



# INDIA'S POLITICAL PARTIES

DECEMBER 2022



# India's Political Parties

A Report Based on a Comprehensive Profile of Parties and  
a Survey of Experts on State Politics

DECEMBER 2022

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## **India's Political Parties**

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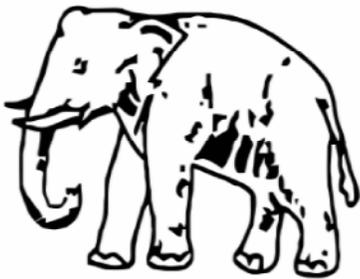
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Bahujan Samaj Party



HAND  
Indischer Nationalkongress



HAMMER UND SICHEL MIT STERN  
Communist Party of India (Marxist)



LOTUSBLÜTE  
Bharatiya Janata Party



ÄHREN UND SICHEL  
Communist Party of India



UHR  
Nationalist Congress Party



PFLANZE (Jora Ghas Phul)  
All India Trinamool Congress

## ABOUT US

The Centre for Policy Research (CPR) has been one of India's leading public policy think tanks since 1973. The Centre is a non-profit, non-partisan independent institution dedicated to ethical and high-quality scholarship on all aspects and processes that shape life in India. Through different verticals of research, the Centre engages in questions of economic policy, state capacity and governance, law and state regulation and domestic and international politics.

The Politics Initiative, set up in 2019, focuses its research on the changing competitive political party system, political and legislative institutions, ideological worldview and preferences of political actors, voting behaviour, and incentive structures and choices that shape policy decisions. In engaging with questions, the initiative aims to become a pre-eminent hub of empirically rigorous, theoretically rich, historically-informed political research that shapes the discussions on key policy issues in the country.

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# INTRODUCTION

1

A study of democracy is incomplete without a study of one of its most fundamental components—political parties. In India, works on the country's political parties so far have explored, among other things, the direct and indirect relationship between the nature and type of political parties and the different facets of the state and governance. One such recurring theme is the exploration of the overall structure of federalism i.e relationship between the centre and state governments (Gardner 2013; Jenkins and Roscoe 2014; Borges 2011).

The influence of political parties on the level of centralization and decentralization has not only impacted the federal structure of the country but has also influenced voters in choosing national parties over regional players (Chhibber and Kollman 1998). This ability of the national political parties to overall influence state-level politics has majorly impacted the regional autonomy of states (Gardner 2013).

The transition of the Indian political system into a dominant party system centred around the BJP in the past decade provokes us to see how the changes in the party system are translated across states in India. Initially, we will consider broad and empirical evidence to study the formation, survival and dissolution or exit of parties in India. Here, we show how and when parties in India are formed, what factors impact their survival and what causes their eventual decline and exit. This section is the product of research conducted on a dataset developed over the course of the year. This dataset profiles all parties in all Indian states for legislative assembly elections conducted between 1962 and 2021 inclusive. We first start by looking at periods of high formation and dissolution of political parties and find how many of India's parties fail to last, ending up exiting the competition after a single election. We subsequently differentiate between the types of parties being formed: are they new and organically arising, or are they the product of splintering and shifting within existing parties? Our research does show that many successful parties are not entirely new and there are a significant number of key parties in states that have links to older national parties. This is especially true for the several parties that split from the INC, or ones that emerged from the breakup of the Janata Parivar of parties.

Later in this section, we also look at state-wise trends of entry and exit of parties in any given election, and how new entrants perform in comparison to more established players. The results suggest that except in certain regions, the hold of older parties has increased, specifically post-1989, whilst significant change happened before it. It also goes on to suggest that the polity of India's states may be far more stable than frequently suggested.

In the second part of the report, we see how national and regional parties are changing across states in three broad fields—ideologically, in their support bases and in their mobilization strategies and organizational capabilities. We have approached state-level experts in political parties and elections through an online survey to evaluate the parties in the above-mentioned parameters. Insights available from elite surveys (or expert surveys) conducted in the past decades present a national picture of major players in Indian politics in terms of their presence and organizational strength, but we have little to no insights into regional parties and how national parties organize themselves at the state level.

These experts' evaluation of states tells us how the regional units of national political parties fare across states when it comes to supporting political and social issues, but not on economic issues. Trends also suggest that the Bharatiya Janata Party has gained significant ground across states in terms of various organizational structures, whereas the Indian National Congress has been significantly weaker. The ability of the BJP to unite its support base through religion, their increased ability to mobilize voters based on the promise of jobs and public goods, and the greater flexibility of the regional units of these two parties to take positions on the issue differently in every state, highlights very centralized federal structure in Indian Politics.

# PARTY FORMATION AND EXIT IN INDIAN POLITICS

1

## Introduction

There is a consensus that Indian politics is undergoing a fundamental transformation and, with it, the fate of India's federal compact is also at an important juncture. Indian federalism has always been closely associated with the process of democratisation. The decentralisation of the Indian polity in the late 1980s and the 1990s had much to do with adjusting to the new political reality on the part of national parties, as the growing political strength of state-level parties meant that no government could accede to the Centre without their support (Singh and Verney, 2003). This increased the bargaining power of state-level parties and the federal compact was organically redrawn to give more meaningful powers to the states.

Hitherto unrepresented social groups have found a chance to get integrated in Indian polity through sub-national party systems because the federal structures of India supported them. This deepening of democracy, especially with the arrival of regional parties, seeded a continuing process of accommodation and negotiation; a system of bargaining between the Centre and the states that have been cited as having a deep stabilising effect on the Indian polity (Mahajan 2012). There are several reasons why this chapter of Indian political history is important to understand India's party system. While databases are now available in the public domain (eg, the Trivedi Centre for Political Data, etc) and past electoral records exist, they still lack fundamental details of when parties are being formed and when they get dissolved (the Election Commission of India does not, or only rarely, de-registers parties).

We were trying to identify and classify parties based on ideology and nature—new/splinter/successor—to create a map of, if not all, then the most critical parties in India. This will be useful in understanding the root of the emergence of political parties and what they tell us about the political space in India. In summary, we wish to look at party narratives at large that go beyond just contesting elections.

However, the rise of the single-majority BJP, especially since 2014, reversed this stability. Further, the dismantling of the Planning Commission, the abrogation of Article 370, and the establishment of a Goods and Services Tax are some of the elements that have altered the fiscal and institutional federal landscape and the dynamic of Centre-State relations. Across various domains—finance, agriculture, law and order, health and education—it is the central government which is expanding its footprint and stretching the limits of its power (Aiyar and Tillin, 2019). This moment in India's political landscape, therefore, presents a paradox of federalism: the rise of a dominant party at the Centre, coinciding with increasing fragmentation and assertion of parties at a sub-national level, pushing the appeal of sub-nationalism and cultural identity, that poses a challenge to the BJP. The present re-configuration, therefore, potentially holds profound implications for the future of the Indian political space. However, we first need a systematic and data-driven framework to ground these concepts and have a meaningful discussion.

## A note on the method

The following section presents an overview of the first stage of adding variables to this dataset. To recap, we initially compiled data for all parties contesting state elections in India from Ashoka University's Trivedi Centre for Political Data-Lok Dhaba and tied it together with their dataset on political parties to fetch additional information and create a base file. Instead of relying on party abbreviations, as we did in the beginning, we chose unique IDs (available from TCPD) for the merging process. It should also be noted that the dataset records unique values for each party's presence in a certain state. Hence, in effect, we will have multiple entries for the same party as it enters different states, but those can be tracked with the party ID.

More manual edits and corrections were also made, subsequently preparing the first major version of the dataset. Aside from all previous variables (which are available in the codebook), the following key variables were added in V1. Some of the definitions used in the database are the following:

1. Party\_ID: Unique numeric identifier for each party (assigned in base election data by TCPD).
2. Party: The most common abbreviation used by the party.
3. Full\_Name: The expanded name of the party.
4. Founding\_President: If the party formally declared a president/leader upon establishment. If not, we use a prominent leader, such as the leader of the party in the Lok Sabha/earliest contested state assembly.
5. Establishment\_Year: The year the party was formally established.
6. State\_Name: Name of the state where the party contested.
7. First\_App: The year of a party's first appearance in an election in a state.
8. Last\_App: The year of a party's latest appearance in an election in a state. (The data currently goes up to the 2020 elections in the state of Bihar.)
9. Vote\_GT\_1: A dummy variable for whether the party has achieved a 1 per cent vote share at least once in the given state. (All parties in this version have achieved this at least once.)
10. Key: Unique identifier for each row.
11. Nature of Party: This is a categorical variable which defines whether a party is a new party, successor to an existing party or a splinter group from an existing party. The criteria for each are as follows:
  - A New Party is one whose origins do not lie in any previous political party. While members can be inspired by or individually have been a part of other parties, we consider a party as new if it does not have substantial ties to any previous party in terms of legislators/office bearers.
  - A Splinter Party is one which split from a previously existing party. For a party to be considered a splinter in our case, it must show that its founder, as well as a certain number of legislators/office bearers, jumped ship from the original party to the splinter group. Eg, the various INC factions or Janata Dal factions.
  - A Successor Party is one which takes the mantle from a previously existing party. In contrast to a splinter, a successor receives the assent of a majority of the legislators/office bearers of the previous party. In essence, it can then lay claim to continuing the legacy of the party it succeeds that a splinter necessarily cannot. Eg, the BJP is the successor of Jana Sangh.

## Overview of the dataset

The following are the summary stats, showing the number of unique parties which breached each threshold (1% vote share, 5% seat share, etc.) at least once. As far as total parties in a state are concerned, states such as UP (618) and Bihar (431) have seen the proliferation of a rather large number of parties which is unmatched by almost any other state. On the other hand, among other major states, Himachal Pradesh has a number of parties (50) that is lower than many newer states which have not seen as many electoral cycles and could be comparable in size. The fewest parties, however, remain

in the northeastern states—excluding Assam—with Arunachal Pradesh at 16, and many others below 30. Interestingly, there have been a number of parties in Delhi, with about 288 different parties having contested the NCT's assembly elections since 1993.

The Number of Unique Parties Which Breached Each Threshold At Least Once

Thresholds	Observations	Unique Parties
1% Vote Share	640	272
1% Seat Share	541	227
2% Vote Share	492	211
2% Seat Share	408	170
5% Vote Share	342	140
5% Seat Share	295	127
10% Vote Share	227	92
10% Seat Share	213	95

The Number of Unique Parties Which Breached Each Threshold Multiple Times

Thresholds	Observations	Unique Parties
1% Vote Share	344	126
1% Seat Share	294	113
2% Vote Share	281	107
2% Seat Share	232	94
5% Vote Share	198	83
5% Seat Share	169	79
10% Vote Share	130	58
10% Seat Share	127	61

Table 1 and 2: Number of Parties at Different Thresholds

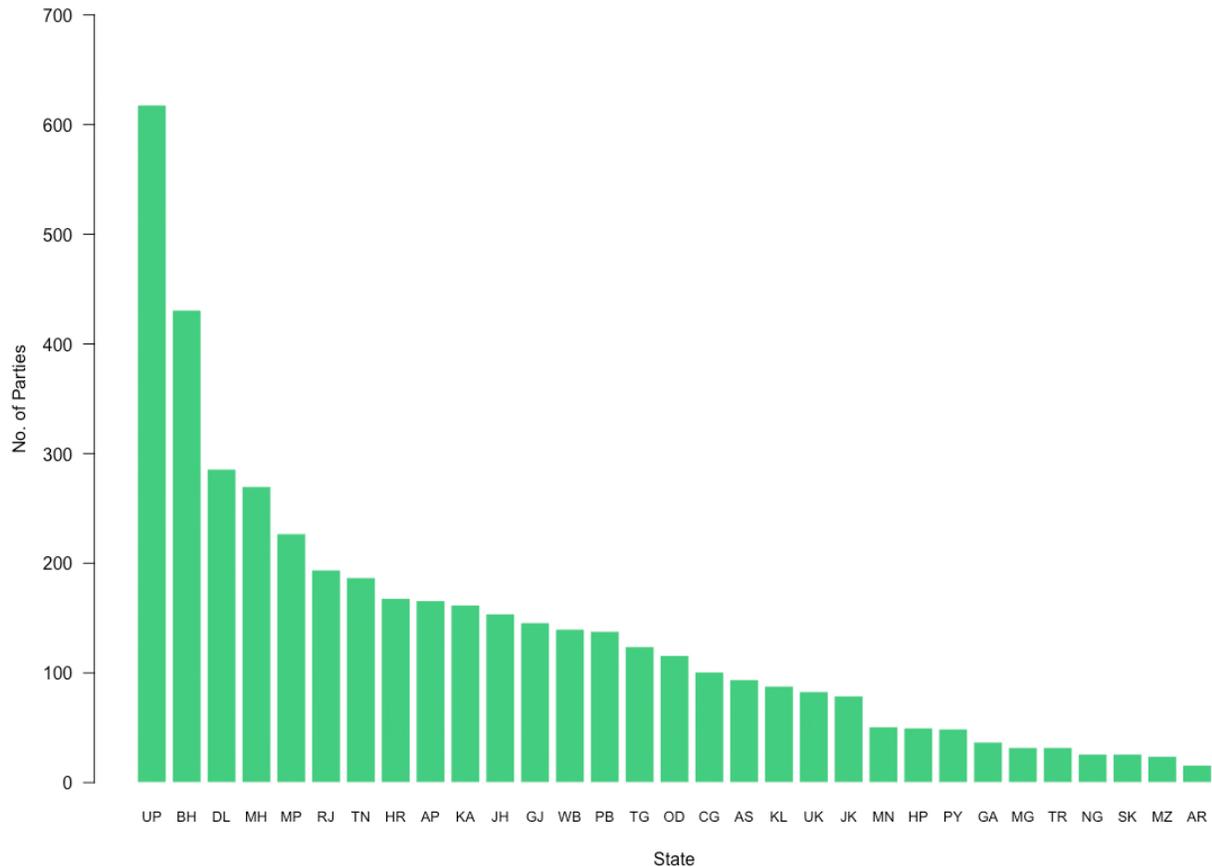
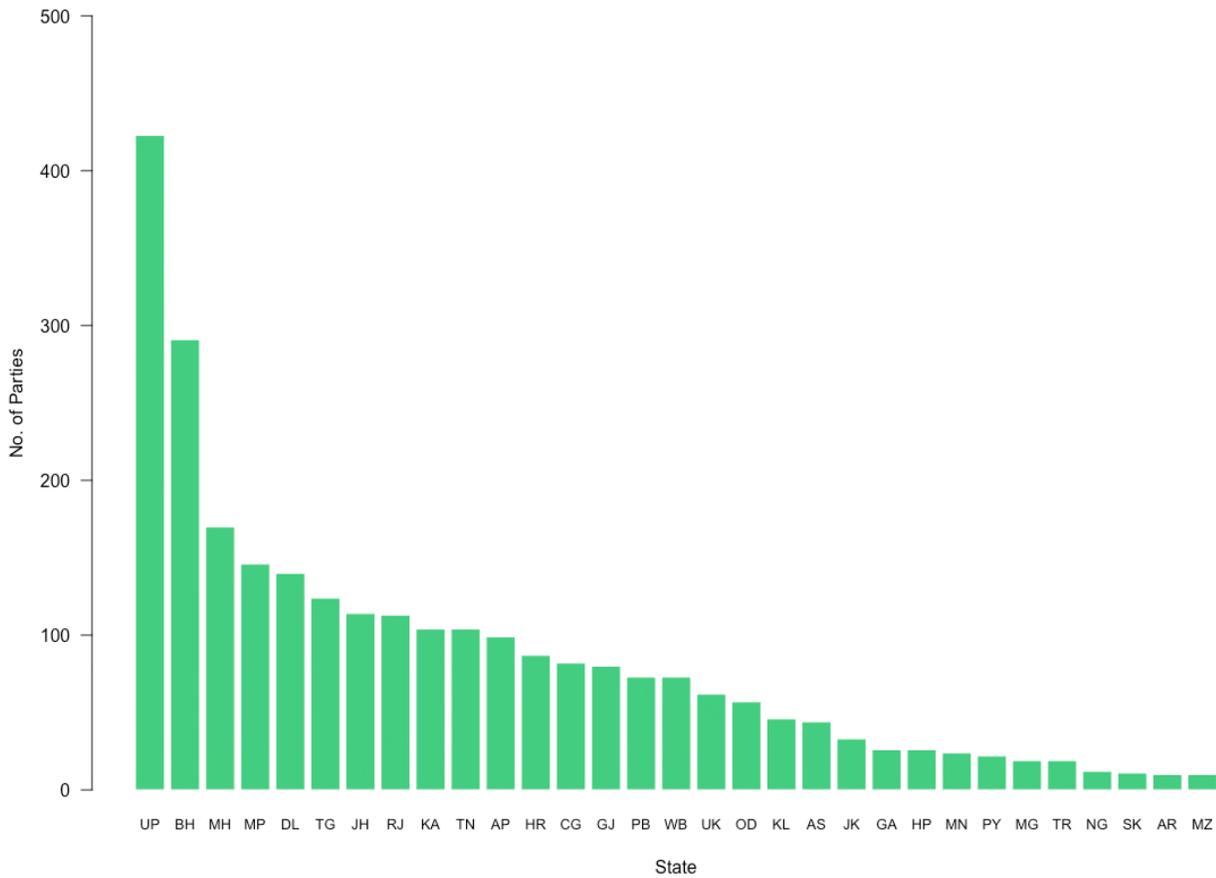


Figure 1: Number of Total Parties by State

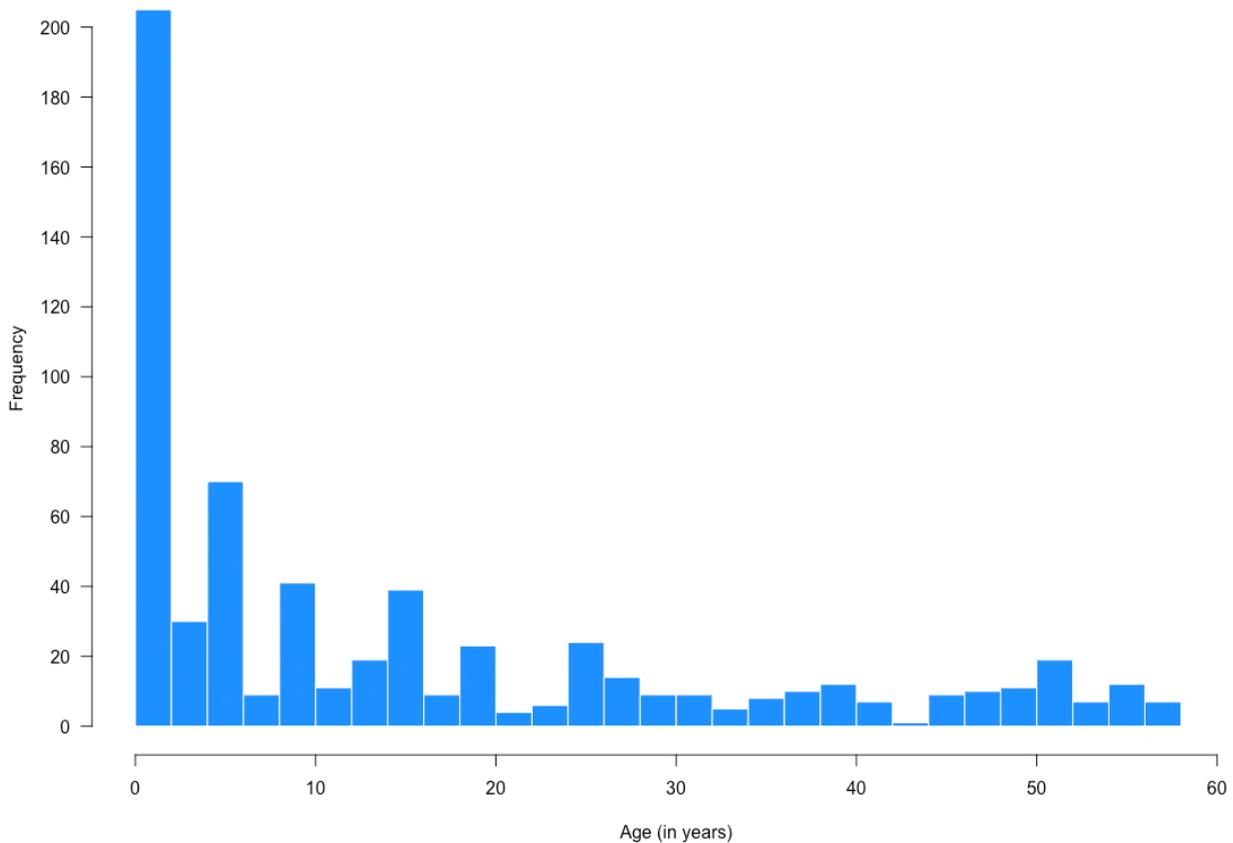


**Figure 2: Number of Total Active Parties by State**

The average is around 139, and it appears that many states (as can be seen in the graph below) are clustered around the average. The graph does not change much when considering only active parties, indicating that it is quite possible many of these parties are more recent. Whether or not they are effective players is a separate question.

