionally voted for Christian candidates. In South Goa, the INC decided to give the party ticket to Reginaldo Lourenco, the sitting MLA from Curtorim. The anti-incumbency factor worked strongly against the sitting INC MP from South Goa. Gauging this INC decided to give ticket to Reginaldo. Reginaldo was a new and clean face of the INC. The BJP redesigned its strategy in South Goa to handle the Reginaldo effect. What helped the BJP's victory in South Goa was internal bickering within the INC. There were two people within the INC who were disappointed with the decision of the party to field Reginaldo – Churchill Alemao and the sitting MP of South Goa, Francisco Sardinha. Both decided to put up a contest against the INC candidate. Shalom, son of Sardinha, decided to contest the Lok Sabha elections of 2014 after his father, Francisco Sardinha, was denied the South Goa ticket. Churchill Alemao, a strong political leader of Salcete, resigned from INC, joined

Trinamool Congress, and decided to contest the election after sitting MP Francisco Sardinha and daughter Valanka, who was also the president of Youth Congress of Goa, were denied party ticket for Lok Sabha election. Valanka also stayed out of INC campaigns. Cracking a whip on anti-party activities, the INC suspended four office bearers of Goa Pradesh Youth Congress (GPYC) as they were found campaigning for the Trinamool Congress candidate. Churchill Alemao later welcomed the expelled Youth Congress members to join his party and went on to add that he would welcome all those expelled from the INC. The challenges for the INC in South Goa did not stop here, Mauvin Gudioho INC MLA of Dabolim decided not to campaign for Reginaldo and started indirectly campaigning for the BJP candidate. The INC proved to be its own enemy in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Being a INC bastion for a long time, Christian-dominated Salcete held the key to win the South Goa seat. Parrikar has emphasised on his 'mission Salcete' to win South Goa. Mission Salcete is 'an exercise aimed to bringing the Salcete minorities closure to the BJP' (*The Goan*, 2019). Christian-dominated Salcete held the key to win the South Goa seat. The BJP was confident of winning South Goa seat as the MLAs of Salcete were supporting the BJP. In South Goa, and especially in Salcete, the BJP avoided making any mention of Modi as the PM candidate but focussed their campaign on Parrikar's developmental record.

With the divided INC, the then independent MLA, and Reginaldo's friend, Vijay Sardesai, mainly supported Reginaldo's campaign in South Goa. Vijay Sardesai, who kept the opposition alive against the Parrikar government, was strongly supporting Reginaldo. Except for the defectors, the INC leaders were united in South Goa and putting their weight behind the campaign for Reginaldo. Street corner meetings, road shows, door-to-door campaigning, and public meetings were organised.

What also increased the prospect of the BJP's winning in South Goa was the support extended by Goa Vikas Party (GVP) and independent MLAs of South Goa. GVP leader Mickky Pacheco's support helped the BJP win support in his Nuvem constituency, one of the strongholds of the INC. The party had received support from independents like Avertano Furtado from Navelim and Benjamin Silva from Velim constituency, which also helped it to percolate amongst the Catholic community vote base (*Herald*, 7 April 2014a). Benaolim MLA Caitu Silva was also campaigning for the BJP's South Goa candidate. With the help of these MLAs, the BJP was making an effort to win a constituency dominated by Christians. The BJP also reached out to the Panchas, Sarapancha's, religious heads, village, or ward heads and through them tried to reach out to the people. Political parties used mobile messages and social media for their campaigns. Voice and text messages, MMS, jingles, YouTube clips, Facebook, and Twitter were widely used by the political parties either to appeal to the voters or to highlight each other failures.

The results of the 2014 Lok Sabha election revealed that by polling 48% vote share, the BJP candidate Narendra Sawaikar emerged victorious in South Goa. Though the BJP won South Goa seat, it lost Salcete to the INC. Despite having the support of MLAs from Salcete, the BJP was not able to win over the voters of Salcete in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

Just two years after the Congress was decimated in the 2012 assembly polls, Velim, Curtorim, Nuvem, Benaulim, and Navelim led from the front to give the Congress the lead for party candidate Reginaldo Laurencio against the backdrop of sustained campaign by the BJP to make inroads in the minority stronghold with the support of its party allies Mickky Pacheco, Caitu Silva, Avertano Furtado, and Benjamin D'Silva.

