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ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY IN ROHTAK PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION 2019

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Abstract

The present study analyses the electoral performances of the two major political parties, the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Parliamentary election of Haryana in 2019. The Rohtak Parliamentary seat has been considered as one of the most important seats in the state, from where the INC has achieved the highest number of victories. In the 2019 Parliamentary election as well, this seat has been considered as the safest seat for the INC; however, the seat has been won by the BJP. The results show that out of the nine assembly segments of Rohtak parliamentary constituency, the INC has been victorious in five assembly segments, while the BJP could retain the remaining four assembly segments. Even in these four assembly segments, the BJP could win three segments with very thin majority. It has been only the Kosli assembly segment from where BJP got substantial lead by securing 70.78 per cent of votes by consolidating the non-Jat votes. Thus, it has been basically the poor performance of the INC in the Kosli assembly segment that has led to its defeat and victory of the BJP in the Rohtak Parliamentary election in, 2019.

Keywords: Electoral Performance, Voters, Parliamentary Elections, Assembly Segment, Political Parties.

Introduction

India is the world's largest democracy, and elections form the foundation of its democratic system. Through elections, citizens elect their representatives and determine the country's leadership. In India, elections are held every five years to constitute governments at both the central and state levels.

Caste plays a significant role in influencing the political landscape through its complex social and electoral dynamics (Dutt and Mishra, 2024). It has remained a central feature of India's electoral politics for decades. From the rise of the *Dalit* politics to the

implementation of the Mandal Commission's recommendations in 1990, which transformed OBCs (Other Backward Classes) political mobilisation, caste has continued to shape political competition and electoral outcomes in the country (Zaved, 2025). Political parties often select candidates based on caste compositions in different parliamentary and assembly constituencies to maximize their electoral prospects.

In terms of caste influencing the electoral politics, Haryana state is no exception. The electoral politics in the state has always been deeply influenced by the caste

factors. The Jats, the largest caste group, have traditionally occupied a central position in the state's electoral politics. They are primarily concentrated in the rural areas of Rohtak, Jhajjar, Sonapat, Hisar, Jind, and Bhiwani districts (Chandra, 2024). Other politically influential castes include Scheduled Castes, Brahmins, Punjabi's (comprising Arora, Khatri, and Sikhs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), such as Ahirs (Yadav's), Saini, Gujjars, and Meo's. These caste groups are by and large distributed across different regions of the state and continue to exert significant influence on the electoral outcomes and political mobilization by the political parties. With the emergence of the 'Jats vs non-Jats' political divide, the state's electoral politics has undergone significant transformation in recent years. This shift has largely benefited the BJP, enabling it to consolidate support among non-Jat communities. In the light of above, this study investigates the role of caste dynamics in shaping the electoral performance of political parties in the Rohtak Parliamentary constituency during the 2019 Parliamentary election.

Objectives of Study

Major objectives of the study are:

- to understand the political background of the Rohtak Parliamentary constituency, and
- to analyse the electoral performances of the INC and BJP in the Rohtak Parliamentary constituency in the 2019 Parliamentary election in Haryana.

Study Area

The Rohtak Parliamentary constituency lies between 28°10' and 29°04' N latitudes, and 76°12' and 76°57' E longitudes. The constitu-

ency has long been a significant centre in Haryana's political landscape and is often called as the political capital of the state. Its jurisdiction spans across three districts: Rohtak, Jhajjar, and Rewari. It represents a combination of two cultural regions of Haryana known as Deswali and Ahirwal (Deswal, 2024). The Deswali region (also known as Jatland) covers Rohtak and Jhajjar districts, while the Rewari district is a part of the Ahirwal region (dominated by the Ahir community) of the state. As per the 2008 delimitation order, the Rohtak parliamentary constituency includes nine assembly segments (Fig. 1, Table 1). The primary reason for selecting only the Rohtak parliamentary constituency among Haryana's 10 parliamentary constituencies, for this study, has been that, except for Rohtak parliamentary seat, the BJP won all the other nine seats by substantial margins. The Rohtak parliamentary seat, however, witnessed an extremely close electoral contest between the INC and BJP, as the seat has been won by the BJP with a narrow margin of 7,503 votes.

Database and Methodology

The study is based on secondary data. The assembly segment-wise and booth-wise data about the votes polled to INC and BJP in Rohtak parliamentary constituency for the 2019 parliamentary election have been taken from the reports of the Election Commission of India (*Nirvachan Sadan*), New Delhi. As the Kosli assembly segment has played a crucial role for the BJP to win this Parliamentary seat, therefore booth-wise electoral data for both the parties have been summed up at village level. Simple methodology of percentages has been applied to evaluate the electoral performances of the INC and the BJP.