### Age distribution of parties

When we look at the lifespan of all the parties together, it becomes clear how difficult it is to sustain a party in this country. Most parties, as can be seen in the graph below, do not survive more than one election cycle. That is to say, most parties just appear in one election and then cease to exist. The only few parties that have been able to survive for the entire period of India are limited to parties like the INC and the Communist Party.



**Figure 3: Age Distribution of Parties**

#### Number of parties versus assembly strength

Looking at parties from this perspective, it becomes clear that there is a strong correlation between the number of assembly seats in a state assembly with the number of parties that are being formed. This means that the number of parties formed in a state depends on the number of seats the assembly has in that state. States like Uttar Pradesh have far more parties formed than any other state. This also makes sense because many parties only contest single seats or in smaller pockets. UP, Bihar and Delhi have effects far greater than what the regression line would predict, but overall, many states end up falling below this line.

What is interesting, however, is the variation in many states with similar levels of assembly seats. For instance, compare Himachal Pradesh with Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, all of which have far more parties emerge, despite a similar number of assembly seats as well as the fact that the latter three have only been states for about two decades. Even Telangana, barely two election cycles old, has seen more parties than states such as Punjab, Haryana and even Andhra Pradesh, which does imply that assembly size is definitely not the only factor at play in influencing party formation.

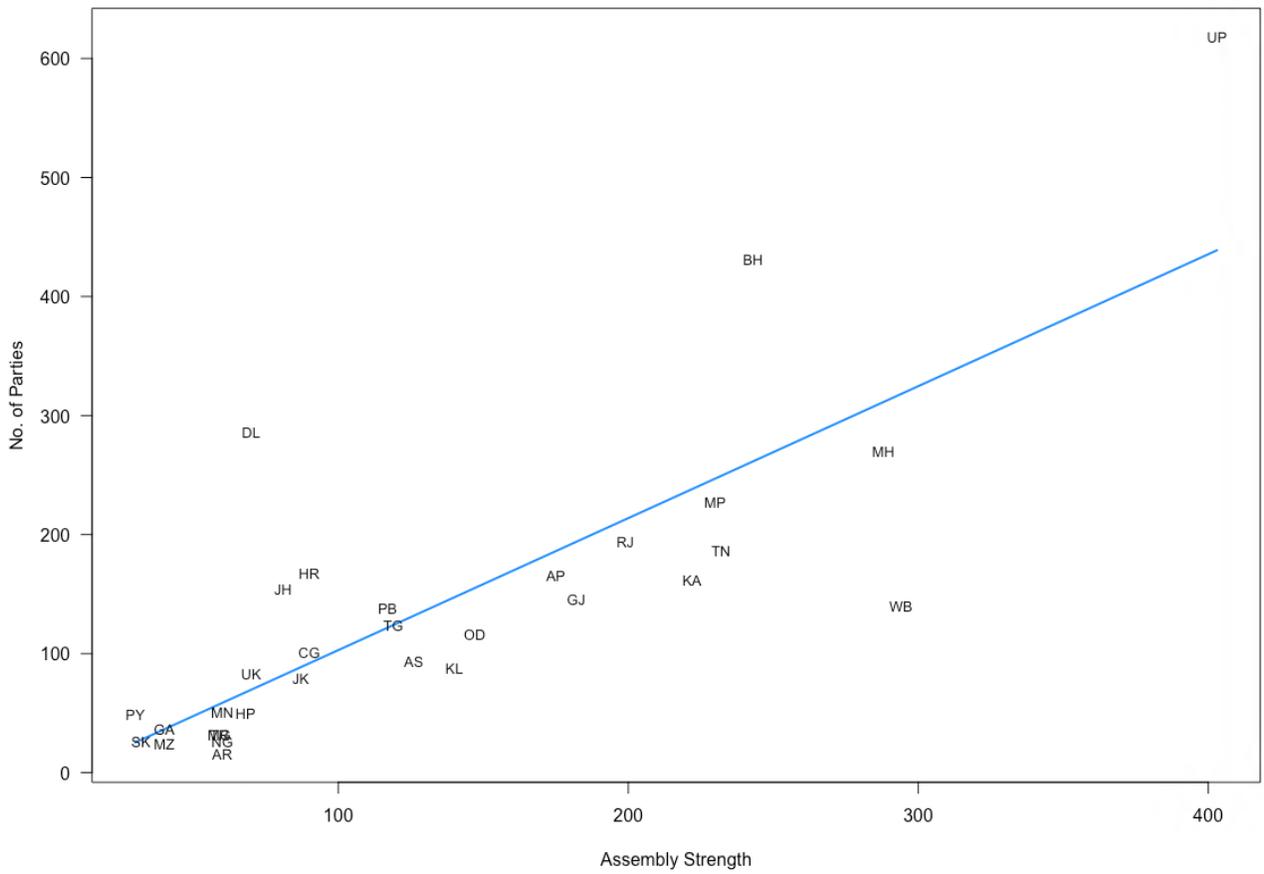


Figure 4: Statewise No. Of Parties by Assembly Strength

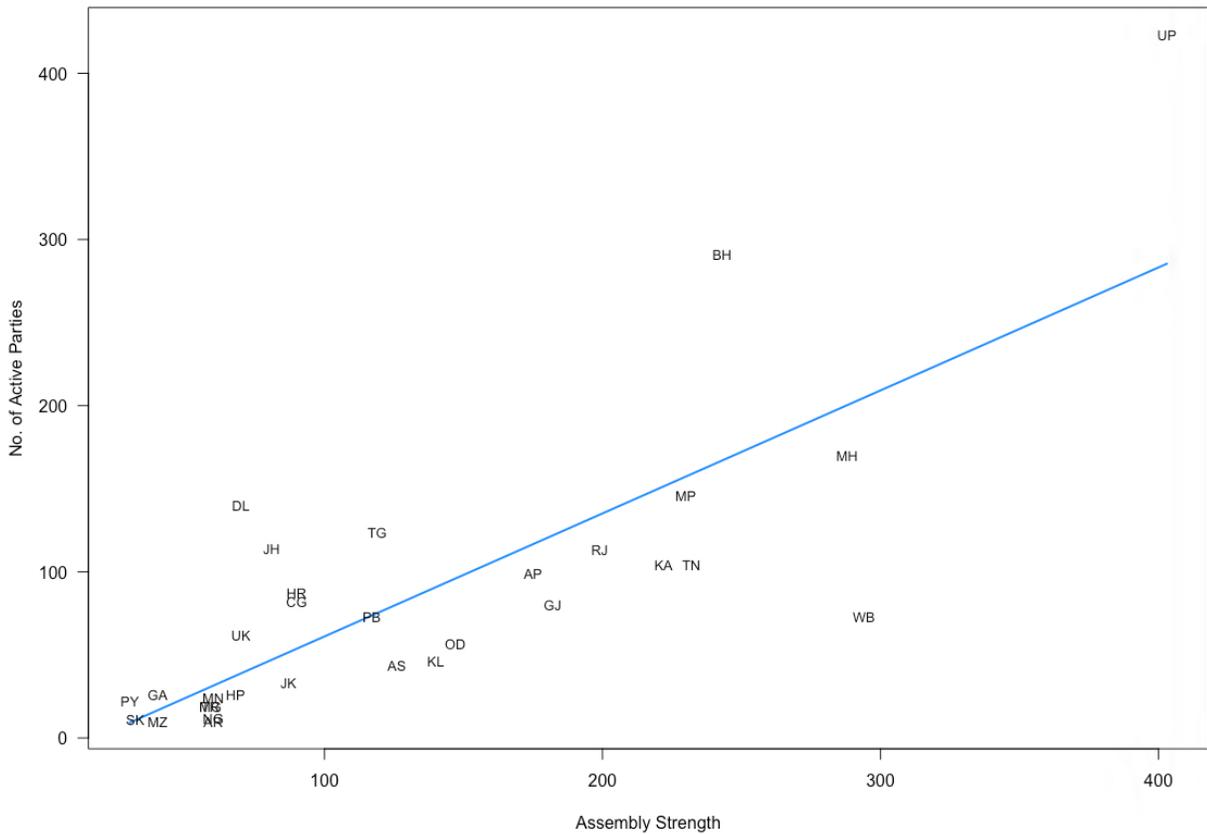


Figure 5: Statewise Active Parties by Assembly Strength

## Nature of emerging parties

Under this category, we determined whether a party was a new, splinter or successor party. Out of 272 parties, we were able to find information on 246 parties. A caveat to mention here is that successors are generally few and far in between. This seems plausible because rarely can a new party lay sole claim to the legacy of an older party without conflict. What is remarkable, however, is the idea that many emerging parties are not fully new. As the graph below shows, the number of new emerging parties (117) and splinter groups (118) is identical among those that have at least achieved a 1% vote share.

The graphs also imply that there are a significant number of key parties in states that have links to older national parties. This is especially true for the several parties that split from the INC or the ones that emerged through the break-up of the Janata Parivar of parties.

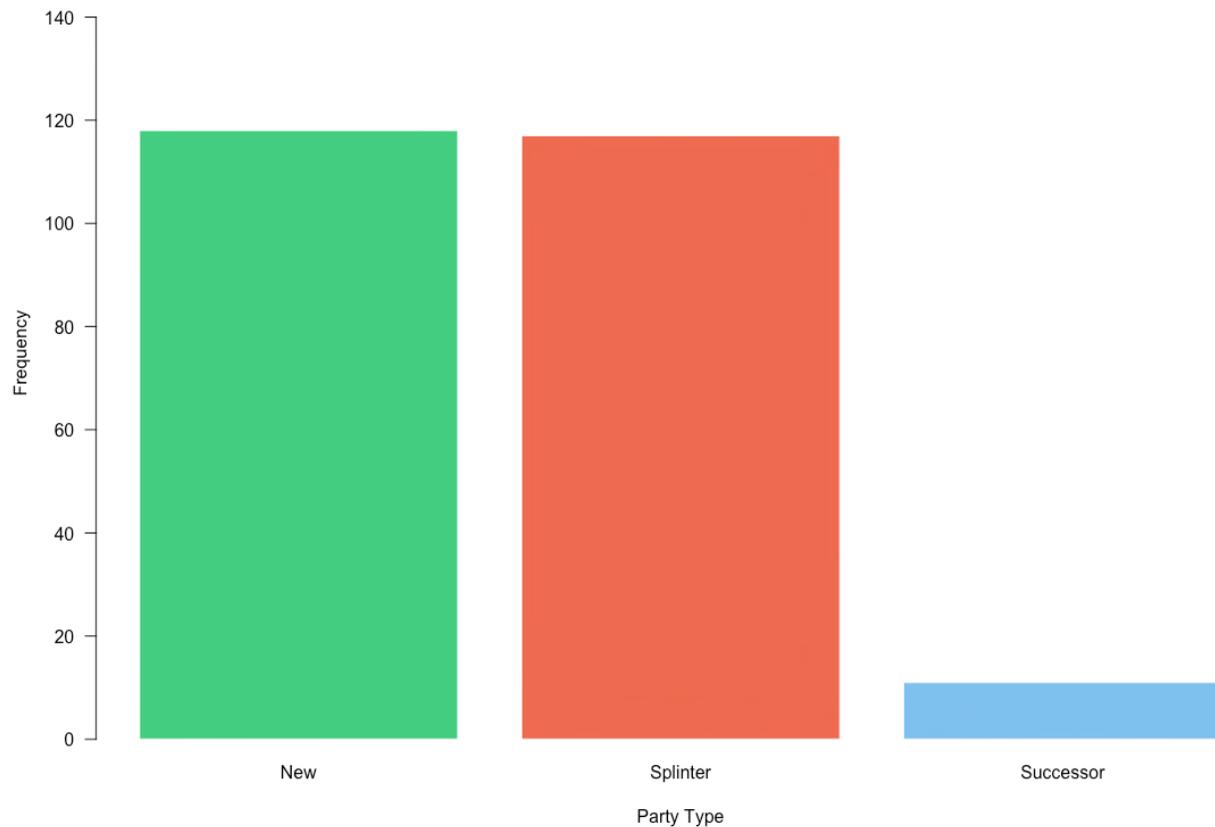


Figure 6: Distribution of Emerging State Parties by Nature

### The number of New Parties and Splinter Parties by state

Although we still don't know what affects the formation of splinter parties in one state more than others, a cursory look at the graph below clearly tells us that the number of splinter parties that formed in the states of Kerala, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh is higher than in any other state.

In comparison to the overall numbers, the proportion of new parties that formed in any state is more or less similar, barring Kerala, which has seen the least number of newer parties emerging.

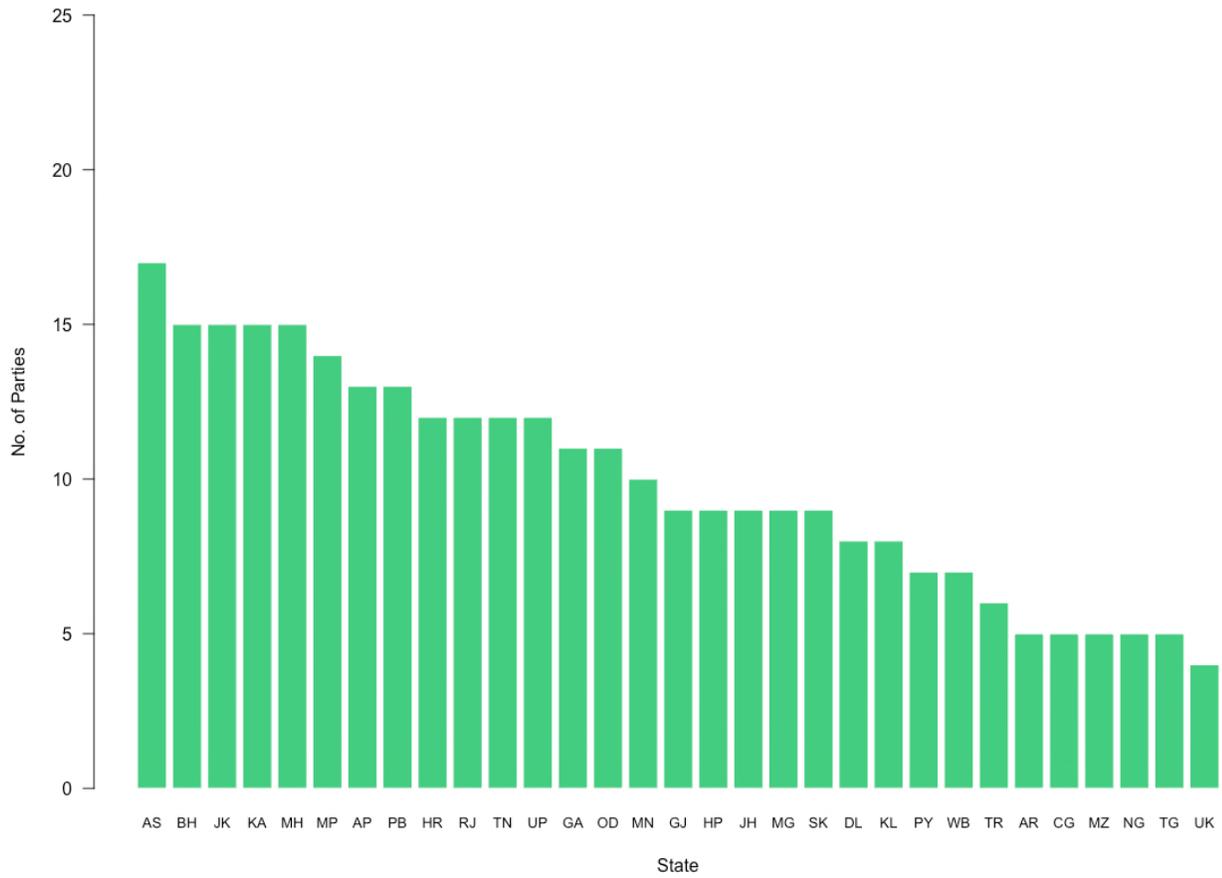


Figure 7: Number of New Parties by State

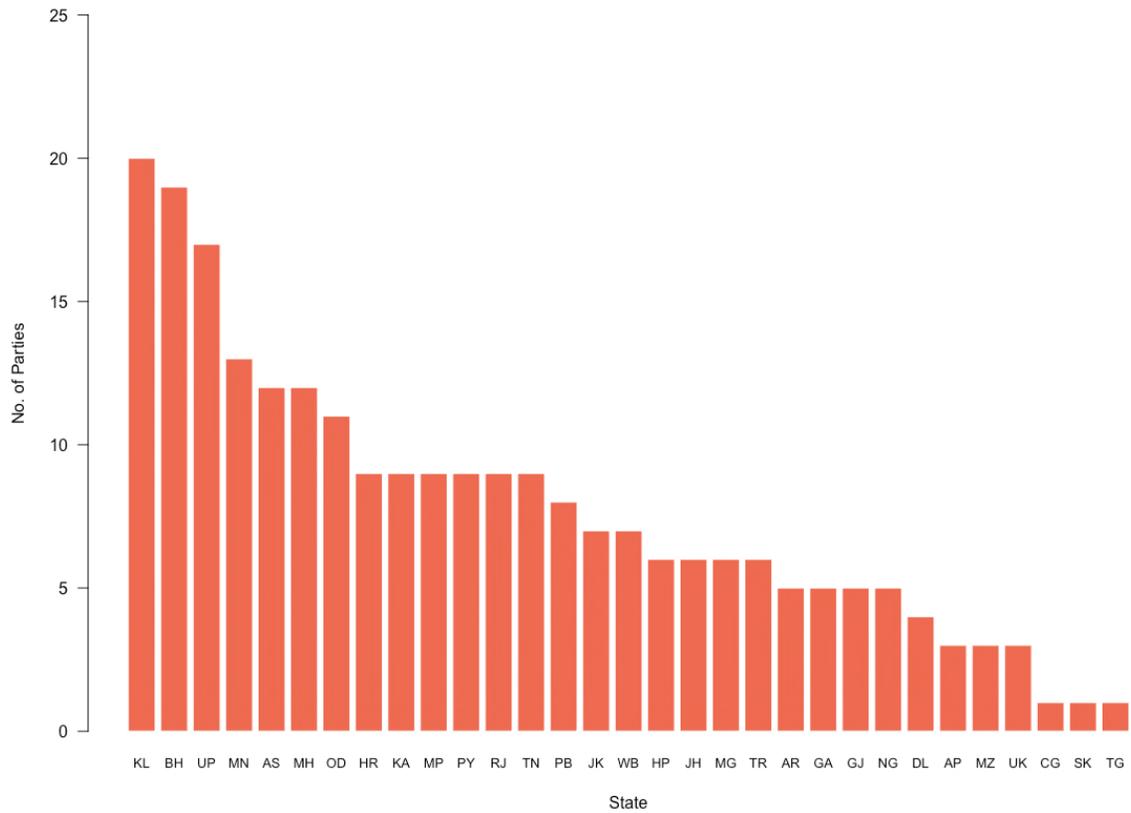


Figure 8: Number of Splinter Parties by State

## The emergence of parties by year, nature and dissolution/exit

Using the year of establishment, we have ascertained when parties were formed. For parties where this was unavailable, we have used their first election year as their year of formation. Among the 272 effective parties, we can see that a bulk of these parties were formed in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The five-year period between 2000-2005 saw the highest number of parties emerge. As is evident, very few parties formed early on in India's political journey, such as the INC and the Communist Party. An initial upsurge is seen close to independence in the five-year period between 1945-50, but it takes until 1965-70 for a greater increase in parties. There is some upsurge between 1975-80, especially in the years after the emergency, but it is post-1990 that far more effective parties start emerging compared to earlier.