(*Herald*, 17 May 2014c)

This was also an indication to the BJP that the Christian voters who supported the BJP in 2012 assembly election have moved away from the BJP in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

What helped the BJP to win South Goa were the voters from mining areas who voted for it in 2014 Lok Sabha elections with the hope that the BJP would find a solution to the mining problem. The BJP registered a lead in the mining belt of Quepem, Sanvordem, Curchorem, Sanguem, and Bicholim (*Herald*, 18 May 2014d). Parrikar during his campaign assured support to the mining dependent people. He made a provision of Rs. 150 crores for the rehabilitation of mining-affected people and assured that the amount will be increased to Rs. 600 crores if the BJP government comes to power at the centre. The BJP also promised to create jobs through Mopa airport, help locals secure jobs in central government, and regularise contract positions.

The BJP has registered an overwhelming victory with 58% vote share from North Goa. Keeping in mind the caste equation in North Goa, the INC decided to give the ticket to Ravi Naik who belonged to the Bhandari community with the hope to dent Shripad Naik's vote base who also belonged to Bhandari community. 'OBCs constitute 26 percent of total population of Goa and Bhandari community represents 61 percent the total OBCs. Out of the total OBC population 71 percent are in North Goa' (goanews 2014). The BJP was sure of its victory in North Goa. Despite winning by a small margin of around 7,000 votes in 2009 Lok Sabha elections, riding on the Modi wave, Shripad Naik won the North Goa seat. Some of the biggest leads for the BJP in North Goa came from MGP-dominated areas.

Thus the results of 2014 Lok Sabha elections were an early indication that the BJP was slowly losing South Goa. In 2017 assembly elections, the BJP's seat share has been reduced to 13 seats while the INC won 17 seats. The INC party's major victory came from South Goa where it won ten seats compared to four in 2012 assembly elections. The major defeat for the BJP was from North Goa where it won just 8 seats compared to 12 in 2012

assembly election. In 2014 Lok Sabha election, the BJP won a large number of votes in the MGP constituencies. The breaking of an alliance with the MGP costs the BJP heavily in North Goa. The MGP broke its alliance with the BJP just before the 2017 assembly elections. Mauvin Godinho, MLA of the INC who supported the BJP in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, joined the BJP. The MGP was not in support of Godinho joining the BJP as it felt that Dabolim was an MGP seat and as an ally of the MGP, the BJP should not allow Godinho to join the party. The RSS faction led by Subhash Velingkar, who fought on the medium of instruction issue, resulted in the formation of the Goa Suraksha Manch (GSM), which contested election with the sole aim of defeating the BJP, also to some extent denting the BJP's prospects in North Goa. Earlier, the BJP during 2012 assembly election campaign promised that it will review the policy of extending grants to English medium primary schools. Once in power it continued grants to the English medium school despite demand by Bharatiya Bhasha Suraksha Manch (BBSM), led by Velingkar, to stop all the grants. This led to a revolt by Velingkar who formed his own party.

With the entry of new parties such as Goa Forward Party (GFP), GSM, and Aam Aadami Party (AAP) in the wake of 2017 assembly elections, the electoral politics of Goa looked more volatile. This however did not significantly damage the vote share of either the BJP or the INC. The BJP with 32% vote share won 13 seats while the INC with 28% vote share won 17 seats. The vote share of both the parties declined by 2% compared to the 2012 assembly polls. In 2017 assembly elections, the MGP was the only party which registered an increase in its vote share from 6.72% in 2012 assembly election to 11.27%. The BJP contested on 37 seats and extended support to three independents in Christian-dominated Salcete. All the three independents it supported were defeated. Thus, in the 2017 assembly elections, the BJP not only lost Christian votes from South Goa but also lost Hindu votes from North Goa. Catholic candidates formed a large chunk of the 13 BJP MLAs of whom 7 were Catholics. In Cumbarjua, Dabolim, and Bicholim, the BJP gave ticket to former INC candidates who won on the saffron ticket.