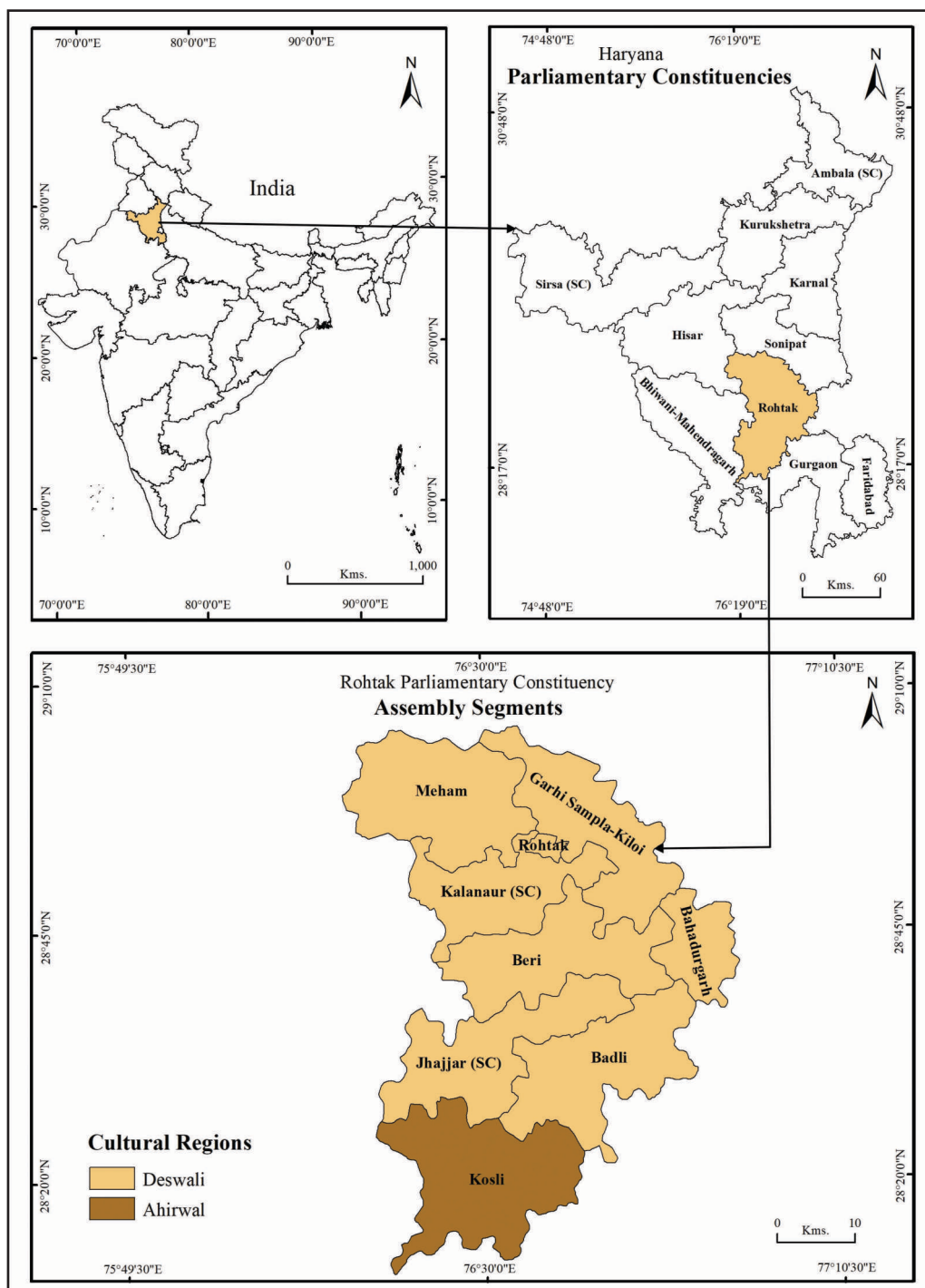


Fig. 1

Table 1
Rohtak Parliamentary Constituency: Jurisdiction of Assembly Segments

Assembly Segment	Part of District	Part of Cultural Region
Meham	Rohtak	Deswali
Garhi Sampla-Kiloi	Rohtak	Deswali
Rohtak	Rohtak	Deswali
Kalanaur (SC)	Rohtak	Deswali
Bahadurgarh	Jhajjar	Deswali
Badli	Jhajjar	Deswali
Jhajjar (SC)	Jhajjar	Deswali
Beri	Jhajjar	Deswali
Kosli	Rewari	Ahirwal

Source: Compiled by Authors.