With regards to party formation by nature, the spread across categories is similar—due to the increased number of parties being formed in later years—but splinter formation seems to have peaked earlier than new party formation.

In fact, in most five-year periods from 1960 to 2000, a greater proportion of the parties emerging are splinter groups, as seen in the graph below. It is only between 2000 to 2005 that new party formation significantly overtakes the formation of splinter parties.

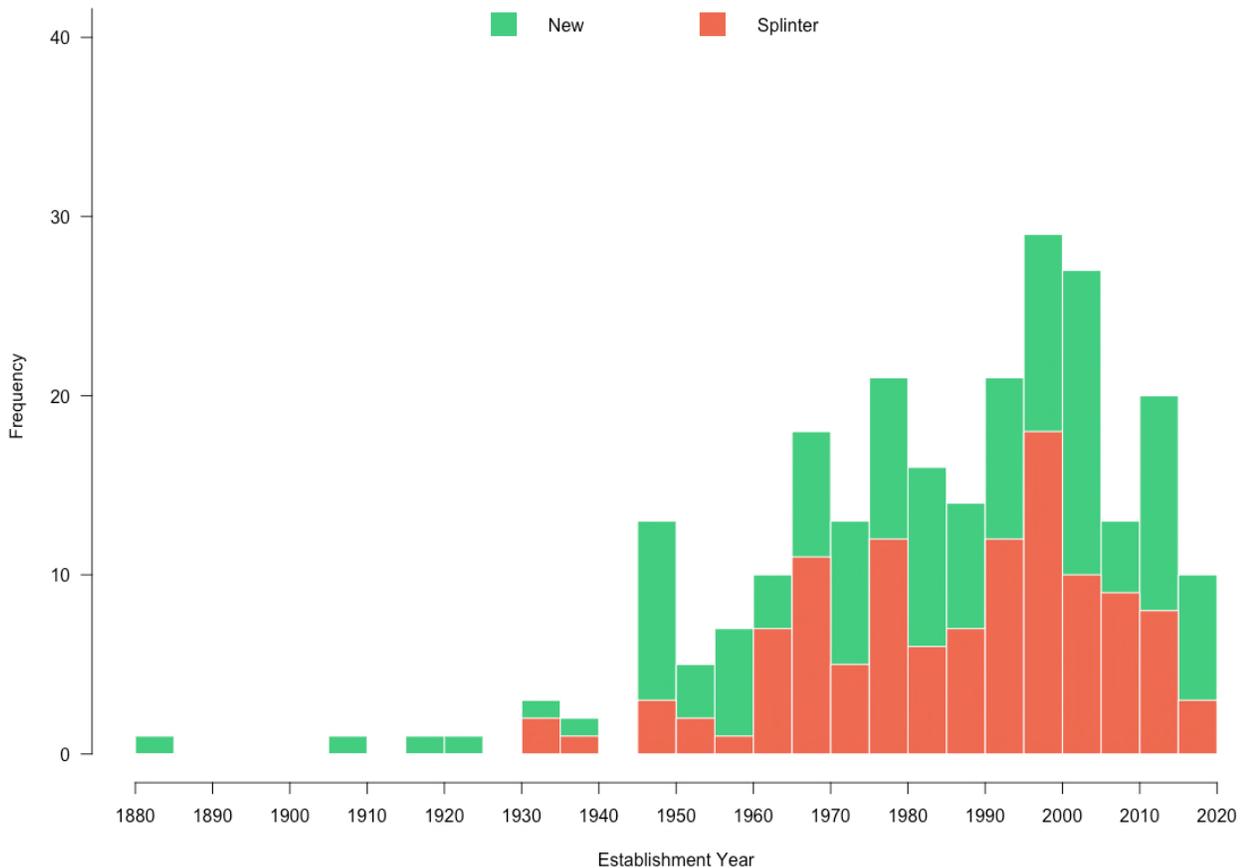


Figure 9: Establishment Year for Effective Parties

While we were able to define a concrete establishment year, we cannot do the same for the dissolution or exit of a party. Because we do not have clear guidelines for when the ECI dissolves or deregisters a party, we have divided the parties between active and non-active for this section. As defined in the codebook, if a party has not contested either of the last two consecutive elections, it is considered not active. Thus, dissolution here can indicate either the end of a party's activities as well as their exit from one state. In either case, it is important to see whether there is a pattern around key parties choosing to exit the political arena and what marks such an exit.

Overall, we know that out of the 4,315 entries across all the states taken together, there have been 1,671 dissolutions or exits from a particular state. But among the 640 observations for parties achieving 1% in at least one election, approximately 50% (319) have already dissolved or exited a state. We see that the years between 2005 and 2010 have the highest rate of dissolution, especially in states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. These are basically parties that would have contested the various elections between these five years but would not have done so in the next cycle. Outside of 2005-10, which accounts for 25% of all dissolutions, we see that dissolution levels are much lower starting in the 1960s until 1985.

### Dissolution or exit (effective parties)

With effective parties, on the other hand, the rate of dissolution/exit seems to go higher, as out of 640 observations across states, 319 have exited the system (indicating that about half of such parties have dissolved or exited a state). Parties exiting peaked, however, between 1970 and 1975 (at about 22.5%) of the total number of parties. Taken together, the 1970s saw the most number of effective party exits, accounting for about 1/3rd of them.

Barring the 1980s, almost every other time period sees a constant rate of dissolution, with roughly 10% of effective parties exiting in each five-year period.

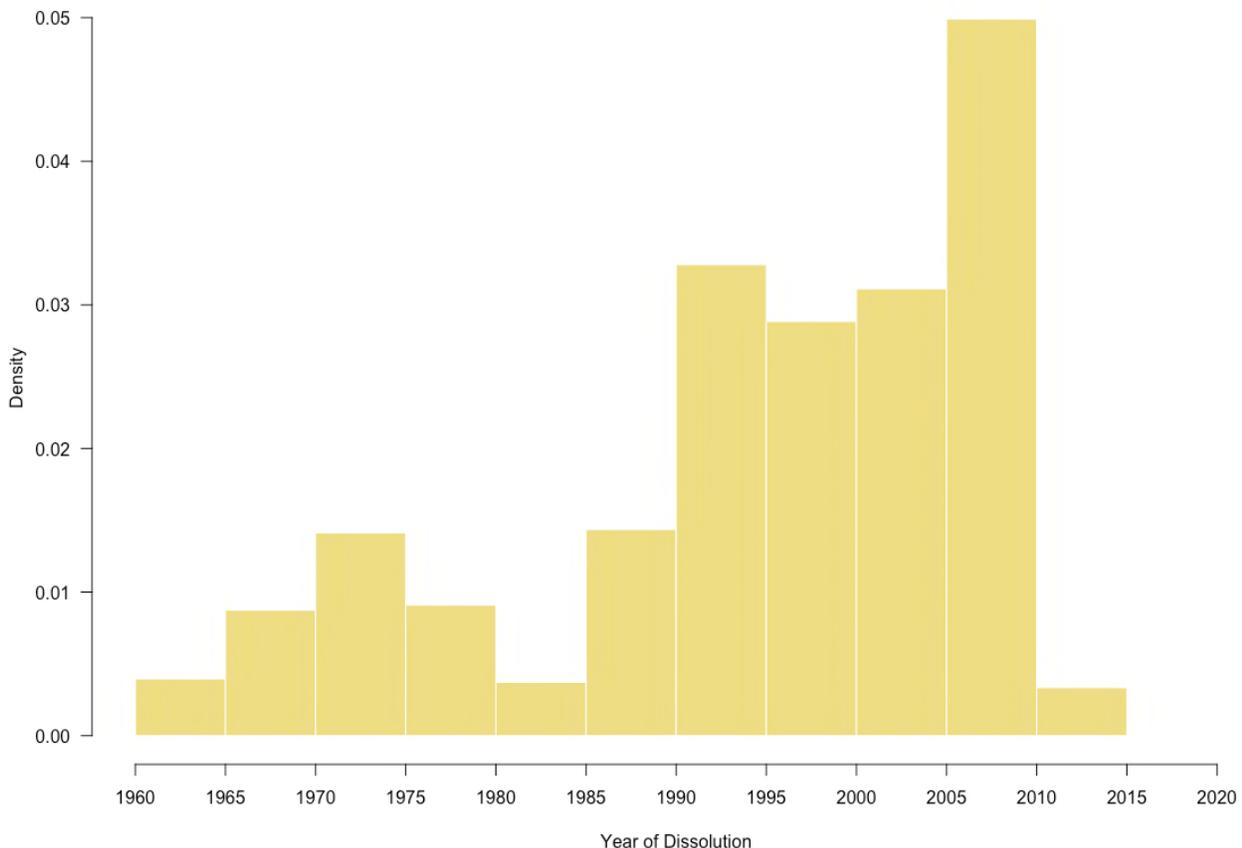
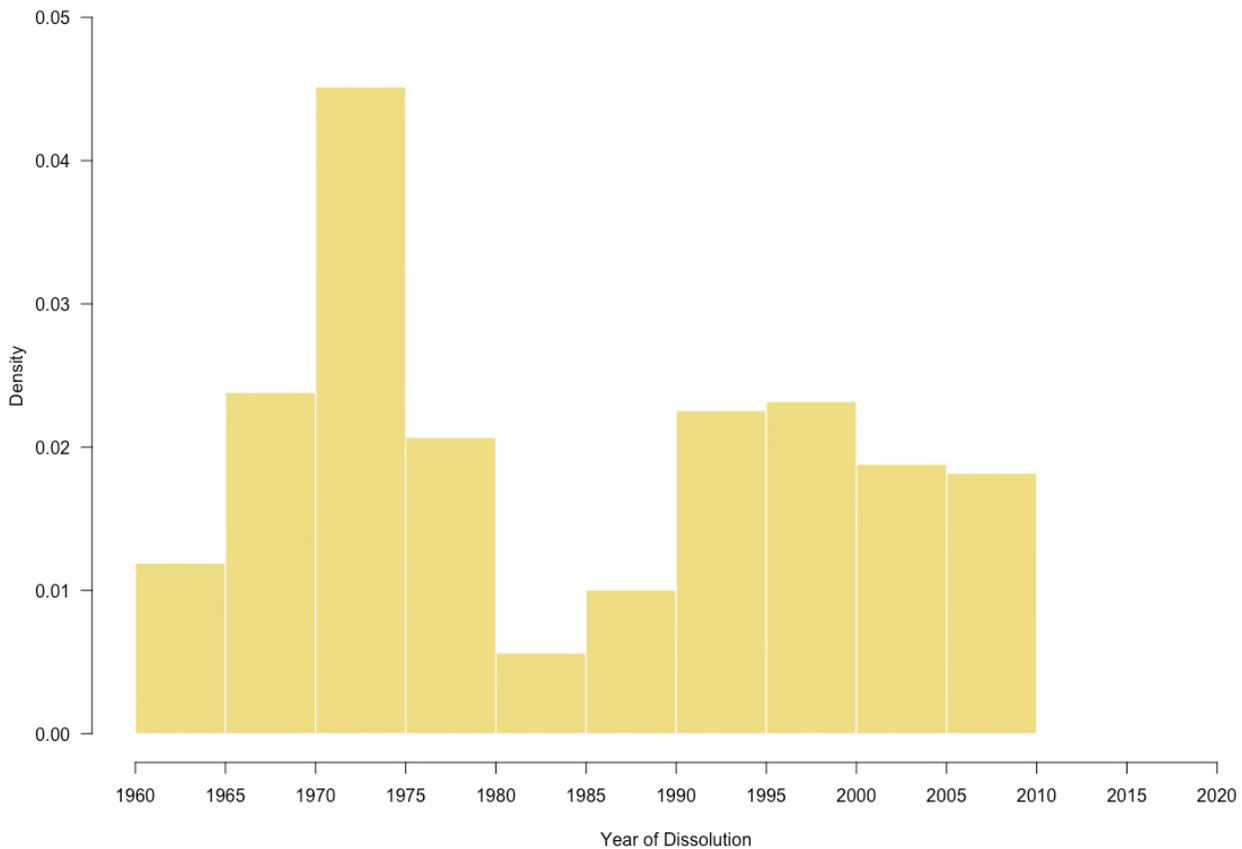


Figure 10: Distribution of party dissolution over time



**Figure 11: Distribution of effective party dissolution over time**

### Scope for future research

This section illustrates one kind of analysis we can do of party survival and exit with our variables. By introducing electoral volatility, competitiveness, and other continuous variables, we can try to determine if there are differences in the survival rate of parties based on either their nature or other factors.

Note: The analysis below is done on V1 of the dataset (i.e., the parties that achieved 1% vote share at least once). In the two graphs, namely A and B, shown below, the red curve represents splinter parties, while the green curve represents new parties.

#### 1. Party age and survival

This example uses party age (i.e., the number of election cycles that they survive) as a means to track survival in two logit models. When it comes to age, it seems there is some statistical significance of the nature of the party nature in affecting party survival, as splinters seem more likely to survive than completely new parties. We can perhaps look for more meaningful variables, as opposed to age, to determine whether this effect holds.

#### 2. Seats contested and survival

Another example is the effect of the total number of seats contested. An increase in this will also naturally increase a party's chance of survival. However, here we can see a slight but statistically significant difference between new and splinter parties' chances of survival.

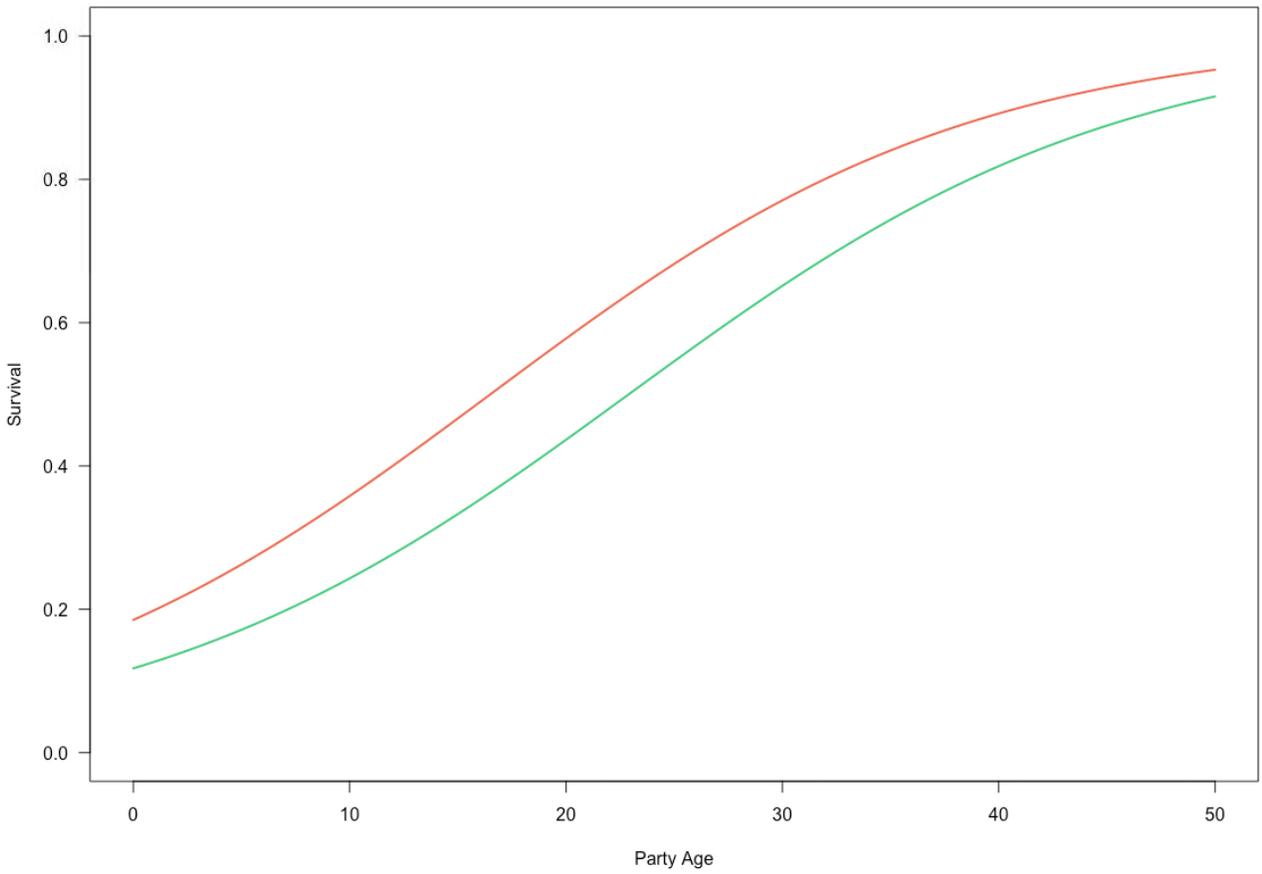


Figure 12: Probability of Party Survival with Age

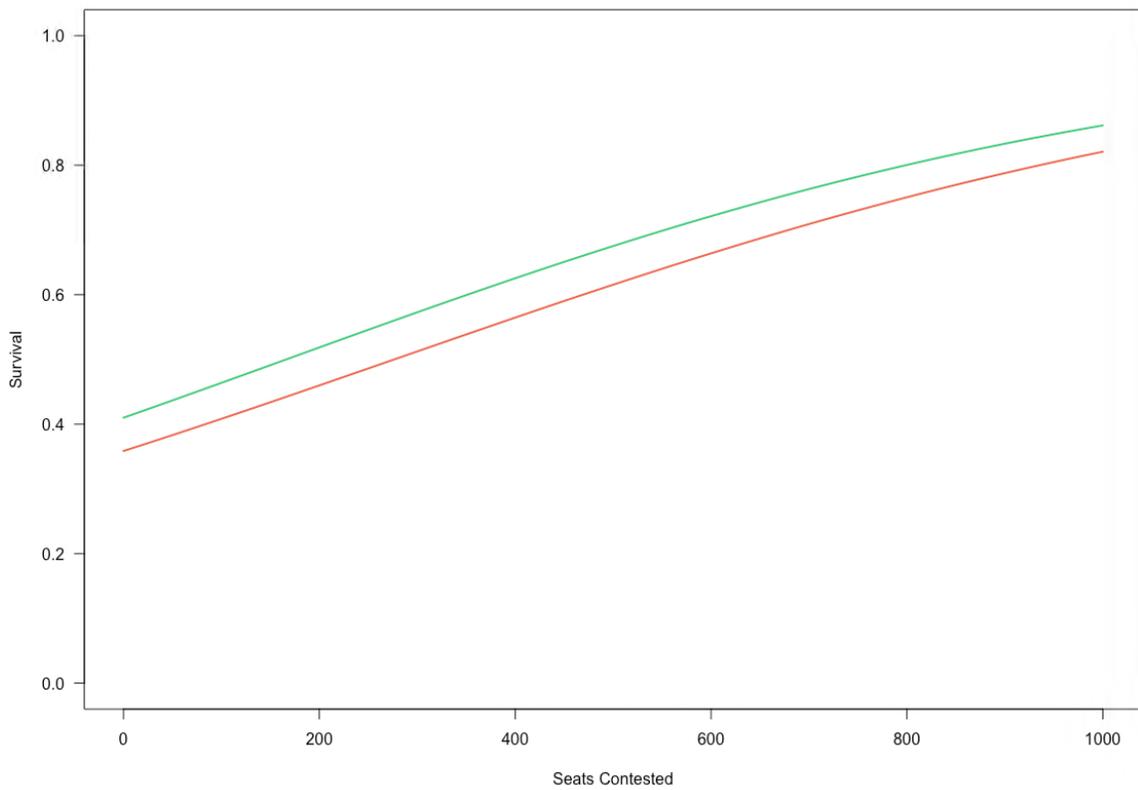


Figure 13: Probability of Party Survival with Seats Contested

## Entry and exit

While we have taken a look at the years parties have emerged and dissolved, the subsequent sections look at the levels of entry and exit on average across elections at the state level. Some of this analysis is closely tied to the work of Oliver Heath and Adam Ziegfeld, where they attempt to explain the entry or exit of contenders at the constituency level in parliamentary elections. For an election in time period  $t$ , they define entry as a party winning more than 2% vote share when it did not contest the previous election ( $t-1$ ) or failed to secure 2% in that election. Conversely, they define party exit in time period  $t$ , when a party contested the previous election ( $t-1$ ) but did not contest the current election (or failed to meet the 2% threshold).