Despite the INC being the party with large number of seats, the BJP formed government with the support of the GFP and the MGP. A section of people in Goa felt betrayed by the GFP, which won three out of four seats; it contested mainly on its anti-BJP stance but soon after the election results were announced, aligned with the BJP to form a government. Vijai Sardesai, leader of GFP, said that the alliance with the BJP was in the larger interest of the state. After extending his complete support to the INC candidate from South Goa in 2014 Lok Sabha election, Sardesai was waiting to form a pre-poll alliance with the INC. The INC kept both NCP and GFP waiting till the last moment, as a result the NCP and GFP decided to fight the polls on their own.

The development, which took place between 2017 and 2019, left one to believe that the BJP was much like the INC in Goa. Soon after

the government formation by the BJP in 2017, one of the INC MLAs, Vishwajit Rane, resigned from the INC and joined the BJP. As a reward, he was inducted into the cabinet and made health minister, the portfolio that he was holding during the INC government. On the eve of 2019 Lok Sabha elections, two more INC MLAs from Mandrem and Shiroda resigned from the INC and joined the BJP. Such acts of defection also demonstrated the candidates' hold over their constituency. People have been rewarding them by re-electing them once again from the same constituency despite changing their party loyalties. Thus, without any fear of losing the election, candidates were switching their party loyalties and again getting elected from the same constituency this time on different party ticket. In a major setback to the INC in Goa, in July 2019, 10 out of the 15 MLAs of the INC joined the BJP along with the leader of opposition. With the strength of the INC in the assembly being reduced to 5 and that of the BJP to 27 MLAs, one could notice how different was the party composition as compared to the time when the 2017 assembly election results were announced. To induct the new defectors, CM Pramod Sawant reshuffled the portfolios. Vijai Sardesai who remained loyal to the BJP during the 2019 Lok Sabha election was sacked along with three other ministers.

Change in the vote base of the parties!

The analysis of the Lokniti-CSDS NES data from 2009 to 2019 of Lok Sabha elections reveals that in the last ten years, the caste-wise voting pattern remained almost unchanged. As Goa was not part of the 2014 NES survey, a question from the 2019, 'Which party did you vote for in 2014 Lok Sabha elections held five years ago?', is used to understand the voting behaviour. An examination of the data shows that a majority of the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) form the traditional vote bank of the BJP while Scheduled Castes (SCs) in Goa preferred to vote for the INC. SCs support for the INC is more pronounced in South Goa. The support for the INC among the SCs increased from a little less than half (46%) in 2009 to close to two thirds (63%) in 2019 Lok Sabha elections (Table 13.1). While there is a gradual rise in the ST and OBC votes for the BJP, it touched 70% in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. As per 2011 census, SCs constitute 1.74% of Goa's population, ST 10.23% (Census, 2011), and OBC 26.26% (goanews 2014).

In the last ten years the BJP has consolidated the Hindu vote. Yet the state is not only about the Hindu vote. Goa has a sizable number of Christian voters and a visible presence of Muslim voters. As per the official data Hindu's form 66.08% of Goa's population, Christians 25.10%, and Muslims 8.33% (Statistical Handbook of Goa 2019:17). Without the support of the Christian and Muslim communities who together form around one thirds of the population (33%), the BJP would find it difficult to win

Table 13.1 Caste-Wise Voting Pattern

<i>Party Voted</i>													
<i>Caste</i>	<i>INC</i>	<i>BJP</i>			<i>Others</i>			<i>No Response</i>					
		2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019
SC	46	50	63	27	12	37	27	0	0	0	-	37	-
ST	33	41	26	67	39	70	0	0	4	4	-	20	-
OBC	44	25	25	52	56	70	5	0	3	3	-	18	-
Others	48	34	49	42	36	44	11	0	3	3	-	30	-

Note: All figures are in percentage form.