Results and Discussion

Political Background of the Rohtak Parliamentary Constituency

The Rohtak Parliamentary constituency is largely dominated by the Jat electorate and has long been considered as a stronghold of the INC. The INC has maintained a sustained political presence in this constituency across various Parliamentary elections. The time series analysis of the election results shows that the INC has been able to win this seat 12 times out of the 19 parliamentary elections held under various delimitation arrangements. Historically, INC represented the constituency in 1952 and 1957. Afterwards, the INC represented this constituency in 1967. Again, the INC subsequently remained elected from the Rohtak Parliamentary seat in 1984, 1991, 1996, 1998, and 2004 elections. This continuity has been retained by the INC in 2005, 2009, 2014, and 2024 elections as well. This pattern, however, has been disrupted in the 2019 Parliamentary election, when BJP defeated the INC.

Electoral Performance of the INC

In this election, out of the nine assembly

segments of the Rohtak parliamentary constituency, the INC has led in five assembly segments, namely Mehama, Garhi Sampla-Kiloi, Badli, Jhajjar (SC), and Beri (Fig. 2). The INC has been historically maintaining a strong political presence in these areas. The party has secured 62.19 per cent of votes in Garhi Sampla-Kiloi, 57.73 per cent in Beri, 51.33 per cent in Badli and 50.71 per cent in the Mehama segment of the Rohtak Parliamentary election. The party has also recorded 48.58 per cent votes in the Jhajjar (SC), 44.17 per cent in Kalanaur (SC), 43.71 per cent in Bahadurgarh and 39.94 per cent in Rohtak assembly segments. However, the party recorded its lowest percentage of votes (25.74 per cent) in the Kosli assembly segment (Table 2; Fig. 3). Thus, Kosli has been the sole assembly segment within the Rohtak parliamentary constituency where the INC has secured its lowest vote share. In this election, INC recorded the highest vote share (62.19 per cent) in the Garhi Sampla-Kiloi assembly segment. This can largely be attributed to the strong political base of INC in this assembly segment, as the native village of the former Chief Minister from INC falls in this assembly