While broadly agreeing with this definition, we have changed some elements. The important part of Heath and Ziegfeld's definition is that it looks at results at the district level. However, for the purposes of our analysis, we are looking at the entry and exit of parties at only the state level. We have also changed the threshold for considering party entry and exit to an aggregate 1% vote share at the state level, in order to ensure continuity.

### Levels of entry and exit across elections

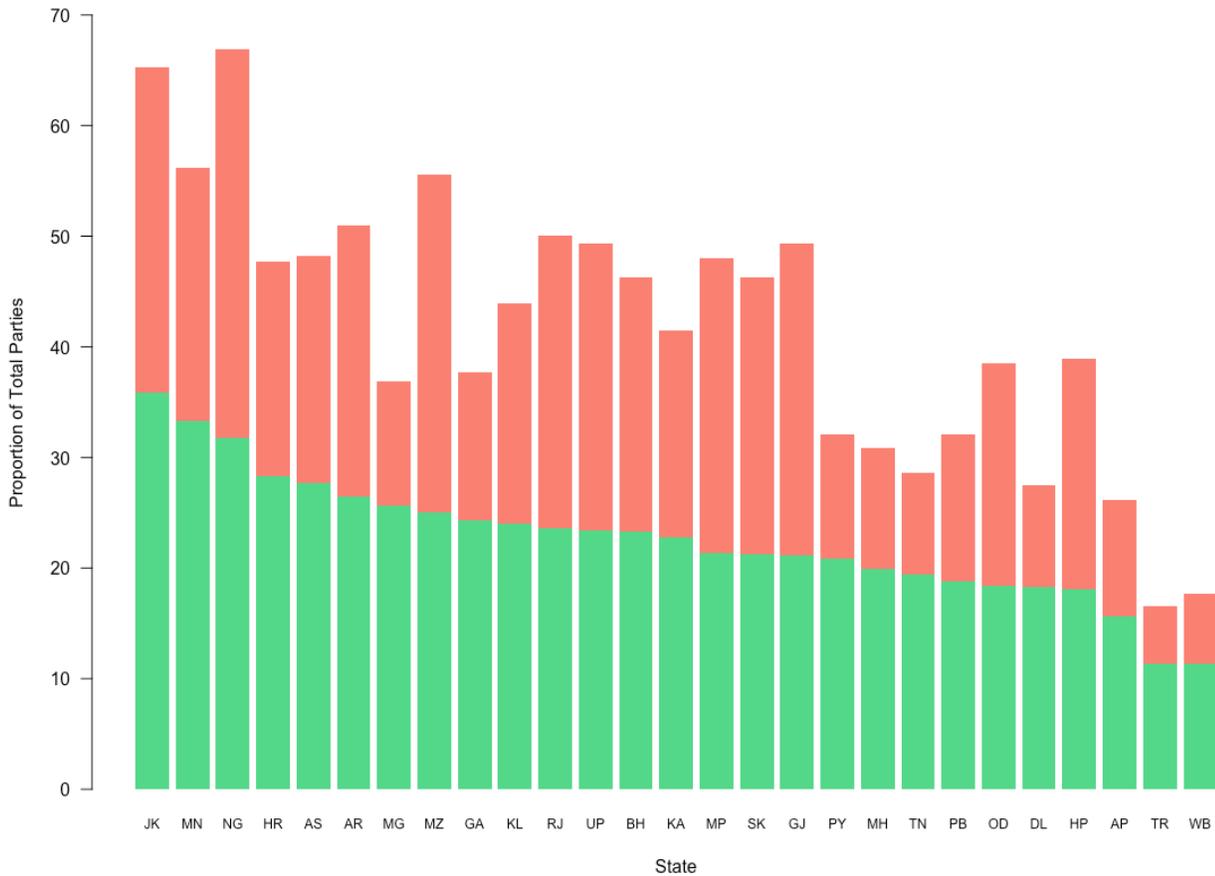
When considering the level of entry and exit, it is important to view them as a proportion of the total parties contesting. Thus, the two indicators below show the proportion of all contesting parties that reflect effective party entry (1%) and effective party exit. One should note that although party entry will always be lesser than the total number of parties, it is practically possible for the number of exits to exceed the total number of parties in an election. For instance, if a previous election saw a large number of players contest which were subsequently dissolved, it is possible the proportion of exit is greater than 100% if fewer parties end up contesting the current election. This has happened in certain cases, particularly in the northeast.

When considering state-wise variations, we see that barring the northeast and Jammu and Kashmir, the average level of entry in a given election across all states is below 30%. The states which have a higher level of entry are either known to have a more fragmented party system, such as Uttar Pradesh or Bihar, or a higher prevalence of factionalism, such as Goa or Kerala, but these averages are all still below 25%.

On the other hand, party exit levels tend to be either around or slightly higher than levels of entry, given how many parties can end up contesting a single election. Barring 9 states, where exits are markedly lower, all others have exit levels that are fairly close to, and in some cases more than, the level of party entries.

Looking at three distinct time periods in independent India's political trajectory, we see that on the whole, both entry and exit levels were much higher in the period before 1989, closer to 25%. This number (~25%) has since come down to an average of around 21% between 1989-2013, further declining to 14% for entries post-2014. Exits, on the other hand, seem to have seen a sharper fall to around 13% between 1989-2013 but have slightly increased to above 14% post-2014.

This trend also seems to be exemplified across most major states, as the visualisations in the appendix (Figure B1) show. The green line represents an entry, while the red represents an exit. Barring the northeast, trajectories of individual states show that while there were considerable fluctuations before 1989, state party systems seem to have stabilized a lot of post-1989, with levels dipping way below 20% for both entry and exits. It is also interesting that this is a trend that holds not just across relatively bipolar states such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, but also across a variety of multipolar polities including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Overall, while individual peaks for entry and exit may vary, the trend clearly indicates that there seems to be a marked decrease in both entry and exit levels, especially in the later years.



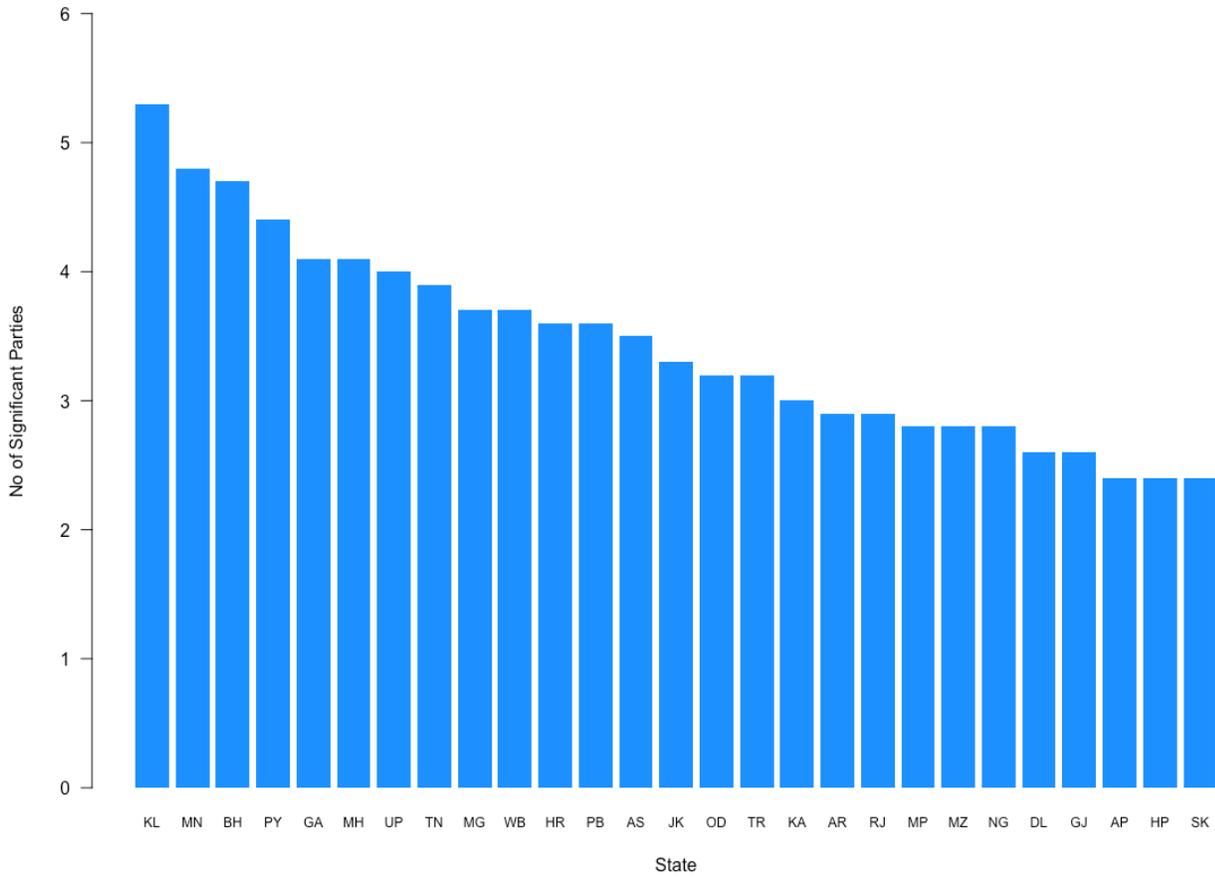
**Figure 14: Average Party Entry and Exit Proportions by State**

#### The vote share of new and old parties

Having considered the levels of entry and exit, we now turn to the performance of the newly entering parties in comparison to the older established players in an election. Unless mobilising with particular force, newer parties often find it hard to break through and take a sizable amount of the vote share from more established parties. For this section, we are mainly looking at major contenders (we define this as those who got a 5% vote share in any election) who were able to go beyond our baseline of 1% and secure at least a 5% vote share state-wide. On average, most states have between 2 to 4 such contenders every election, leaving limited scope for the breakthrough of newer players.

Looking at the variation between vote share levels for new and old major parties across states, we find that newer parties collectively secure less than 20% of the vote share across most states, with the exception of the northeast. In some states such as West Bengal, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh, this number is even lower, below 10%, indicating how hard it is for most parties to break through. These states often see the established players net more than 75% of the vote share, with the rest being dispersed between marginal players and independent candidates.

The hold of established parties has only solidified with time, as a breakdown by time period suggests a consistent and substantial decline of the total vote share new contenders accumulate. This level, which was close to 20% before 1989, has almost halved to 10% post-2014, while established players have gone up by at least 20%.



**Figure 15: Average Significant Contenders Across States**

The graphs (attached in Appendix B2) give a sense of when a state is experiencing disruption and the rise of newer parties, as opposed to seeing a continued hold by more established parties. The golden line represents newer parties, whilst the red one represents established ones. While the two will end up intersecting in specific elections, the red one does go back up immediately if the new parties were successful in establishing themselves as credible players, continuing to receive at least 5% of the vote share. This is precisely what we see in most states, where barring the occasional changing of the guard that happens when a new party breaks through, the red line does go back up eventually, and the gap between established and newer major parties remains.

# HOW INDIAN PARTIES DIFFER: ANALYSIS OF EXPERT OPINIONS

## Introduction

Indian Politics has transformed in the past decade. At the present moment when the dominant party occupies centre stage in the nation's polity, we observe state-wise variation in terms of how parties are organizing themselves. In the studies of political parties at the global level, the most recurrent themes that set parties apart include their organizations (Fabre 2011; Dupont et al., 2022), the degree of their populist appeal (Norris, 2020), and political clientelism (Kitschelt 2014). In this chapter, our focus remains on studying how parties vary at the subnational level in India

In a multi-level polity like India, the organization and functioning of political parties—that includes winning elections and mobilizing their support base—varies greatly. Our study aims to broaden the understanding of inter-state variations among parties by including their organization, ideological positions, and mobilization techniques to identify the subnational variations impacting the survival of parties and party systems.

With responses from the elite survey, we have organized this chapter into three different themes—ideological positions of the parties, social bases and mobilization, and state-level party organization. Previous elite surveys on India (See DALP 2009, Schoeman 2021, Norris 2020) have demonstrated the varying positions of political parties over time, with an emphasis on the INC and the BJP. As these surveys were conducted over a span of the past decade, the elite responses to various indicators of organizations and mobilization have changed. The survey conducted as a part of this study reaffirms the findings of other surveys (Schoeman 2021) that the BJP has become more organized as a political institution than the INC. In addition to the various previous survey, we add on to show state-wise variations among these two parties.

Studying parties within the context of a particular state reveals greater similarity to the other parties in the state, especially with respect to the ideology and political culture of the state. On the other hand, the economic ideology of subnational units shows much more consistency with their party's overall ideology as showcasing the demand side with respect to certain economic ideologies is still on the weaker end in India.

In terms of regional autonomy, the INC has a more autonomous structure, but when it comes to campaigning and strategy, the BJP remains ahead of the INC. Organizationally, the BJP gained substantial ground across the states. In our analysis, we have considered 8 states representing varying regions and polity.

## A note on the method

In the past few years, studies of political parties globally have relied exceedingly on country experts (Bakker et al 2014) to give important information on party organizations, electoral strategies, client-patron relationships, and ideological and policy positions. Following the existing methodology, we contacted a number of experts on political parties and state politics in India. To understand the subnational variations among the political parties in India, we divided the survey into 5 themes. These include support for different ideologies, degree of regional autonomy, support base and mobilization strategies and organization features and strengths. The detailed questionnaire is attached in the appendix C.

The identification of the experts to fill out our survey was based on three criteria: 1) Experts should have a publication on state politics in a reputed journal, 2) Experts should be employed in the department of political science in an academic institution located in the state of their expertise, 3) In case they're journalists, they should have demonstrated publications and years of experience in covering parties and politics in the state. Based on this, we formed a list of 712 experts across states, out of which we received 162 (22.7%) valid responses (attached in Appendix D). As the number of responses varied by state, we weighted the responses from each state in accordance with the proportion of seats that particular state has in Lok Sabha to make our sample nationally representative. Furthermore, we conducted state-level analysis for only those states where the number of expert responses was greater than or equal to eight.

### **Ideological positions of parties in India**

Indian states are diverse in their geographic, demographic, and cultural composition, which not only creates demand for a distinct style of governance but also allows parties with distinct ideologies and policy positions to succeed. Largely, the explanation attributed to the success of regional and ethnic parties in India has not been based on key ideological or policy differences but on representation (Chandra 2007), high clientelist costs of establishing national parties, the success of factions, and change in the overall party system in India (Ziegfeld 2016). The ideological differences between parties are yet to be explored thoroughly in India, but the debates on the state's role in regulating social norms, redistribution of private property, protecting minority rights and accommodating the needs of the marginalized are primary constituents of the ideological space in Indian party politics (Chhibber and Verma 2018).

The shift in ideological politics in India is marked by the INC losing its ideological catchment area and the BJP consolidating those who opposed the politics of statism and reorganization (Chhibber and Verma 2018). The shift also suggests that social and economic ideologies might be more fundamental to Indian politics than previously credited.

Subnational politics in India varies across India, as there is variation in the state-level party system. It is understood that local parties are equipped to better understand local needs and tailor policies according to them (Clark 2004). The variation in ideologies is also interesting as the regional and the national parties often found themselves in different situations. For instance, the regional parties confined to the state would be able to integrate their ideology into popular demand. However, the same is challenging for national parties, as adjusting to local demands and simultaneously representing the national party's ideology can create a conflicting situation (Geser 1999).

In India, the presence of two national parties across all states gives the impression of a homogenous ideology across all units. We know little about how these parties vary across states with respect to their support of certain social and economic issues. In our survey, we focused on a few salient issues to measure the ideological position of parties in different states.

### **Political issues**

Caste has remained a strong force in Indian politics. Caste-based associations have a long story in Indian society, and with the rise of electoral democracy, many of these associations have transformed (Arnold et al, 1976). One such drastic shift in caste-based politics in India was the implementation of the Mandal Commission report which mandated another 27% reservation to Other Backward Classes (OBCs), who roughly form 52% of the population. These changed reservation policies benefitted the dominant OBCs, which further led to decades of agitations, showing how considering them one homogeneous bloc would be erroneous (Sen 2012). High incidences of protests across states in past decades have kept the issue of reservation relevant in electoral politics.

Overall, there is high support for caste-based reservation across parties in India, with a mean score of 3.2. This is also driven by caste-based political parties such as the Bahujan Samaj Party, Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal. The variation on this issue between the two national parties in India, BJP and INC, is quite high, with a mean score of 3.5; the INC is much more supportive of caste reservation than its counterpart. The subnational variation between two parties across states is also significant, indicating the greater salience of the issue at the state level. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, caste-based networks are the basis for mobilizations by parties (Trivedi and Singh 2021). Both parties strongly support caste-based reservations in Uttar Pradesh more than their national positions. In Gujarat, the gap between the INC and the BJP's positions on this issue is quite high, with the INC supporting recent agitation by the dominant OBC community of the state, Patel. The support was extended in order to gain electorally against the incumbent BJP. Patel's agitation in the state to come to gain electorally against the incumbent (Jeffrelot 2016).

The variation in the support provided to the caste reservations by the parties is also contingent upon a high dependency of the region on social policies (Brokema et al, 2021). Different social movements have pointed out similar expectations from the state, overall negotiating the federal structure of the Union. Our analysis of the survey points to the trend that regional demands do accentuate or suppress the support from the national party within the state diverging from their national positions.

This is true for other issues as well. In Maharashtra, the politics of nativism has been centre-stage since 1966, with the Shiv Sena behind it (Verma 2011). On this issue, both national parties are higher in their mean positions than their overall positions, as per the expert's opinion. Similarly, in the state of Madhya Pradesh, the whole son of the soil movement supported by both the BJP and the INC within the state is different from their national positions.

The role of subnational units of parties in driving support for different policies is not just limited to preferential treatments given to a caste or domicile but the state's capacity to spend on social policies. Past research has shown that voters reward incumbents in expectation of benefitting from the state's expenditure on public services (Nooruddin and Chhibber 2008). The presence of a single party in the centre often benefits the states ruled by the same party by allowing them to have higher fiscal deficits (Khemani 2007).

As per the expert's opinion on the subject, for the BJP, the overall support on the issue of greater devolution of funds to the state is not of much significance. The only BJP units of states that have given due importance to the issue are also ruled by them. Whereas the states where the INC supports the issue are also the states where the INC remains a major player. Both the BJP and the INC lose incentives to support greater fiscal space with a third-party majority in the state. Here, in the case of New Delhi and Punjab, due to the Aam Aadmi Party being in power, the support for the issue for both parties is way below their mean positions.

### Social issues

Parties are also divided in their views and support of certain social issues that vary across states and their unique societies. We see state-wide variations between the two national parties in their support of social issues such as the inheritance rights of women, the position of women in households, and accepting inter-caste marriages. The INC is far ahead of the BJP when it comes to women's position in society and accepting inter-caste marriages, as per the responses provided by the various state experts.