Source: NES Post-Poll Goa 2009 and 2019.

N (2009): 368; N (2014): 555; N (2019): 565

elections in Goa. Hindus in Goa have traditionally voted for the BJP while a majority of the Christians and Muslims have supported the INC (Table 13.2). This divide can also be noticed in the two parliamentary seats of Goa with North Goa – consisting of large Hindu population, generally voting for Hindu candidate – and South Goa – having a sizable number of Christian population, having Catholic candidate with an exception of 1999 and 2014 Lok Sabha elections. These exceptions are the times when voters are either not happy with the performance of the INC or the votes of the INC got divided with other parties.

As mentioned earlier, Salcete holds the key to winning South Goa. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the major battle was in South Goa. 'Home to nearly half of the 5.44 lakhs South Goa electorate – around 2.24 lakhs to be precise – Salcete has been a INC borough over the years' (*Herald*, 11 April 2014b). In the 2012 assembly polls, the INC lost in Salcete one of its strongholds in South Goa. The Christian voters moved away from the INC mainly due to corruption and dissatisfaction among the Catholic communities over the income tax raids against the Catholic priest of Velim. While the cadre-based BJP has not been known to give tickets liberally to minority candidates in other states, in Goa the party's strategic social engineering in 2012 to woo Catholic voters appears to have worked in their favour (*Times of India* 2017). It was believed that Parrikar, with his mission Salcete, made inroads into the Christian votes of South Goa, which was considered to be the bastion of the INC. Parrikar embarked upon mission Salcete on the eve of 2004 Lok Sabha elections. However, the mission did not yield result in 2004, but Parrikar did not abandon the mission and it yielded the result in 2012. What benefitted the BJP to make inroads into Catholic-dominated constituencies was a strategy to support independent candidates from Catholic communities to divide the INC vote. These independents were later inducted into Parrikar's cabinet after the 2012 assembly elections.

The Christian community of Salcete, which had supposedly backed the BJP in 2012, was the decisive voter for the BJP in South Goa for winning the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP was confident of winning Salcete once again as the BJP's South Goa candidate Narendra Sawaiker received encouraging response at public meetings organised in Salcete. Majority of the MLAs from Salcete also threw their weight behind the BJP. The INC was also completely banking on Christian votes mainly from Salcete. 'Defeat communal forces' was the major appeal of Reginaldo in South Goa. He held the 'Secularism and peace yatra' in South Goa, which was supported by the Youth Congress and ex-ministers. The people of South Goa very well received his yatra. He gathered huge crowd for his campaign meetings. The last minute advisory issued by the church asking the Catholic population not to vote for communal politics was believed to have dented the BJP's prospects, especially in South Goa. Though the South Goa seat was won by the BJP, it lost Salcete voters who supported the BJP in 2012 assembly elections.

Table 13.2 Religion-Wise Voting Pattern

Party Voted		INC			BJP			Others			No Response		
Caste		2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019	2009	2014	2019
Hindu		34	23	28	58	52	68	8	0	3	-	25	-
Muslim		83	77	90	16	4	3	0	0	6	-	17	-
Christian		74	47	77	10	9	7	20	0	16	-	45	-
Sikh		100	0	0	-	0	100	-	0	0	-	-	-

Note: All figures are in percentage form.

Source: NES Post-Poll Goa 2009 and 2019.

N (2009): 381; N (2014): 557; N (2019): 565

When we look at the voting pattern of the religious communities separately for the two constituencies of Goa for 2019 Lok Sabha elections, we observe that North Goa is in sync with the old trend but South Goa witnessed a shift of sizable number of Christian voters towards the AAP. The margin of victory for the INC in South Goa would have been more if AAP was not in the fray. With just a 3% vote share AAP hardly had any impact on election results but in South Goa it managed to pull a large number of Christian voters towards AAP (Table 13.3). More than the party it is the AAP's popular candidate Elvis Gomes who attracted the Christian voters.