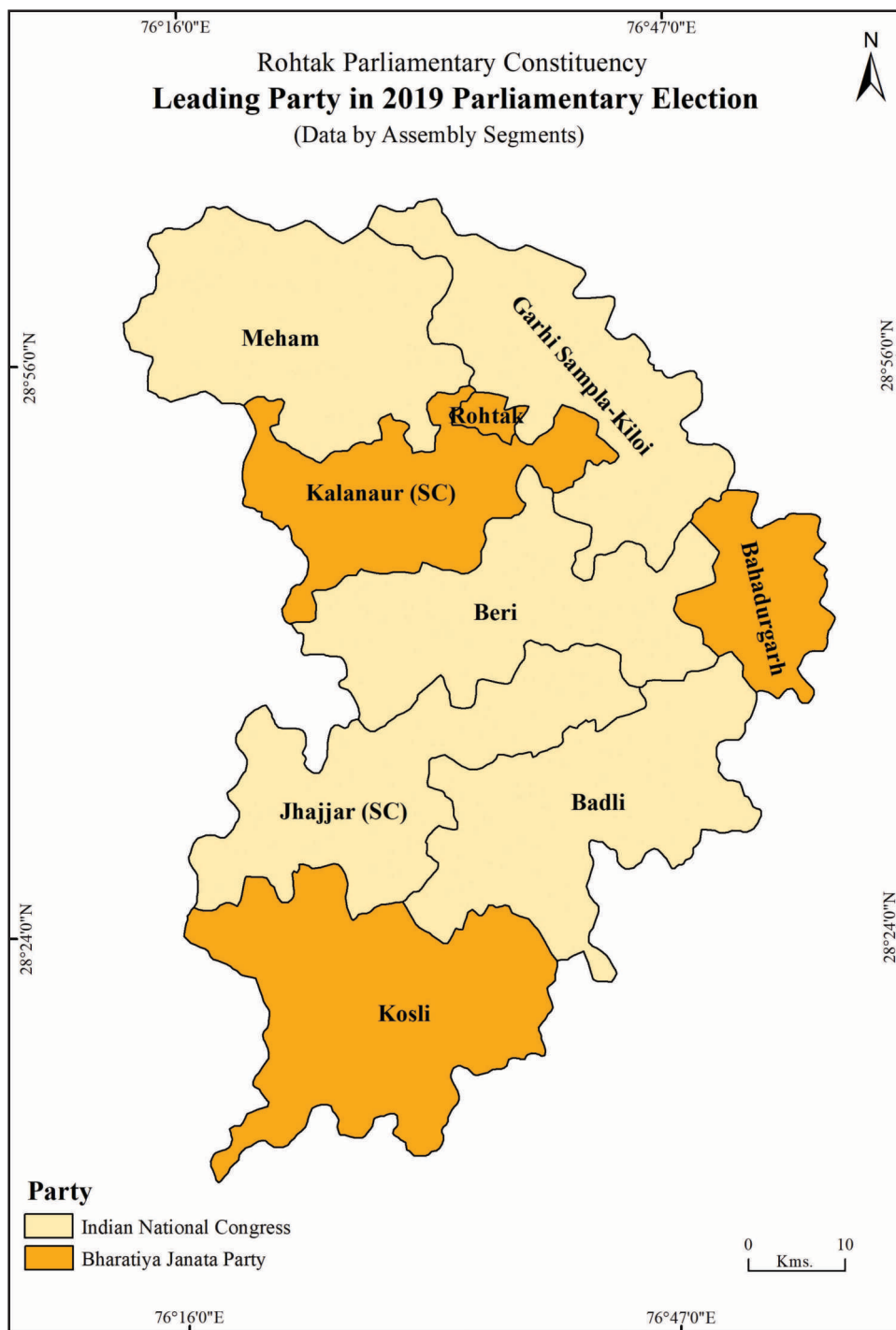


Fig. 2

Table 2

Rohtak Parliamentary Constituency: Assembly-segment-wise Electoral Performance of INC and BJP in 2019 Lok Sabha Election

Assembly Segment	Leading Party	Vote Polled to INC	Vote Polled to BJP
Meham	INC	68,826 (50.71)	54,721 (40.32)
Garhi Sampla-Kiloi	INC	92,606 (62.19)	46,881 (31.48)
Rohtak	BJP	48,736 (39.94)	68,477 (56.12)
Kalanaur (SC)	BJP	62,390 (44.17)	66,701 (47.22)
Bahadurgarh	BJP	59,889 (43.71)	65,519 (47.82)
Badli	INC	61,928 (51.33)	50,374 (41.75)
Jhajjar (SC)	INC	57,395 (48.58)	52,746 (44.65)
Beri	INC	68,991 (57.73)	42,998 (35.98)
Kosli	BJP	42,845 (25.74)	117,825 (70.78)

Source: Compiled by Authors. Figures in parentheses are percentages.

segment. As a result, the party secured a massive lead of 45,725 votes in this assembly segment (Table 2). Thus, it has been basically the Kosli assembly segment that had delivered the most significant setback to the INC in this election. While commenting upon the INC's performance in 2019 Parliamentary election, Saini (2024) has also observed that INC's biggest loss came from Ahir dominated Kosli assembly segment where INC lost by about 75,000 votes, thus, offsetting INC's gains in the segment of Garhi Sampla-Kiloi from where INC has led by 45,000 votes by virtue of being the family base of the INC's candidate.

Electoral Performance of the BJP

The BJP won all the ten parliamentary seats in the state in 2019 Parliamentary elections. However, the Rohtak parliamentary seat has been the only seat from where the party secured victory by a narrow margin of 7,503 votes. Among the nine assembly segments that make up the Rohtak parliamentary seat, the BJP led in four assembly segments of Rohtak, Kalanaur (SC), Bahadurgarh, and Kosli, while INC took lead in the remaining five assembly

segments (Fig. 2). Despite this fact, the BJP has been able to win this Parliamentary seat. In Indian politics, religion, caste, and culture play a dominant role while selecting the candidates to fight elections. By fielding a Brahmin candidate in the 2019 Parliamentary election, the BJP has been able to unify and mobilize non-Jat voters.

The party performed strongly in the Rohtak assembly segment by securing 56.12 per cent of votes. The party has been benefited with a significant backing from urban voters and non-Jat communities. Urban voters have traditionally been a strong vote base for the BJP across the country. The Rohtak assembly segment, characterized by a predominantly urban landscape and the highest concentration of non-Jat voters, particularly from the Punjabi refugee community, worked to the BJP's advantage. Thus, the demographic composition of urban and non-Jat voters in this assembly segment directly benefited the BJP.