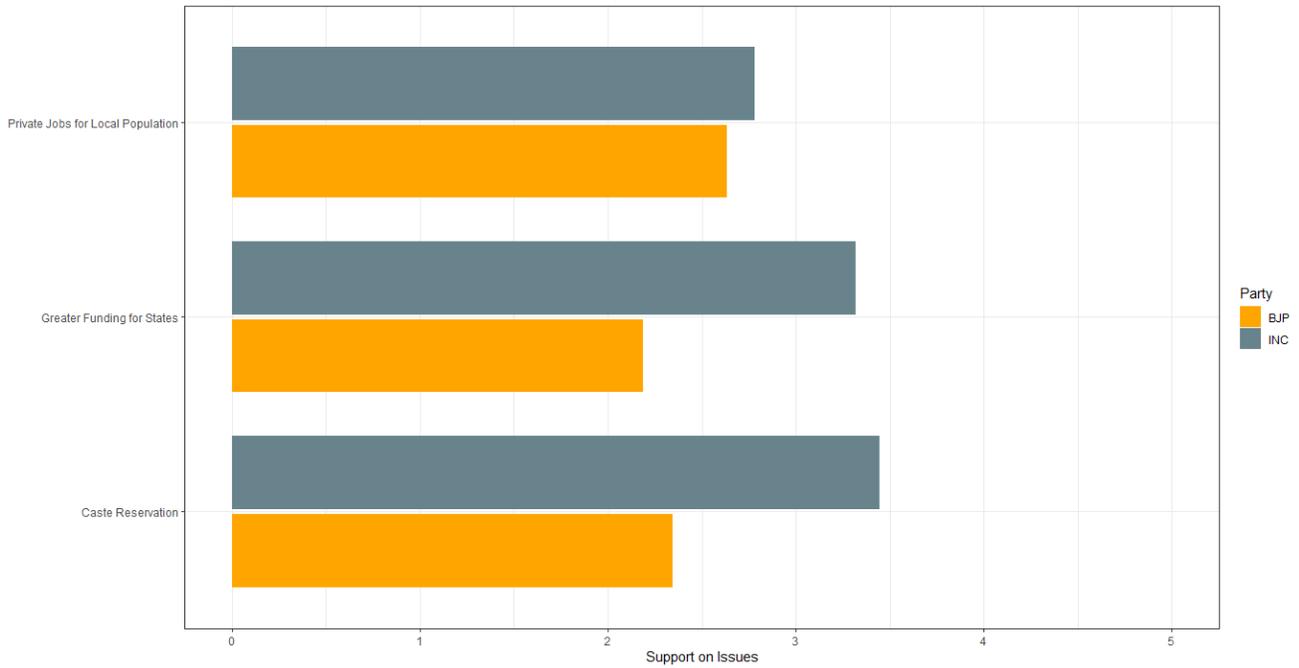


Figure 16: Party-wise Division on Key Political Issues

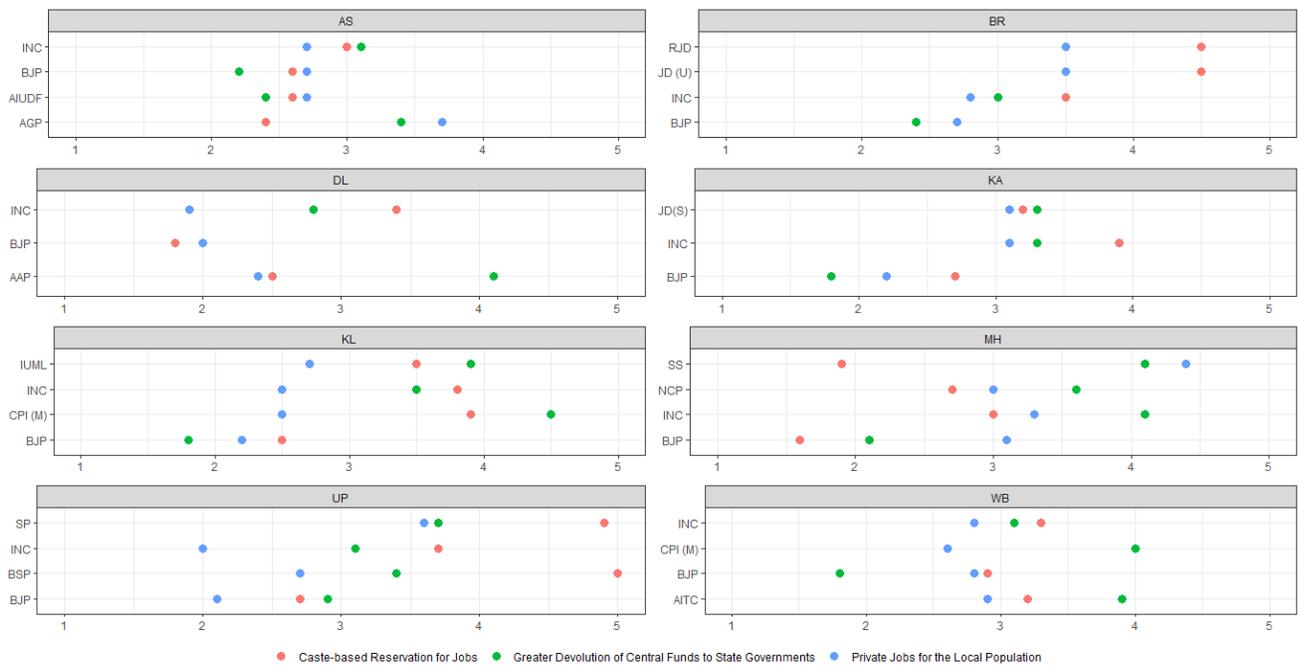
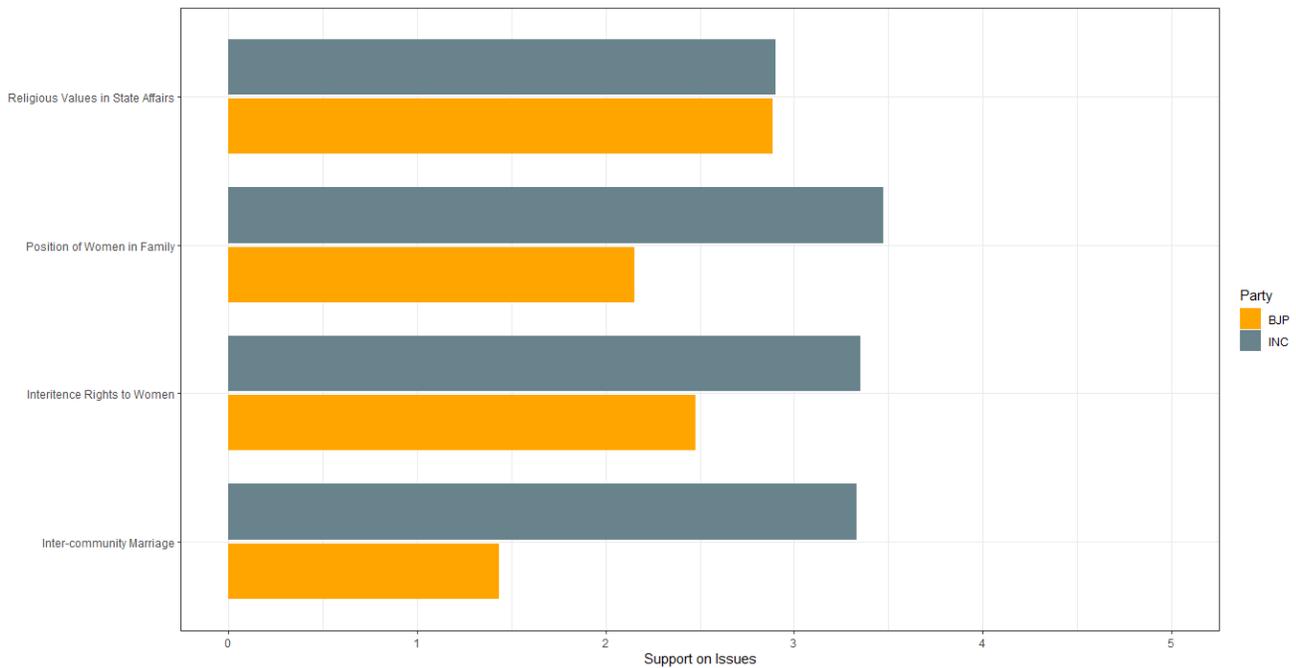


Figure 17: State-wise Support for Caste-based Reservation



**Figure 18: Prevalence of Traditional Values within Parties across States**

Women, have acquired a political identity of their own as markers of the identity of social and religious groups, and have also been the objects and agents of different discourses (Chhachhi 2019). The high variation between the mean positions of the national parties at the state level in advocating more agency to women within the family versus its overall position might be cautionary as some cultures or religious groups might take it as undue interference by the state in their religion. Of the social and cultural factors in the past few years, we've seen issues like triple talaq and uniform civil code being politicized and parties carefully navigating these issues based on their existing support base.

The BJP has also been able to integrate itself into women's issues by adopting a feminist vocabulary without giving any substantive representation (William 2022). Expert evaluation of the BJP's support of women's rights and autonomy is also interesting, given that the party has promised more than they've delivered. It is also interesting to note that both the BJP and the INC support women's inheritance rights and their position in families in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The support withers away when it comes to inter-community marriage because, in both states, caste is an important factor.

In India, religion is seen more as a way of life, deeply intertwined with society. The idea of secularism in India has been more of treating all religions equally rather than completely separating religion and state. With a mean score of 2.7 and 3, both the BJP and the INC converge on the importance of religious values in conducting state affairs. The mean positions of other regional parties also converge with the positions of the BJP and the INC in this respect. The consistency among parties with respect might also be due to unanimity among all parties with the Indian idea of secularism where the safe distance between the Indian state and religion is maintained (Bhargava 1998).

### Economic issues

The economic reforms of 1991 were a watershed moment in Indian history. As license raj retreated, there was more foreign direct investment followed by higher revenue by the Indian state. The period also saw an increase in public investment in

social sectors and welfare schemes (Deshpande et.al, 2017). The ability to invest more by the government through subsidies also resulted in demand for welfare and subsidies from the population, which essentially became the precondition for effective power mobilization (Esping Anderson 2017).

With regard to issues such as an increase in taxation for the rich or an increase in public subsidies, both parties differ greatly but remain more consistent with respect to their state units. As per our survey, the INC, with a mean score of 3.6, is far ahead of BJP when it comes to advocating an increase in subsidies for the poor and this trend is consistent across all 12 states on our panel. The position of the INC with respect to other regional parties demands a greater subsidy net for the poor, highlighting greater social sector spending for the poor.

Labour rights is another ignored policy area in India, with the declining bargaining power of labourers and the strengthening position of employers (Roychowdhury 2019). The issue of labour rights is not as important for the BJP in most states in contrast to the INC. INC's focus on the issue has been evaluated higher than the overall positions of other parties in most of the states. The stark gap between INC and BJP reduces with respect to treating companies at par with domestic companies with BJP supporting the issue in almost all the states except for West Bengal.

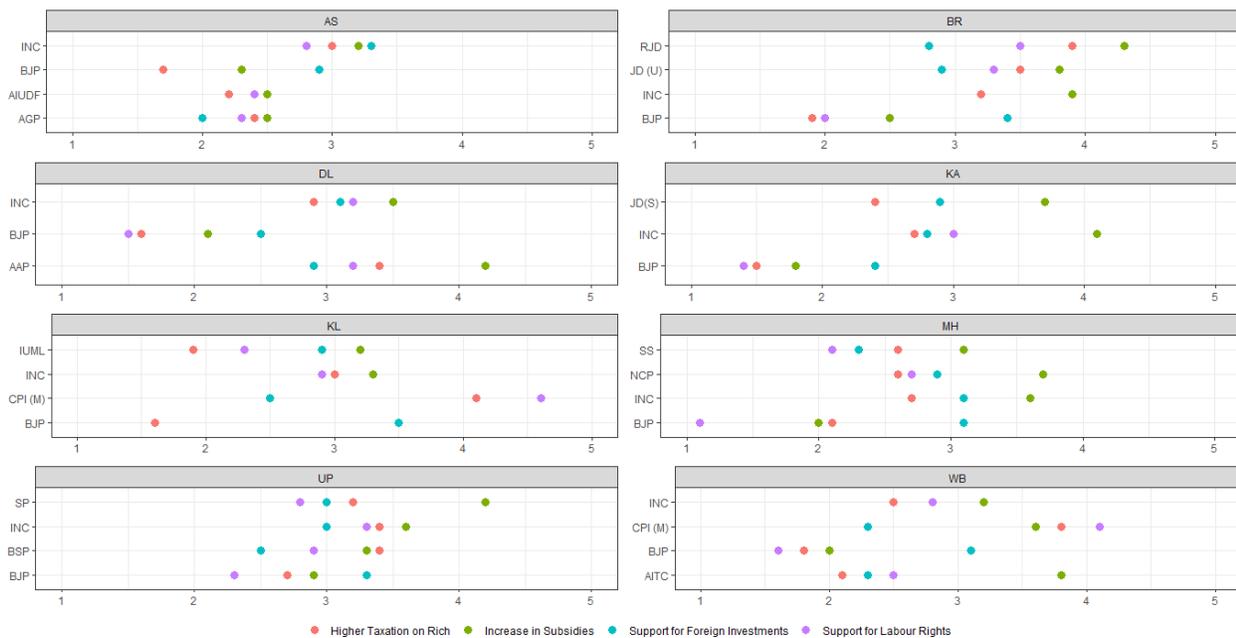


Figure 19: Policy Positions on Major Economic Issues.

### Social base and mobilization

Political parties have distinct social bases and constituencies. Historically, the genesis and function of political parties lie in shaping political expression and exploiting existing social cleavages in society (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). Such politicization of social cleavages gave rise to political parties with very distinct social bases. For instance, the Labour Party in the United Kingdom and other social democratic parties in Western Europe drew their overwhelming support from the working classes or labour with extensive links to trade unions, while the Conservative Party defended the interests of the propertied

classes and the bourgeoisie. Even in India, during the halcyon days of the Congress system, the INC at the state level operated on local social cleavages and derived electoral gains accordingly (Chhibber & Petrocick, 1989). Later, during India's third electoral system, which witnessed an upsurge in the political participation of backward and lower castes and minority groups, India's party system changed considerably, giving rise to parties with very distinct social bases (Yadav, 1999). This section will focus on the social bases of India's two primary national parties, the BJP and the INC, and also focus on the mobilization strategies undertaken by parties for electoral purposes.

### Mobilization of the social base

Factors that play a salient role in mobilizing the social bases of political parties widely differ between the INC and the BJP. The electoral success of the BJP lies in its ability to coalesce religious Hindus on a common platform of 'Hindutva' (Chhibber, 1997). The formation of the BJP and its earlier avatar, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, can be traced back to its principled stand in opposition to the politics of secularism by the INC party and its professed intention to protect so-called Hindu interests (Graham, 1990). It is this expression of religion and religious attitudes that remains the single biggest factor propelling the BJP and its support base. As per the survey responses, 71.6% of BJP supporters are perceived to attach more importance to religion as a mobilization factor, compared to only 3.6% of INC supporters. For BJP supporters, religion is followed far behind by leadership as a second important consideration (12.2%) for galvanizing its support base. In the absence of the glue of religious fervour, for the INC, leaders and party elites are perceived to mobilize their supporters drawing on the popularity of its central leadership, namely, the Nehru-Gandhi family. Historically, INC candidates won handsomely in the elections held in the 1950s and early '60s due to the immense popularity of Prime Minister Nehru, then, in the 1960s and '70s the personality cult of Indira Gandhi, and later on, Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi. This popularity stood on the meticulously created patronage networks of the party at the state level, led by regional stalwarts and political bosses. Thus, 30.4% of INC supporters are primarily motivated by leadership, followed by the pull of the state and local patronage networks, undergirded by more materialistic factors (28.8%).

Party	Caste	Ideology	Leadership	Patronage	Religion
BJP	5	11	14	4	67
INC	8	26	31	30	5

**Table 3: Uniting factors for BJP and INC**

Note: Owing to approximation the row sum does not add up to 100

### Representation of social groups within the party

In Indian politics, even though parties have distinct social bases, they cannot win elections based only on their core supporters and, hence, they do reach out to diverse social groups within society. The INC party, post-independence was a typical catch-all political formation, lost its position as the 'pole' around which Indian politics revolved due to the erosion of political support from nearly all social groups. However, in the 1990s, there remained some social groups that could be characterized as 'Congress voters'—Adivasis, Muslims, women, and the poor—and the party was at an advantage among these social segments more than the BJP and its allies (Yadav, 1999).

On the other hand, the BJP, whose social base was primarily drawn from the upper castes, underwent a massive change as the INC declined and the BJP emerged as the dominant party of Indian politics. The party has made new appeals to the so-called marginalized sections of society to shed its attribute of being an elite party, and one can say with much confidence that the social base of the new BJP is starkly different from before. The party has crafted new strategies to mobilize women, OBCs, Dalits, and Adivasis.

Given these changing social bases, it is pertinent to ask how much this change reflects in the party organization and hierarchy. Our expert opinion perceives that when it comes to the representation of various social groups within the party organization, the INC is ahead of the BJP in inducting party workers and leaders from vulnerable social groups. The INC is far more likely to have a greater representation of women, religious minorities, and poor and lower castes within the party than the BJP, despite its increased outreach to these social groups.

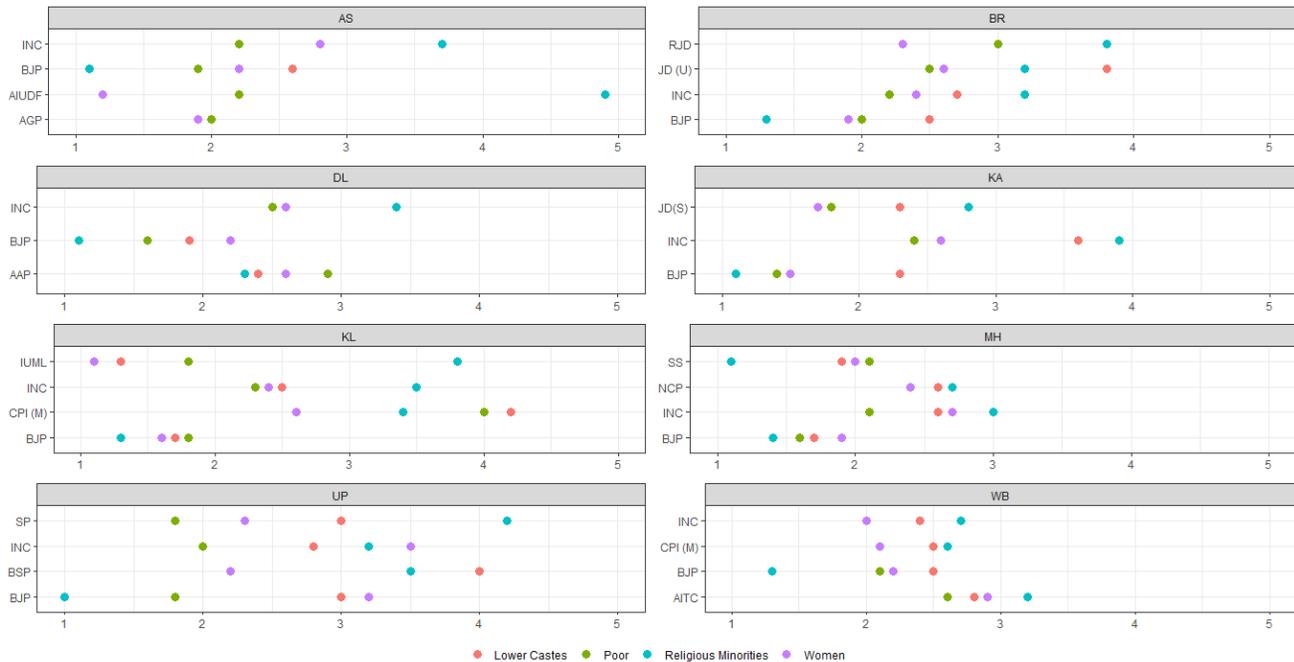


Figure 20: Representation of Various Social Groups within Parties

### Mobilization strategies of political parties

To win elections, political parties must cater to both core supporters of the party and swing voters as well. For this purpose, parties deploy numerous strategies to gain political momentum and to distinguish themselves from the stand taken by other parties. As a part of electoral rhetoric, the study reveals that both parties utilize anti-elite rhetoric, leaning on populist appeals. Many countries around the world, including advanced democracies, are grappling with the rise of both right and left-wing populist parties and anti-elite rhetoric (Grujini et al. 2014). Such populist appeals emanate from either economic causes as a fallout of the consequences of globalization or cultural sources related to xenophobic or religious sentiments. In India, populist appeals are not just limited to the BJP, in congruence with the global trend, but are equally a potent weapon used by the INC.