2019 Lok Sabha elections

Between 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections things have changed drastically for the BJP in Goa. The 2017 assembly election could have been a point of reflection for the party. It had earlier won the 2012 assembly elections with majority. The BJP was the first party after long time to win majority in the state. Leadership factors were an added advantage for the party. The popularity of Modi at the national level and Parrikar in the state benefitted the BJP in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The 2019 Lok Sabha election was seen as the testing ground for the BJP in Goa as it was for the first time the party went to the polls without Parrikar. The internal bickering among the alliance partners just before the elections led to the MGP breaking its alliance from the ruling BJP. Along with the Lok Sabha election, by-elections were declared for the three constituencies of Panaji, Shiroda, and Mapusa. The MGP wanted to contest both the Lok Sabha constituencies as well as

Table 13.3 Religious Communities by Party Voted

North Goa	Party Voted			
	INC	BJP	AAP	Others
Hindus	21	77	0	2
Muslims	90	0	10	0
Christians	76	17	0	7
South Goa	Party Voted			
	INC	BJP	AAP	Others
Hindus	34	63	0	3
Muslims	91	4	5	0
Christians	71	3	25	1

Note: All figures are rounded to the nearest percentage.

N: 600

Source: NES Post-Poll Goa 2019.

the by-elections, especially Shiroda constituency. There was a pressure on the MGP not to field its candidates for these elections.

The death of Parrikar on 17 March 2019 led to new political developments in the state. The first challenge for the BJP was to select a chief ministerial candidate who could hold the alliance partners together and was acceptable to all. In continuation of its support to the BJP-led coalition, the MGP was promised the Deputy CM position and cabinet positions. Sudin Dhavalikar agreed to the proposal only after Nitin Gadkari came down to Goa to convince him. But the very next day Dhavalikar refused the proposal and decided to contest both the Lok Sabha and assembly elections. Meanwhile the BJP was able to engineer a split within the MGP and two of its MLAs switched party and joined the BJP. Sudin Dhavalikar was left alone in the MGP. Sudin Dhavalikar was also dropped from the cabinet hours after MGP MLA Dipak Pawaskar and Goa tourism minister Manohar Ajgaonkar broke away from the MGP and merged its legislative wing with the BJP (*India Today* 2019). After being meted this humiliating treatment, the MGP withdrew its support to the BJP-led coalition government. However on the pretext of lack of time to plan the campaign strategy, the MGP later decided not to contest the Lok Sabha seat but extended support to the INC candidate from South Goa. The MGP breaking its alliance with the BJP proved to work to the advantage of the INC in South Goa.

The 2019 Lok Sabha election once again restored the old power equation in Goa with the North Goa seat won by the BJP and South Goa by the INC. The BJP lost the South Goa seat to the INC by a slim margin of 9,755 votes while the BJP continued its victory in North Goa with its candidate Shripad Naik winning the Panaji seat consecutively for the fifth time. Though the margin of victory has been reduced, Shripad Naik was able to muster the support of significant number of voters (57%) in the North Goa constituency.

The death of Manohar Parrikar was believed to have damaged the BJP's prospects in Goa. But the post-poll data indicates that more than the leadership factors, regional factors determined voters' choice of the party in the 2019 Lok Sabha election (Shringare 2019). Neither the Modi factor nor the death of Parrikar had a serious impact on the voters. When asked 'how important was the issue of death of Manohar Parrikar when they voted in this election', close to six of every ten (58%) respondents said it was not an important issue for them (Table 13.4). To examine the impact of the Modi factor on the voting behaviour, respondents were asked 'whether their preference for the party voted would have changed if Narendra Modi was not the PM candidate of the BJP/NDA in this Lok Sabha election'. It is found that more than half the respondents (55%) said that it would have made no difference to their choice of voting.

The NES Post-Poll data indicates that it was not the leadership factor but the mining issue that adversely affected the BJP's prospects in South Goa. In 2014, the BJP had won South Goa on the promise that it will find

Table 13.4 Importance of the Issue of the Death of Manohar Parrikar while Voting

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Important	35
Not important	58
Can't say	4
No response	3

Note: All figures are rounded to the nearest percentage.