In 2019 Parliamentary election, the Kosli assembly segment has played a crucial role in securing the victory for the BJP candidate, who took a massive lead of 74,980

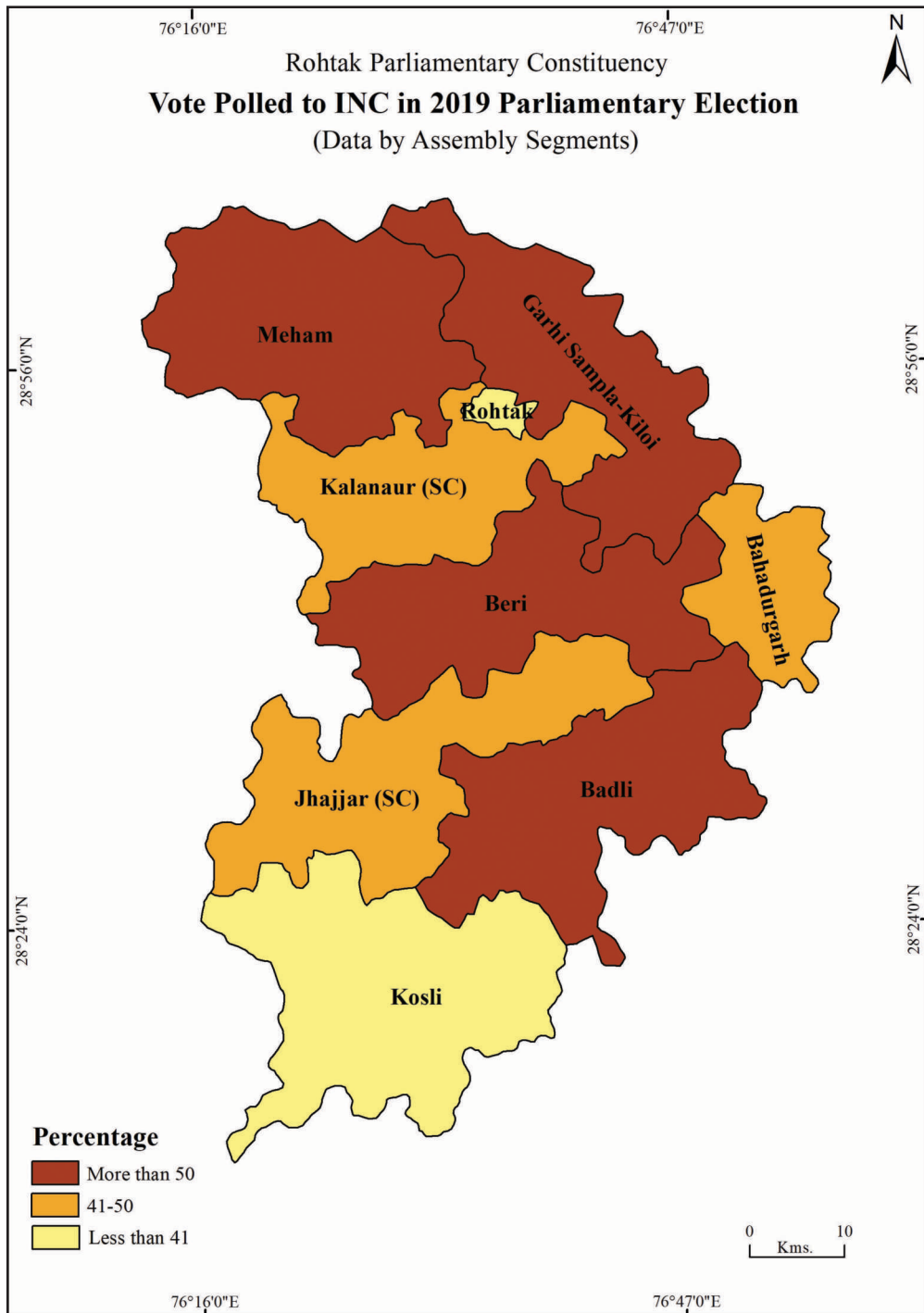


Fig. 3

votes over the INC candidate, from this assembly segment (Table 2). Among all the assembly segments of the Rohtak parliamentary constituency, the BJP had secured its highest vote share of 70.78 per cent from the Kosli assembly segment (Table 2). While in other assembly segments the BJP has secured just 47.82 per cent vote share in Bahadurgarh, 47.22 per cent in Kalanaur (SC), 44.65 per cent in Jhajjar (SC), 41.75 per cent in Badli, 40.32 per cent in Meham, 35.98 per cent in Beri, and 31.48 per cent in Garhi Sampla-Kiloi assembly segments (Table 2; Fig. 4).