On the question of national security issues, the BJP is more likely to deploy the national security pitch for electoral purposes than the INC. The expectation is that raising national security issues is likely to generate high, nationalistic sentiments and produce a 'rally around the flag' effect for a party that attaches a lot of importance to national security (Hinton & Vaishnav, 2021).

On the last variable of regional sentiments, the INC and its subnational units in various states of the country are more likely to raise issues of regional sentiments than the BJP. This can also be attributed to the fact that now, the INC is a more fragmented political organization, wherein the subnational units are in a constant tussle with the party elites at the centre. On the other hand, the BJP seems like a more cohesive organization, with party elites at the centre dominating party affairs and decision-making and, thus, refraining from using regional issues.

## Clientelism or programmatic strategy?

It is known that political parties deploy a diverse range of strategies to deliver goods and services to citizens. This raises a question: Are some parties more likely than others to use either a clientelist or a programmatic strategy? The literature on clientelism argues that clientelist strategies are used by political parties to focus on swing voters, who are not die-hard loyalists of the party and provide them incentives to switch their votes (Stokes, 2005). On the other hand, it is also argued that clientelist efforts are geared toward core voters, rather than swing voters, as it is difficult to monitor the voting behaviour of clients, and clientelism as a strategy is meant to boost voter turnout (Nichter, 2008).

However, it must be kept in mind that clientelism with either of the above motivations creates a small clientele base, thus creating a patronage trap for political parties (Barthwal & Ali, 2021). If political parties desire to broaden their social base and expand their winning coalitions, clientelism as a strategy has its limits and it is prudent for political parties to switch to a programmatic basis for the distribution of goods and services.

The survey responses captured by the study observe that among the two national parties, the BJP, owing to its more robust organizational network and better ability to monitor voting behaviour, is more likely to utilize clientelism as a strategy than the INC. On the other hand, the INC is slightly more likely to rely on a programmatic strategy for the distribution of public goods and services. The new welfare architecture established by the INC in the early 2000s attests to the findings of the study, which can be explained by the fact that the party draws its support from a broad social base, rather than narrow ethnic groups.

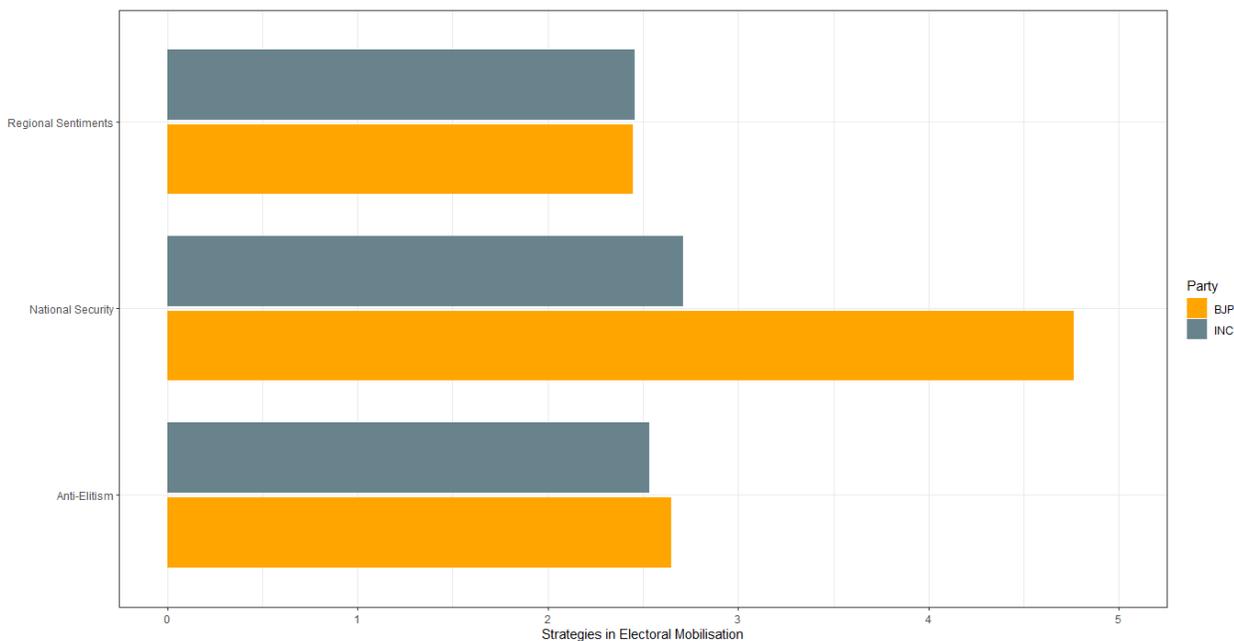


Figure 21: Variation in Types of Rhetorics Used by INC and BJP

## State-level party organization

Party organizations are argued to be critical to the electoral success and survival of political parties. Based on empirical evidence, it has been observed that political parties with strong organizations are more likely to be electorally successful and survive as they are able to attract and mobilize voters more effectively than political parties with weak organizations (Tavits, 2013). Therefore, political parties invest a lot of time and effort in building party organizations as it is a costly and painstaking exercise. However, in recent times, the proliferation of different forms of mass contact, namely, media and social media, are argued to have been playing a pivotal role in electoral mobilization, which raises questions on the utility of party organizations in a conventional framework.

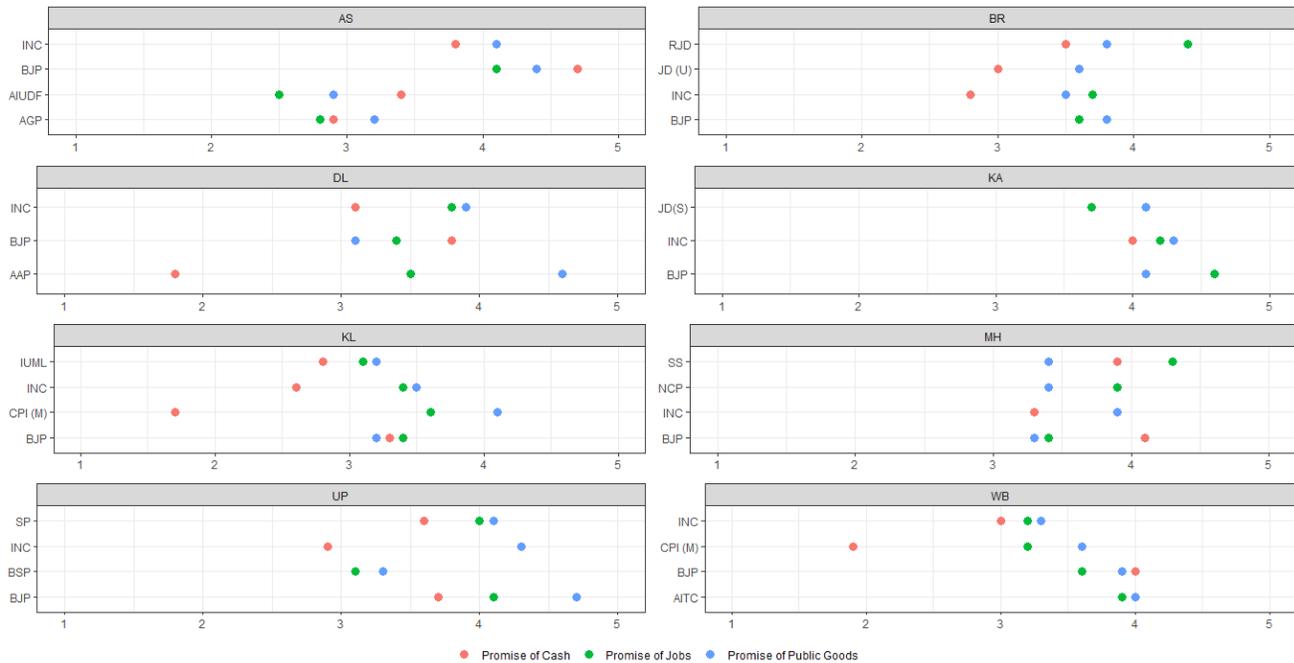


Figure 22: Electoral Promises made by Parties

In poor democracies, despite a high degree of penetration by both media and social media networks, robust party organizations remain a key element of political parties to connect with voters and mobilize the masses prior to elections. Establishing and scaling up party organizational units requires physical infrastructure, raising of finances, recruitment of party cadres or members, and procedures for internal discipline and governance (Weiner, 1967). Based on such characteristics, the organizational strength of political parties in India varies from political parties which have robust party organizations and high levels of internal cohesion to parties that are centred around a single political leader or political dynasty controlling the internal affairs of the party.

In this section we assess the organizational strength of political parties based on the responses provided by experts on political science and practitioners of politics on the following themes:

### The physical infrastructure of political parties in Indian states

The first test of the organizational strength of a political party is the geographic breadth of its organizational capacity. The structure of party organizations in India can be traced back to the organizational pattern of India's oldest political party, the INC. The INC was one of the few political parties in the world whose local units were in congruence with governance and administrative units, rather than electoral units (Weiner, 1967). Thus, almost all political parties in India have followed the organizational template of India's Grand Old Party. As per our survey, we have defined the geographical breadth of a party's organization by measuring the presence of the political party at the level of the districts.

As per the survey responses, it can be said that at the level of states, the INC vis-à-vis the BJP has a better organizational presence in the states of Assam and Kerala. However, the BJP has a greater geographical presence in the states of Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and New Delhi. It is only in the state of West Bengal that the BJP and the INC do not have much difference. In addition to the presence of party offices at the district level, another measure of assessment is to understand whether these offices are operational only during elections or all around the year. There are differences between the two principal parties on this count: The INC offices are more likely to be visible during election time rather than non-election

time, and the converse is true for the BJP. Further, the mere physical presence of party offices cannot adequately account for the presence of party offices at the district level. The presence of party offices has a more meaningful characteristic when it is measured by how active these party offices are in terms of the regular attendance of party workers, how often political leaders visit the party offices and whether these offices conduct regular meetings. On this measure, BJP party offices are perceived to be more active (mean score of 3.9) vis-à-vis party offices of the INC (mean score of 2.7).

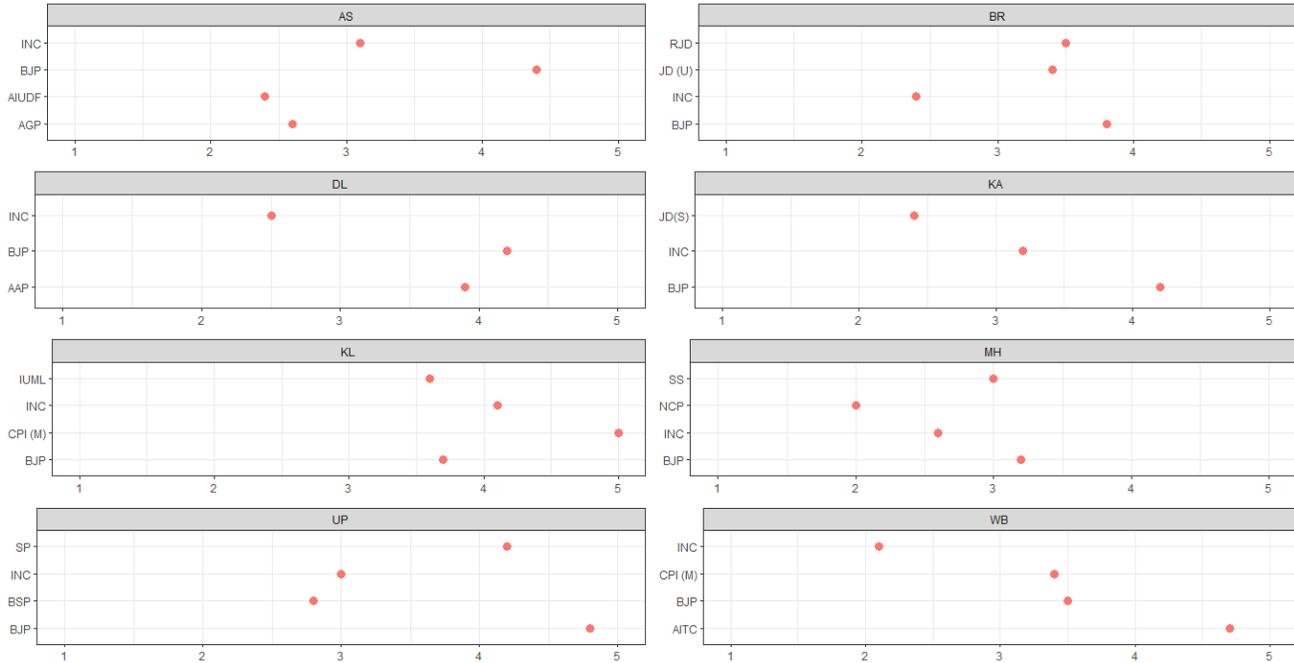


Figure 23: How Active Are Local Level Party Offices?

Party	High Presence	Moderate Presence	Only During Elections
BJP	73	24	3
INC	48	34	18

Table 4: Party Offices at District Level

**Frontal organizations and recruitment of party cadres**

Party organizations in India and in other parts of the world are closely associated with auxiliary organizations which are created for a special purpose or to respond to specific segments of society. However, the degree of association between the main party organizations and these auxiliary units differs from one party to another.

Based on survey evidence, one can infer that for the BJP, business organizations, information technology cells, women’s organizations, and youth organizations are perceived to be performing better than other types of auxiliary organizations. On the other hand, for the INC, farmer organizations and labour unions/organizations are perceived to be more robust than other types of auxiliary organizations. While in many contexts, new members of political parties are often drawn from the aforementioned auxiliary organizations, political parties also conduct recruitment drives to add vigour to their party organizations. However, the frequency and intensity of such drives vary from one party to another. According to expert opinion, the BJP is known to conduct membership drives more frequently than the INC, especially in states not in states where the BJP doesn’t run the state government. However, there are differences among states too. When it comes to membership drives, the INC in Assam is perceived to be far more active than in other states. Similarly, the BJP is perceived to be far more active in states such as Kerala and Bihar where the state government is run by a different political party.

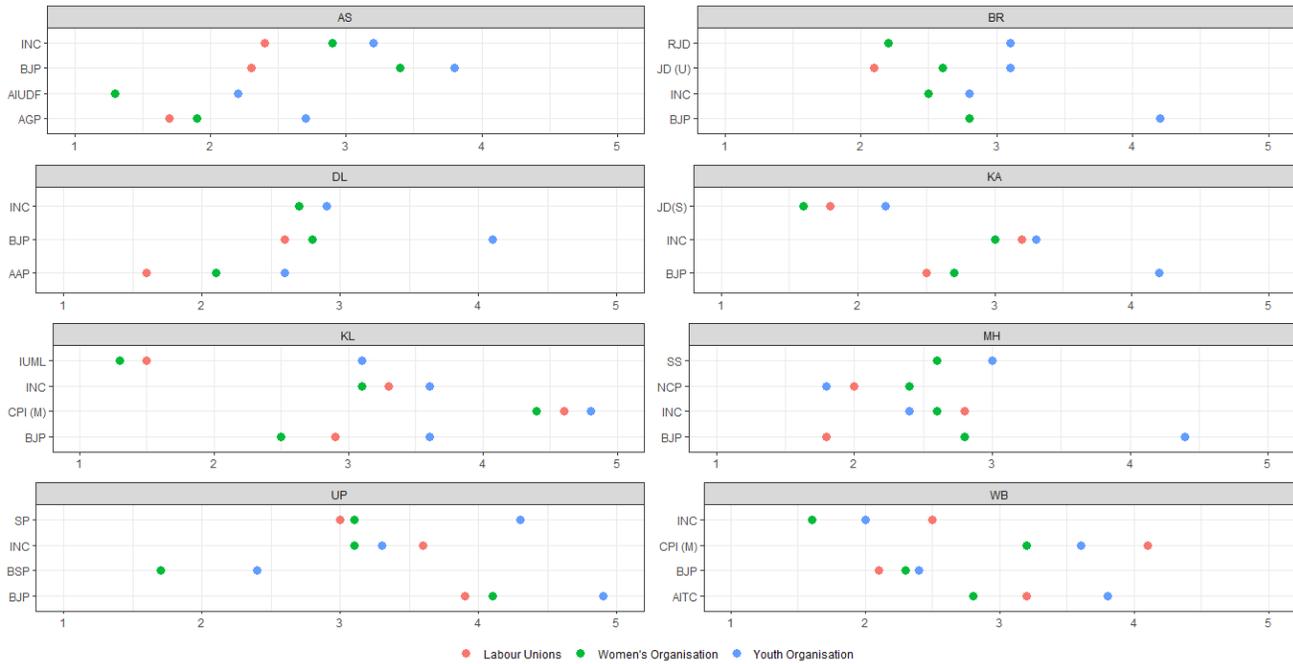


Figure 24: Strength of Frontal Organisations

### Candidate selection and individuals careers within the party

Another facet of the robustness of party organizations is the process of candidate selection for electoral contestation. Political parties with strong and cohesive organizational units have laid out procedures for the selection of candidates and are reflective of practices of intra-party democracy, while political parties with weak organizations may lead to the concentration of such decision-making powers by top party elites (Hazan and Rahat, 2010).

The study undertakes a comparison between the two national parties in terms of candidate selection for the general elections. The survey responses reveal that when it comes to caste considerations for the selection of candidates, the BJP is slightly more likely to attach importance to caste affiliations than the INC (refer to figure 11). On the other hand, candidates being selected due to their family or political dynastic ties are more likely to find a special place within the INC, despite the close gap in the selection of the dynastic candidates by both the BJP and INC. On a more important note, proximity to the top leadership matters equally for both political parties, which is indicative of the concentration of the decision-making processes with the top political elites.

Party	Frequent	Less Frequent	No drive
BJP	77	22	1
INC	28	53	19

Table 5: Frequency of Membership Drives across BJP and INC

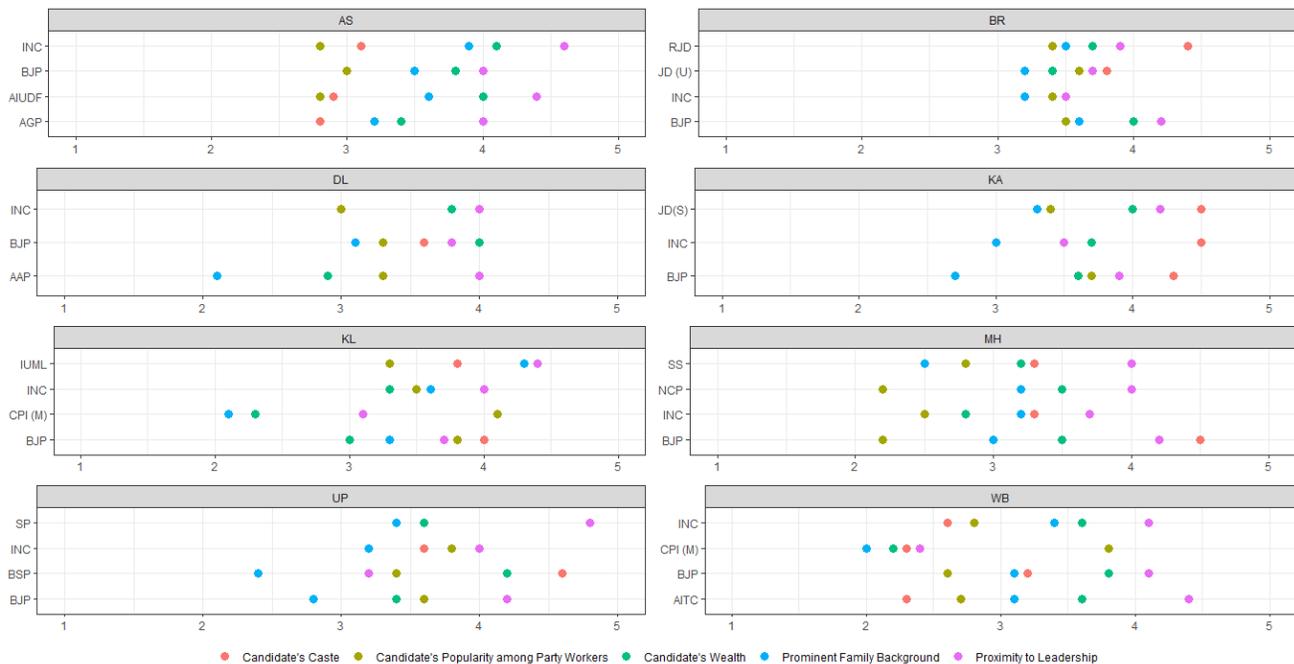


Figure 25: What Matters More for Securing a Party Ticket for Assembly Elections

In the context of Assembly elections, a similar trend can be observed between the two parties. In terms of caste consideration, again, the candidates belonging to the BJP are more likely to be chosen based on their caste affiliation vis-à-vis the INC. Candidates with greater family or dynastic ties are again more likely to be considered by the INC compared to the BJP.