N: 603

Source: NES Post-Poll Goa 2019.

a solution to the ban on mining. Mining activities have been totally banned in Goa from March 2018 and have made it a major issue. The BJP leadership, both at the state and centre, promised to find a solution to the mining issue but never delivered on their promises. The Goa Mining Peoples' Front (GMPF), fighting for the cause of mining-affected people, made an appeal to the voters not to vote for the BJP. The NES Post-Poll data indicates that close to half the respondents (48%) were in favour of lifting the ban on mining activities. If we compare these responses separately for North and South Goa (Table 13.5), we find an overwhelming number of voters from South Goa (84%) in favour of lifting the ban. The ban on mining became a determining factor for the voters while voting.

The Table 13.6 indicates that a large number of voters who have been adversely affected by the ban on mining preferred to vote for the INC. The support for the INC over ban on mining is more in South Goa compared to North Goa. In South Goa, half the respondents (51%) who were affected a lot by the ban on mining and four of every ten respondents who were somewhat affected by the ban have voted for the INC in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

Table 13.5 Parliamentary Constituency-Wise Response to Lifting the Ban on Mining

<i>Response</i>	<i>North Goa</i>	<i>South Goa</i>
In favour of lifting the ban	16	84
Should not be lifted	30	70
Lift under some condition	23	77
No response	43	57

Note: All figures are rounded to the nearest percentage.

N: 603

Source: NES Post-Poll Goa 2019.

Table 13.6 Affected by Ban on Mining and Party Voted

	INC	BJP	AAP	Others
A lot	51	46	0	3
Somewhat	40	35	22	3
Not much	31	66	2	1
Not at all	52	45	0	3
No response	0	40	60	0
Not applicable	64	32	4	0

Note: All figures are rounded to the nearest percentage.

N: 567

Source: NES Post-Poll Goa 2019.

Table 13.7 Satisfaction with the Performance of the MPs

<i>North Goa PC</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Satisfied	61
Dissatisfied	35
No Response	4
<i>South Goa PC</i>	
Satisfied	41
Dissatisfied	51
No Response	8

Note: All figures are rounded to the nearest percentage.

N: 568

Source: NES Post-Poll Goa 2019.

The existence of anti-incumbency factor against the BJP candidate Narendra Sawaikar cannot be ignored. The data in the Table 13.7 shows the levels of dissatisfaction with the performance of the South Goa BJP MP. However, one of the reasons for the dissatisfaction with the South Goa MP is also because of the fact that he never raised the issue of mining in the Parliament. Thus, once again the issue of ban on mining activities determined the voters' choice of party.

To conclude, it can be said that power oscillated between the INC and the BJP in the state assembly of Goa but for Parliamentary elections, the seats were shared between the two parties. The 2019 Lok Sabha election once again restored the old power equation in Goa with North Goa seat won by the BJP and South Goa by the INC. More than the leadership factor, mining issues determined the people's choice of party. If in 2014 Lok Sabha election the issue of mining led to the victory of the BJP in South Goa, in

2019 Lok Sabha election the same issue resulted in the defeat of the BJP in South Goa.

The 2012 assembly election and 2014 Lok Sabha elections had seen the rise of the BJP to the peak of power by winning both the Lok Sabha seat and assembly election with a clear majority. This euphoria of the BJP victory did not continue in the 2017 assembly election. Yet, the BJP was able to form the government with the help of regional parties. Both the regional parties paid a heavy price for their support to the BJP. By engineering a split within the MGP, the BJP pushed the MGP into political oblivion in Goa. The GFP members also met with the same fate when ten INC MLAs switched party and the BJP sacked the GFP members from cabinet. At the end of the day the INC proved to be its own enemy in Goa.

Note

- 1 Mathany Saldana was a social activist and a politician famously associated with Ramponnkars (traditional fisher folk of Goa) movement and Social Economic Zone (SEZ) movements, who demanded for Special Status to Goa.

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