In addition to the demographic composition of the parliamentary constituency, one of the main reasons for the BJP's victory in this election has been the strong nationwide wave that prevailed in favour of the BJP, largely driven by the popularity and leadership image of the incumbent Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. Additionally, the terrorist attack in Pulwama (Jammu and Kashmir) in February 2019, followed by India's retaliatory Balakot airstrike in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK), generated a strong sense of patriotism across the country. As a result, the BJP derived considerable electoral advantage in the parliamentary election held just a few months later, in the month of April 2019.

The Role of Kosli Assembly Segment for the Victory of BJP

In this election, the Kosli assembly segment has played a very significant role for the victory of BJP. This assembly segment is a part of the Ahirwal socio-cultural region of Haryana. Ahirwal means the land predominantly occupied by the Ahir/Yadav community. This socio-cultural region in Haryana spreads in the southern parts of the state. Ahirwal region includes the districts of Mahendragarh,

Rewari, and Gurgaon of Haryana (Yadav, 2003).

The INC has secured 42,845 votes, comprising 25.74 per cent of the total votes in the Kosli assembly segment. Thus, the party performed its poorest in Kosli across the entire Parliamentary constituency of Rohtak. On the other hand, the BJP has secured 70.78 per cent of the total votes from the Kosli assembly segment. Thus, the BJP has exhibited its strongest electoral performance across the entire parliamentary constituency of Rohtak (Table 2).

Taking into account the decisive role played by the Kosli assembly segment, village-wise percentage of votes polled to each party has been taken to further analyze the results. The frequency distribution of the percentage of votes received by the INC and the BJP in the villages of the Kosli assembly segment clearly shows a contrasting picture. Out of the 124 villages in the assembly segment, there have been 105 villages comprising 84.68 per cent of the total villages from where the BJP secured more than 60 per cent of votes (Table 3; Fig. 5). Whereas, the INC could get more than 60 per cent votes only from 4 villages (Table 3). On the other hand, there have been 106 villages comprising 85.48 per cent of the total villages from where the INC has secured less than 41 per cent of the votes (Table 3; Fig. 6). The number of such villages has been only 08 in the case of the BJP (Table 3). The analysis further reveals that there have been 44 villages from which INC has secured less than 21 percent of votes, while there has been no such village in case of the BJP (Table 3). Thus, it has been the huge lead received by the BJP in the Kosli assembly segment that has led to its victory in the Rohtak Parliamentary seat in 2019.