Lastly, the proximity to party elites continues to play a salient role in candidates being given nominations in both parties. Career trajectories of individuals within political parties are contingent on the strength of political organizations within parties. Robust organizations provide a platform for individuals to aspire and climb the organizational hierarchy within political parties. An assessment of the factors which determine this process of career mobility varies among political parties. According to expert opinion, in both the BJP and the INC, ascendance on the organizational ladder is shaped by proximity to party elites, followed by possession of wealth. However, another important factor is family or dynastic ties, which is more so for members of the INC.

### Party finances

In addition to personnel, running effective political organizations requires money. Political parties draw on diverse sources of finances to establish and maintain party offices. Both the BJP and the INC rely on big businesses to fund their organizational and day-to-day activities. However, the BJP has a clear edge in obtaining finances from big businesses compared to the INC. Also, when it comes to smaller businesses, the BJP has a natural advantage as their primary support base is derived from small businesses and traders (Sitapati, 2020).

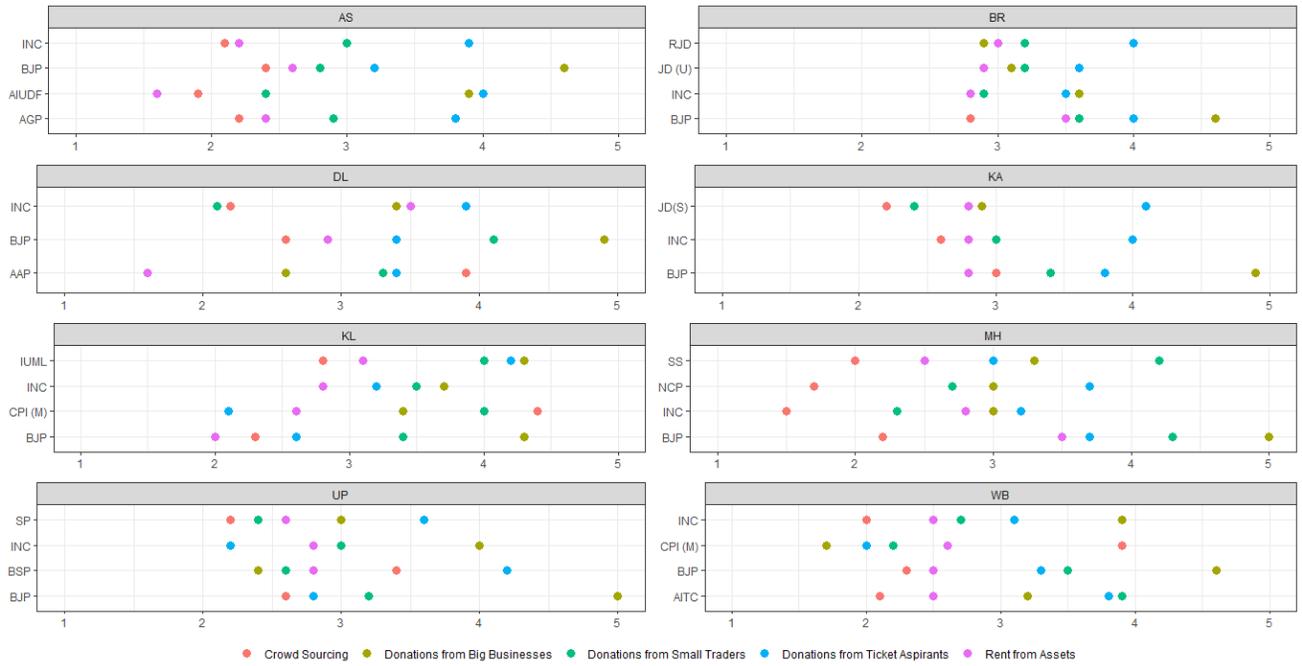


Figure 26: Where do Parties Recieve Funds From?

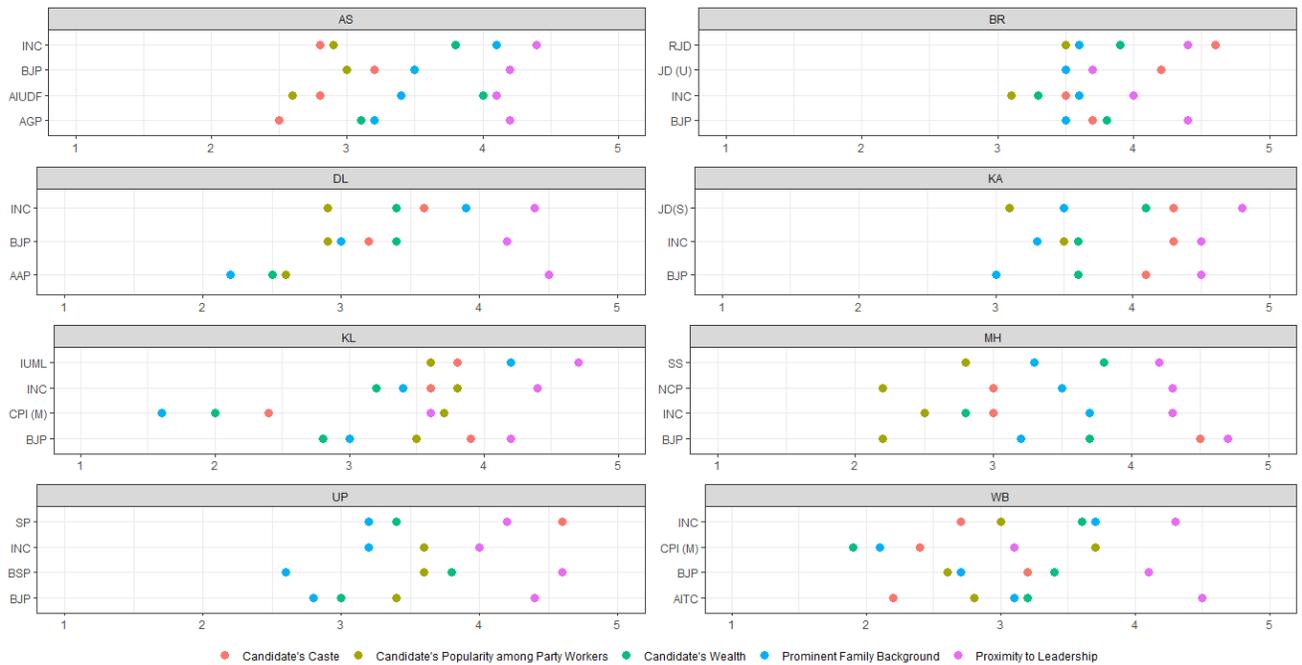


Figure 27: Determinants of Upward Mobility within Parties

## Internal discipline

Strong-party organizations often suppress individual opinions and aspirations in the large interests of the party. This is more so for ideologically glued cadre-based parties. However, in politics, individuals have political ambitions beyond party interests and people within parties do express views that contravene the official stand taken by a party. Given that this is commonplace, there are variations in how parties respond to such individual dissent and political ambitions. The BJP, being a cohesive ideologically-glued party, is more likely to take disciplinary action against party members, especially where members have deviated from the ideological platform of the political party (mean score of 3.8), versus a party like the INC, which has a fuzzier political ideology. Individual members of the BJP who publicly disagree with the top party leadership are more likely to face disciplinary action vis-à-vis the members of the INC. Lastly, individual members of political parties often neglect the party work assigned to them and face some form of punishment. As per our survey findings, members of the BJP who are derelict in their party duties are more likely to face punishment than an INC member who has done the same.

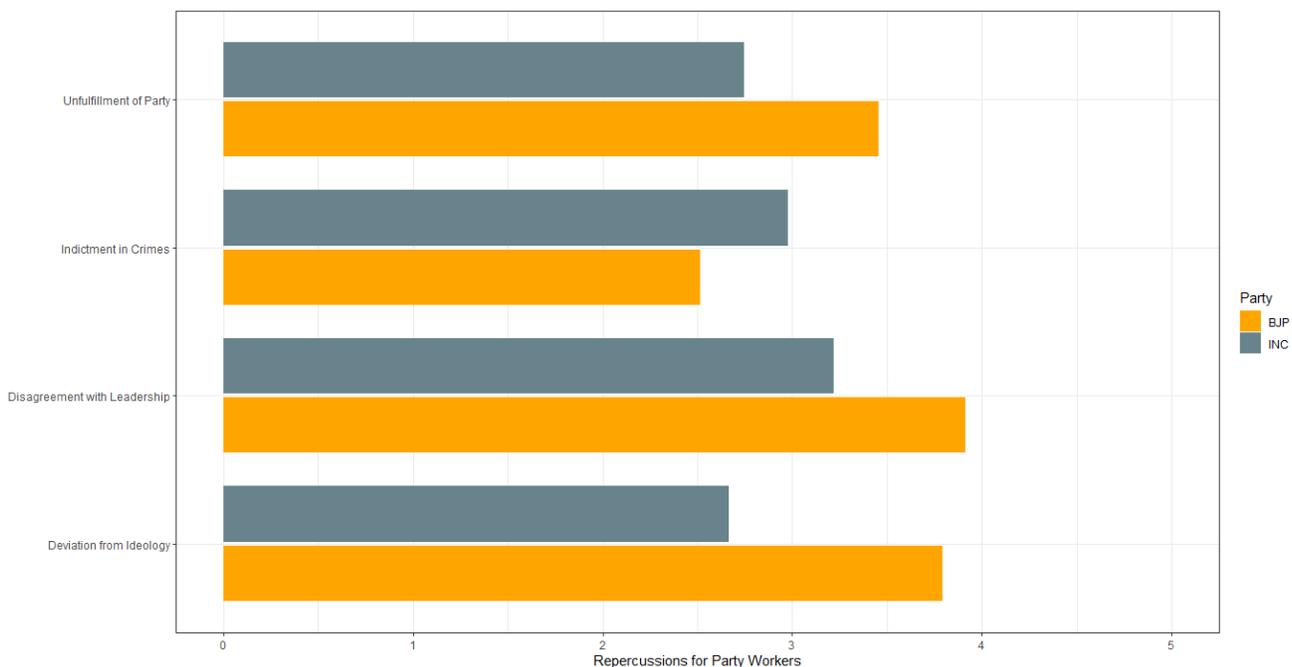


Figure 28: Dealbreakers for Parties

## Regional autonomy and party organizations

There is a strong correlation between robust party organizations and regional autonomy within political parties. Strong party organizations go hand-in-hand with strong regional units and are often contradictory to the impulses of a few political elites at the centre of the hierarchy to dominate party affairs (Kitschelt 2015). This also challenges the conventional political wisdom that it is strong organizations that produce a few elites to rule, giving rise to a law of oligarchy. However, strong party organizations with regional units wielding power can undermine the law of oligarchy (Drochon 2020).

Given the state of Indian politics, experts opine that regional units of the INC in several states of India are more autonomous than the other national party, the BJP. There is a higher likelihood of INC state units wielding more autonomy (mean score of 2.7) than BJP state units (mean score of 1.8), even though the INC, in terms of organizational effectiveness, scores lower than the BJP in terms of organizational strength. The characteristics of regional autonomy can be further broken down into six factors: campaign strategy, candidate selection, coalition making, positions on important policies, resource allocation, and state-level party organization.

On all these parameters, it is perceived that the degree of regional autonomy enjoyed by INC state units is far greater than the state units of the BJP. Further, among these parameters, BJP state units enjoy more autonomy in the domains of campaign strategy and state-level party organization. On the other hand, in the INC, state units enjoy the highest autonomy in the three domains of campaign strategy, candidate selection, and state-level party organization.

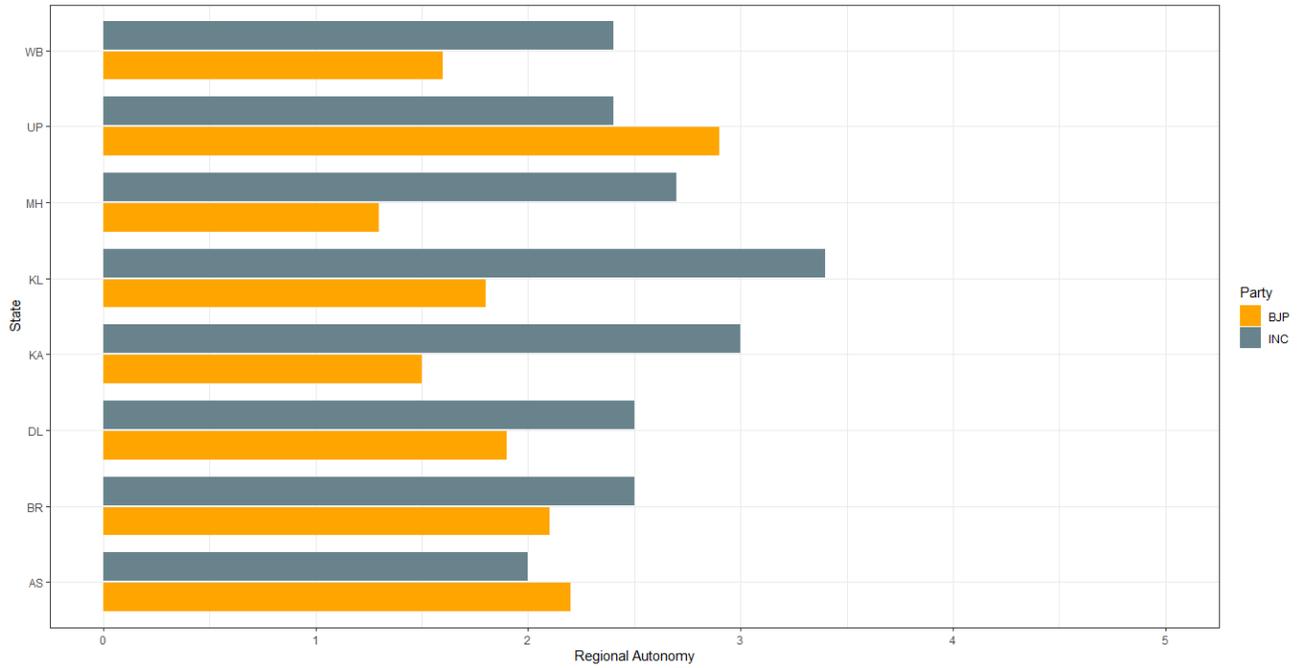


Figure 29: Regional Autonomy of State Units of BJP and INC

## CONCLUSION

While there exists significant literature on parties and party systems in India, less attention has been paid to assessing the influence of federal structure on the Indian polity and the varied sub-national social cleavages that have on political parties in India. The strategic policy positions taken by parties at the national level and across states stand crucial in understanding the transformations undergoing in the Indian polity and their possible outcomes that will further shape the federal structure of the Indian state.

In the first section, we identified and classified parties to understand the factors behind their proliferation and survival at the sub-national level. One of the necessary but not sufficient determinants for the proliferation of parties stood the size of the legislature at state levels. Factionalism and fragmentation in the sub-national party systems prompted by social cleavages in attempts to capture electoral space emerge as prominent causes in the formation of new parties. However, electoral performance and survival are dependent on the links the new parties have to established parties from the past.

In the subsequent section, we studied, based on the opinions of scholars and experts, the varying positions parties take up to capture political space at state levels. We found out that the extent of ideological disposition, positions on key issues, and organisational and social mobilisation are dependent on the socio-political contexts of those states. Major parties remain clientelist at their fundamental level, driven by social cleavages, and funded by big businesses. The core uniting base for BJP stands for religion while that for INC remains leadership and patronage.

The aggressive expansion of the BJP has led to the shrinkage of the political space and bargaining powers that state-level parties once held and has forced them to reposition themselves on major socio-political issues to replicate the electoral success of the BJP. The pervasive impact can be observed on issues of minority representation. The Personality-driven politicisation of welfare is another facet of the ongoing transformation that the BJP has normalised in recent years.

The transformations and their plausible consequences raise the need for extensive research and debates. In studies to follow, we will look at the changing nature and patterns of welfare and their impact on the federal polity. As well as the evolution of political mobilisation at district levels to ascertain the varying positions parties take up and their impact on sub-national party systems.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A: Tables and Graphs

Average Vote Share of New and Old Major Contenders by Time		
Time Period	Vote Share of New Contenders	Vote Share of Old Contenders
Pre-1989	19.3	56.7
1989-2013	12.3	69.2
Post-2014	10.1	74.9

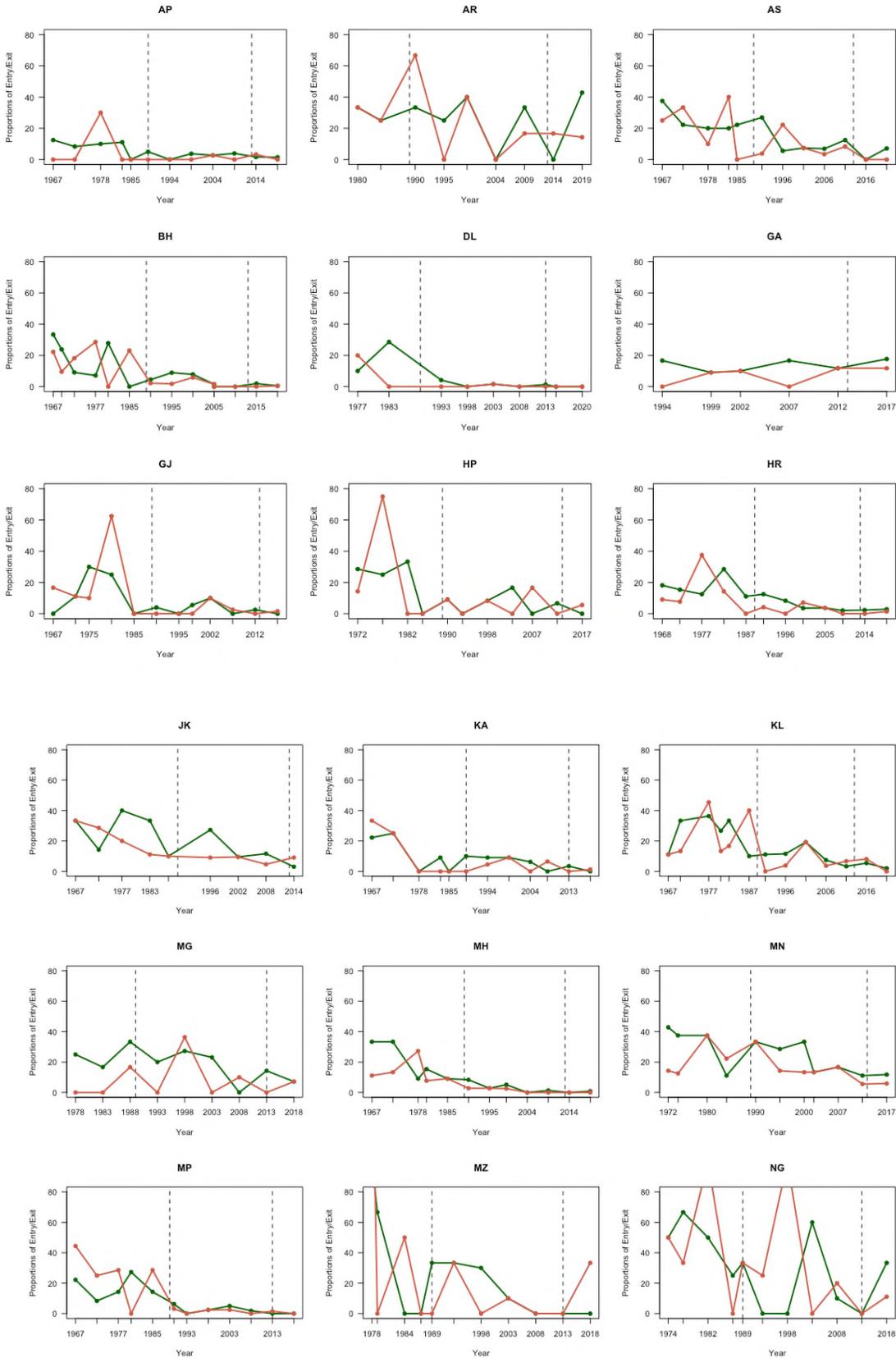
Table A1: Vote Share of New and Old Major Contenders