The overall political-electoral scenario

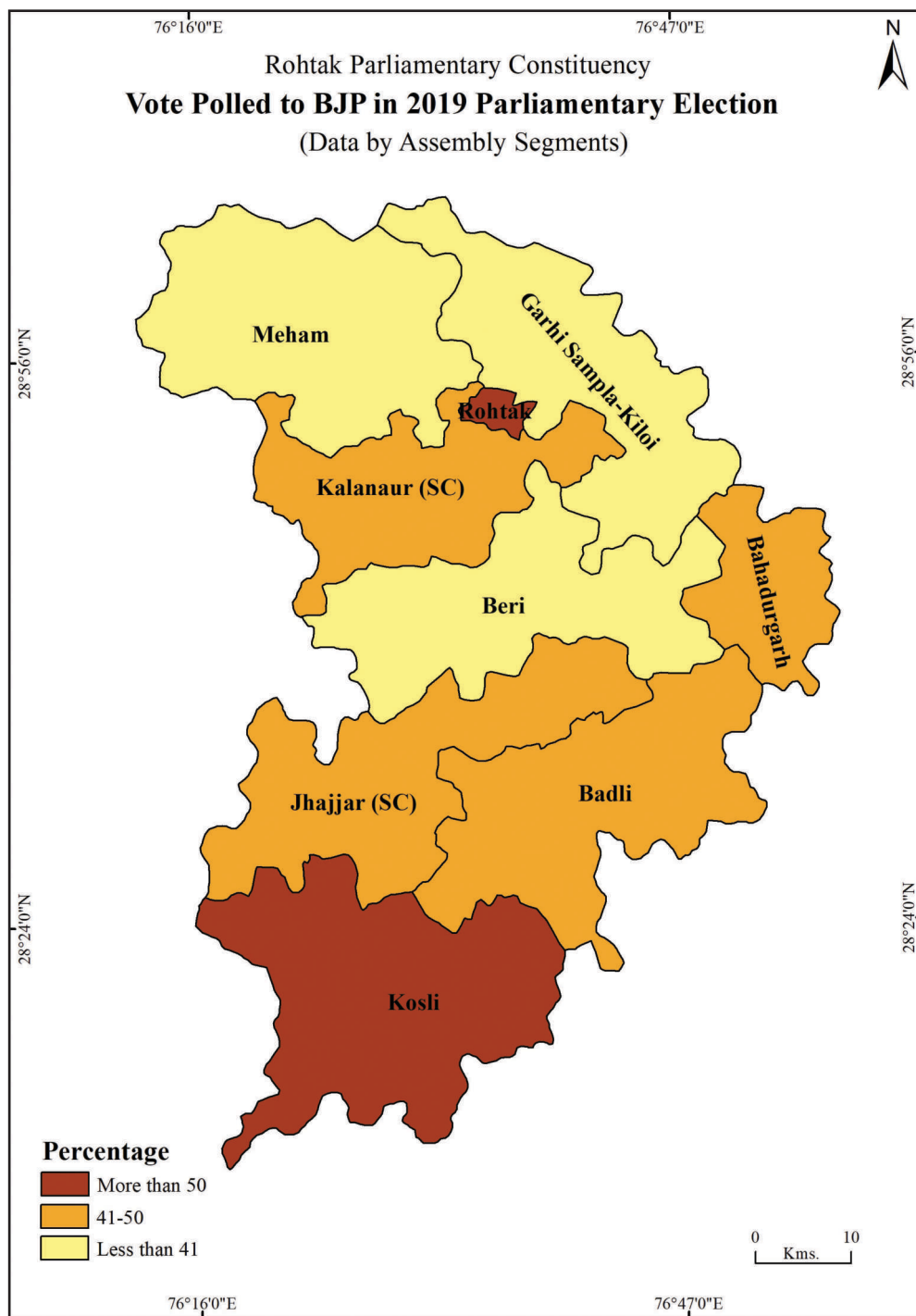


Fig. 4

Table 3
Kosli Assembly Segment: Number of Villages Polled in favour of the INC and BJP in 2019
Lok Sabha Election

Percentage of Votes	Number of Villages Polled in Favour of INC and BJP	
	INC	BJP
More than 60	04	105
41-60	14	11
21-40	62	08
Less than 21	44	00
Total Village	124	124

Source: Compiled by Authors.

of the Rohtak Parliamentary seat reveals that in the eight assembly segments, “INC has been leading with a margin of 72,344 votes (excluding postal belts), however, the difference of 74,980 votes alone in the Kosli assembly segment led to the INC defeat” (Singh, 2024).

The BJP's victory in this election, especially the massive lead it has secured in the Kosli assembly segment, can largely be attributed to the influence of Rao Inderjit Singh, a towering figure in the Ahirwal region. He hails from the prominent 'Rampura House' of Ahirwal.