Average Party Entry and Exit Proportions by State		
State Name	Proportion of Party Entries	Proportion of Party Exits
Andhra Pradesh	15.6	10.6
Arunachal Pradesh	26.5	24.5
Assam	27.7	20.5
Bihar	23.3	23.0
Delhi	18.3	9.2
Goa	24.3	13.4
Gujarat	21.1	28.2
Himachal Pradesh	18.1	20.8
Haryana	28.3	19.4
Jammu & Kashmir	35.9	29.4
Karnataka	22.8	18.7
Kerala	24.0	19.9
Meghalaya	25.6	11.3
Maharashtra	19.9	11.0
Manipur	33.3	22.9
Madhya Pradesh	21.4	26.6
Mizoram	25.0	30.6
Nagaland	31.8	35.1
Odisha	18.4	20.1
Punjab	18.8	13.3
Puducherry	20.8	11.3
Rajasthan	23.6	26.5
Sikkim	21.3	25.0
Tamil Nadu	19.4	9.2
Tripura	11.3	5.3
Uttar Pradesh	23.4	25.9
West Bengal	11.3	6.4

Table A2: Proportion of Party Entry and Exit by State

# APPENDIX

## Appendix B: Tables and Graphs



# APPENDIX

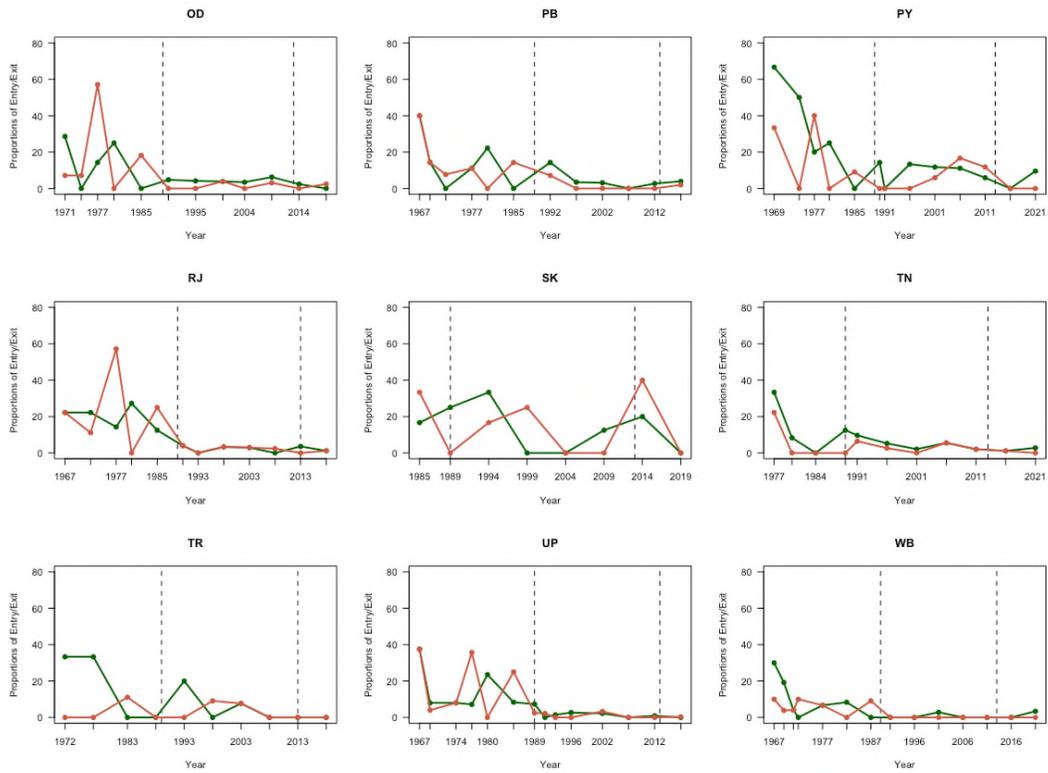
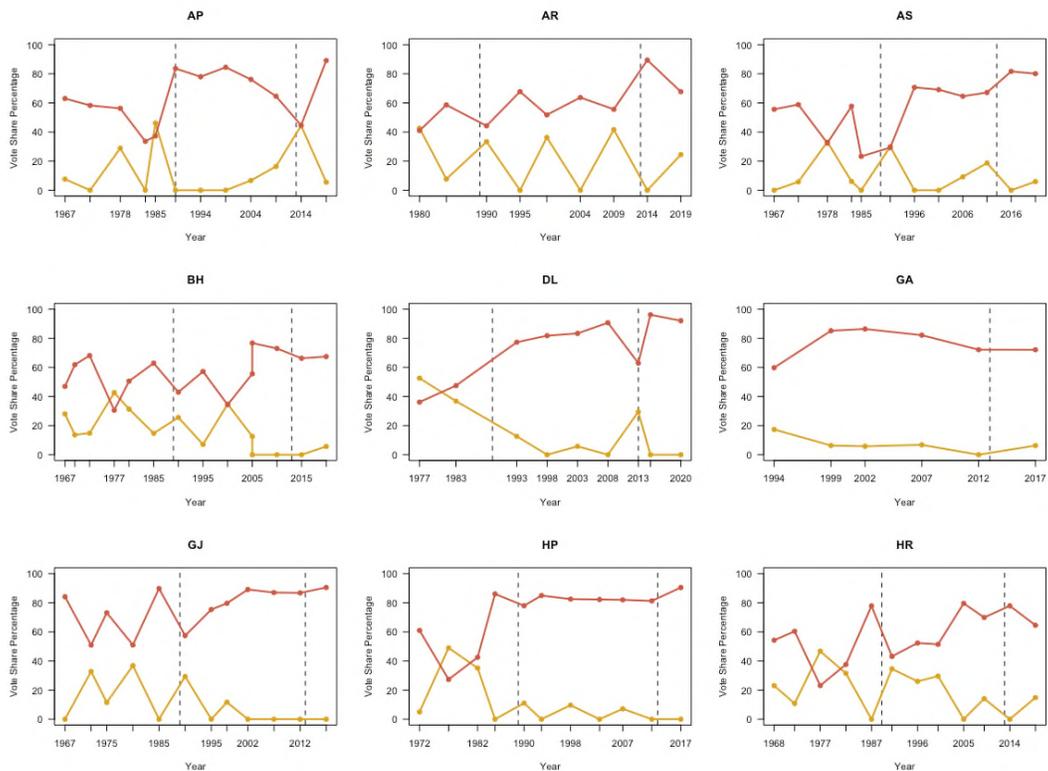


Figure B1: Level of Party Entry and Exit (Green Represents Entry and Red Represents Exit of a Party)



# APPENDIX

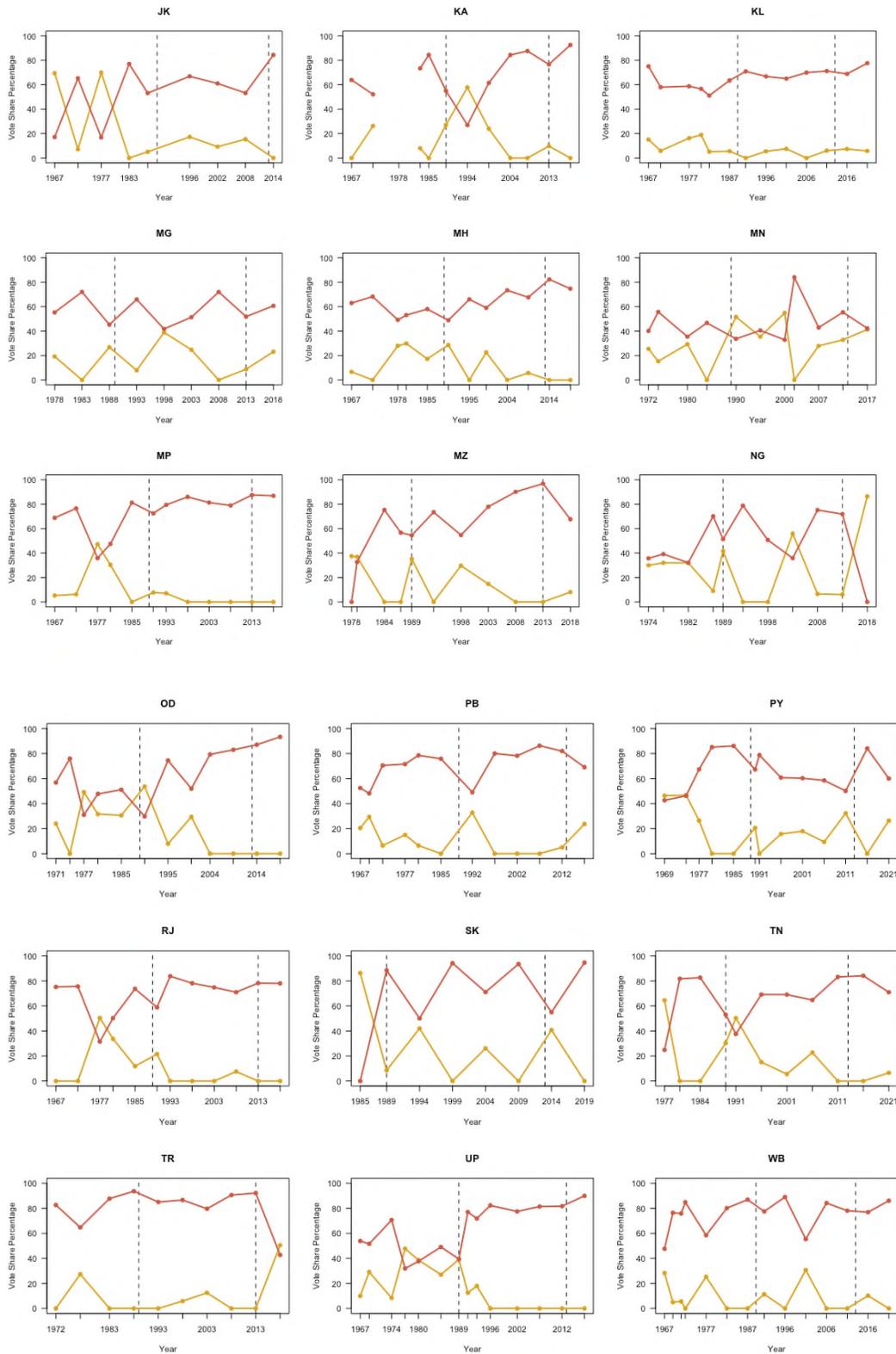


Figure B2: Vote Share of Old and New Major Parties (Golden Line Represents Newer Parties and Red Line Represents Established Parties)

# APPENDIX

## Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire

### Section 1- Ideology

Q1. Political parties often differ in their position on key social issues. In your opinion, how supportive political parties in your state are on following social issues

- A. Caste-Based Reservation for jobs – 1 No Support, 5 – High Support
- B. Preference to state's population in obtaining private jobs- 1 No Support, 5 – High Support
- C. Greater devolution of central funds to state governments - 1 No Support, 5 – High Support

Q2. Political parties often differ in strategy to mobilize during elections. In your opinion, to what extent do parties use the following rhetoric to mobilize voters? Please rate your opinion from 1 to 5 where 1 is not used and 5 is highly used.

- A. Use of strong National Security pitch in electoral mobilization – 1 No Support, 5 – High Support
- B. Use of anti-Elite rhetoric in electoral mobilization - 1 No Support, 5- High Support
- C. Use of strong regionalist sentiments

Q3. Some parties are traditional/conservative on certain social issues while others are more liberal. Please rate the parties on issues of marriage, property inheritance, the position of women, and the role of religion in governance.

- A. Inter-Community Marriage- Scale 1 to 5 (1 being very traditional and 5 being very liberal)
- B. Inheritance rights of family properties to women Scale 1 to 5 (1 being very traditional and 5 being very liberal)
- C. Position of Women in the family
- D. Religious Values and Customs shaping the affairs of the state

Q4. Please evaluate party positions on the following economic issues

- A. Increasing subsidy net – 1 No Support, 5 – High Support
- B. Higher taxes for rich – 1 No Support, 5 – High Support
- C. Expansion of Labor Rights – 1 No Support, 5 – High Support
- D. Treating foreign companies on par with Indian companies- 1 No Support, 5 – High Support

### Section 2- Social Base and Clientelism

Q5. Political Parties are often rooted in social divisions and their supporters are united by certain factors. In your opinion, please rank order these factors in descending order (1 being most important and 5 being least important) for each of these parties choose an option from below that best describes the party's uniting factor in your state  
Religion, Caste, Ideology, Leadership, Patronage

Q6. In your opinion, how representative (candidate nomination and party organization position) are the following parties in your state with respect to these groups?

- A. Women (1- Not Inclusive, 5- Very Inclusive)
- B. Lower Caste (1- Not Inclusive, 5- Very Inclusive)
- C. Religious Minorities (1- Not Inclusive, 5- Very Inclusive)
- D. Poor (1- Not Inclusive, 5- Very Inclusive)

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Q7. In your opinion, how inclusive policy agendas of the following parties are in your state with respect to these groups?

- A. Women (1- Not Inclusive, 5- Very Inclusive)
- B. Lower Caste (1- Not Inclusive, 5- Very Inclusive)
- C. Religious Minorities (1- Not Inclusive, 5- Very Inclusive)
- D. Poor (1- Not Inclusive, 5- Very Inclusive)

Q8. Political parties try to attract voters by offering different things during elections. In your opinion, how likely are candidates of the following parties to offer these things?

- A. Cash or gifts during the election- (1 Less Likely and 5 Very Likely)
- B. Promise of Jobs/Employment- (1 Less Likely and 5 Very Likely)
- C. Promise of public goods and services like houses, etc.- (1 Less Likely and 5 Very Likely)

### Section 3- Party Organization (Regional autonomy within the Party) This section to be asked only for BJP and INC

Q9. In your opinion, how much autonomy in decision-making do state units of the following parties enjoy in your state? (1 – No Autonomy, 5- Complete Autonomy)

Q10. In your opinion, what level of autonomy regional branches of the national party enjoy in your state?

- A. Coalition Making – (1- No autonomy, 5- Complete autonomy)
- B. Campaign Strategy – (1- No autonomy, 5- Complete autonomy)
- C. Resource Allocation – (1- No autonomy, 5- Complete autonomy)
- D. Candidate Selection – (1- No autonomy, 5- Complete autonomy)
- E. State-level party organization posts – (1- No autonomy, 5- Complete autonomy)
- F. Positions on important policies/ legislations

### Section 4- Party Organization (Frontal Organizations, New Membership)

Q11. Political parties maintain community presence by holding regular social and political events that include local party members along with common citizens. How regularly do following parties hold such events? (1- Never, 5- Very Frequently)

Q12. Many political parties tend to have active frontal organizations catering to various groups. Do political parties in your state have active frontal organizations?

- A. Women's Organization (1- Not Present, 5- Very Active)
- B. Labor/ Trade Union (1- Not Present, 5- Very Active)
- C. Trader/ Business Units
- D. Youth Organization (1- Not Present, 5- Very Active)
- E. Farmer's Organization (1- Not Present, 5- Very Active)
- F. IT Cell/Social Media unit

## APPENDIX

Q13. Political parties frequently conduct membership drives to increase their base. Since the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, how frequently have such drives been conducted by the following parties in your state?

No drive, 1-2 drives, Every year, more than once a year

### Section E- Party Organization (Presence, Communication, Discipline)

Q14. In your opinion, how would you rate the presence of party offices of the following parties in your state?

(1- Party Offices become visible only during election times

(2- Party has offices in less than half of the districts

(3- Party has offices in most parts of the state

(4- Party has offices in all the districts of the state

Q15. In your opinion, how active these offices are? (Please note: Activeness of a party office can be evaluated by considering regular meetings and visits of party workers and local leaders)

(1- Not Active, 5 – Very Active)

Q16. In your opinion, how important are the following criteria for political parties while selecting candidates for the Lok Sabha election? Please rank these options on a scale of 1 to 5 for each party. 1 being Not Important, 5 is Very Important

Proximity to top leadership, Wealth of the candidate, Candidate having Prominent Family Name, Candidate's Popularity Amongst Local Party Members, Caste of the Candidate

Q17. In your opinion, how important are the following criteria for political parties while selecting candidates for the State Assembly election? Please rank these options on a scale of 1 to 5 for each party. 1 being Not Important, 5 being Very Important

Proximity to top leadership, Wealth of the candidate, Candidate having Prominent Family Name, Candidate's Popularity Amongst Local Party Members, Caste of the Candidate

Q18. Political parties have different mechanisms to discipline party members. Some parties impart harsh punishment while others may largely ignore it. In your opinion, please select the degree of punishment you expect to be awarded by these parties on the following issues:

A. Deviation from Core Ideological Platforms (1- No penalties/ Completely Ignored. 5- Serious Penalties)

B. Public Display of disagreement or difference from top leadership (1- No penalties/ Completely Ignored. 5- Serious Penalties)

C. Not fulfilling or engaging with duties assigned by party's leaders (1- No penalties/ Completely Ignored. 5- Serious Penalties)

D. Caught indulging in severe crimes (1- No penalties/ Completely Ignored. 5- Serious Penalties)

Q19. Let us now talk about the communication abilities of political parties. In your opinion, how effectively the following parties can communicate

A. their position on important issues on mass media platforms? (1- Not Effective, 5- Very Effective)

B. Their election strategy and tactics among party members? (1- Not Effective, 5- Very Effective)

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Q 20. Some political parties are highly dependent on the charismatic personality of their current leader. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you think the following parties are completely dependent on their leader to conduct their political affairs?

Q 21. In your opinion, how important are the following criteria for political parties while obtaining a higher position within the party's organization? Please rank these options on a scale of 1 to 5 for each party. 1 being Not Important, 5 being Very Important

Proximity to top leadership, Wealth of the candidate, Candidate having Prominent Family Name, Candidate's Popularity Amongst Local Party Members, Caste of the Candidate

Q 22. Political parties rely on different avenues to raise resources and funds. Please rank on a scale of 1 to 5 how parties in your state raise funds. 1 being Not Important, 5 is Very Important

Big Business

Small Traders/ Businesses

Small Volunteer Donations/ Crowdsourcing

Party ticket aspirants/ Party Leaders

Rent/interests based on party assets

Q 23. In the end, please evaluate the overall organizational strength of the following parties in your state

1- Very less Organized

10- Highly Organized

# APPENDIX

## Appendix D: Tables on Survey Responses From States

State	Total Expert Interviews	Proportion Sample in Nationally-Weighted Data File
Andhra Pradesh	4	8
Assam	9	4
Bihar	13	12
Chhattisgarh	1	4
Delhi	18	2
Goa	5	1
Gujarat	6	8
Himachal Pradesh	4	1
Haryana	3	3
Jharkhand	4	4
Jammy and Kashmir	1	2
Karnataka	12	8
Kerala	12	6
Maharashtra	8	15
Meghalaya	2	1
Manipur	2	1
Madhya Pradesh	6	9
Mizoram	1	0
Nagaland	2	0
Odisha	4	6
Punjab	5	4
Puducherry	1	0
Rajasthan	4	8
Sikkim	1	0
Telangana	4	5
Tamil Nadu	2	12
Uttarakhand	2	2
Uttar Pradesh	8	24
West Bengal	18	13