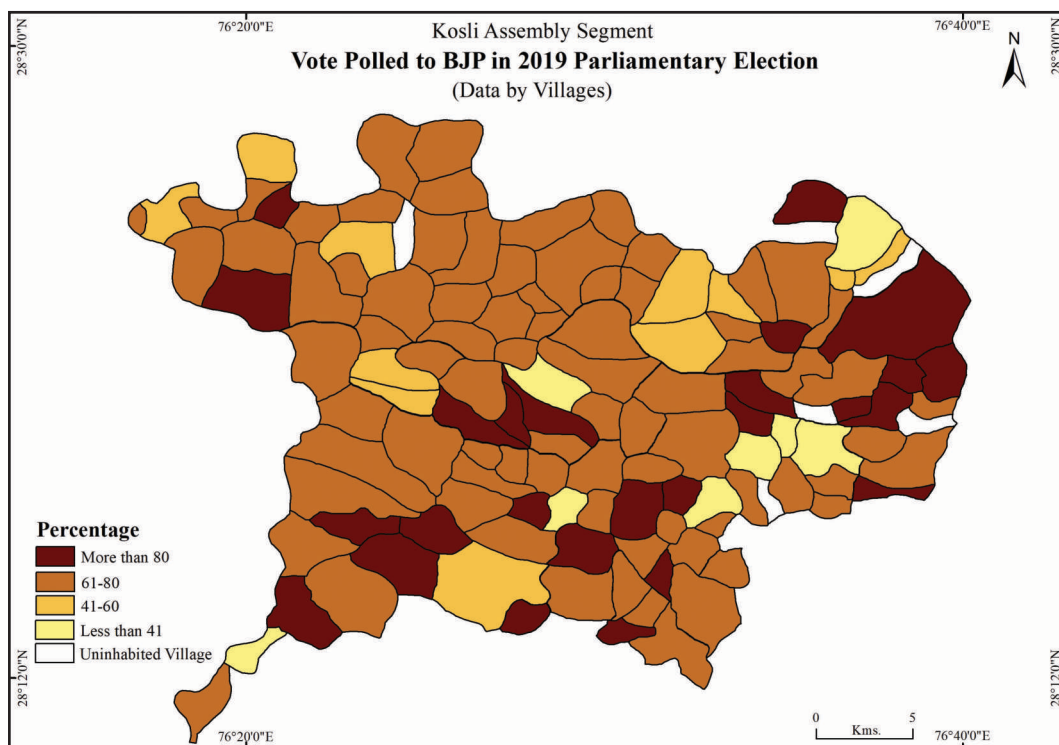


Fig. 5

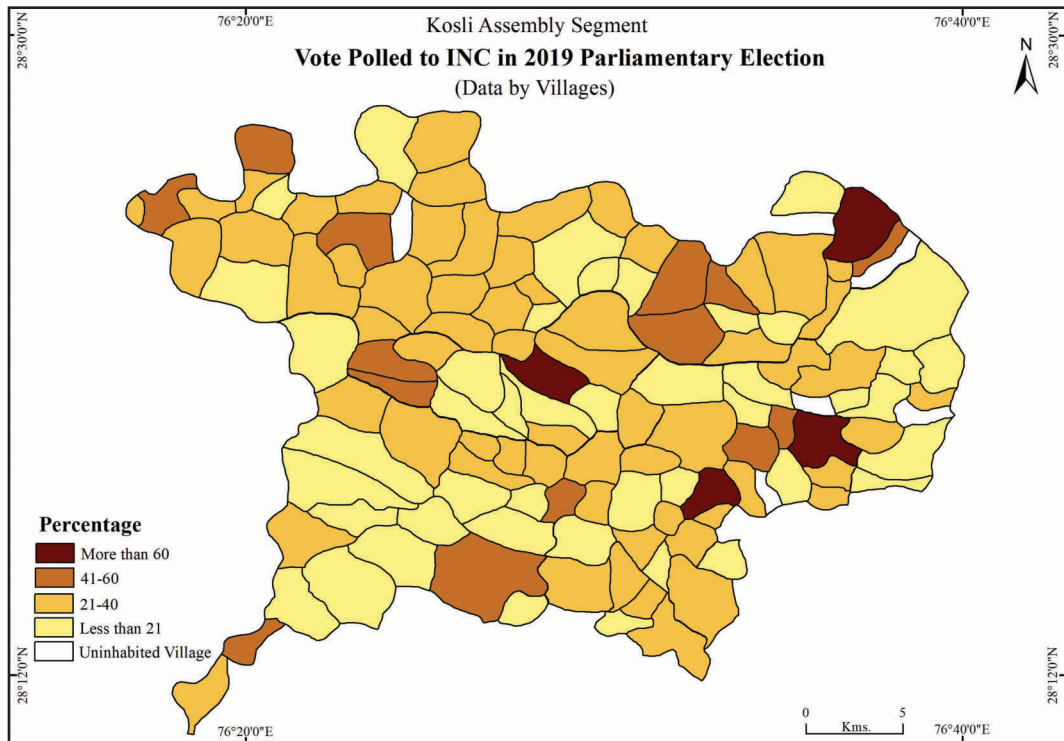


Fig. 6

'Rampura House' belongs to the lineage of Rao Tula Ram, a famous revolutionary from Haryana. He revolted against the British Government from this region in 1857" (Yadav and Singh, 2025). 'Rampura House' in Rewari is widely regarded as the centre of Ahirwal politics, as the political influence of this family has long been shaping the political landscape of the region. Prior to 2014 Parliamentary election, the Ahirwal region has been a strong bastion of the INC. However, after the 2014 Parliamentary election, the political landscape of the region underwent a significant transformation, and it has since emerged as a formidable electoral stronghold for the BJP in Haryana. The key architect of this shift has been Rao Inderjit Singh. He has been previously associated with the INC, but in 2014, he left the

party and joined the BJP.

Conclusions

The Rohtak Parliamentary election 2019 proved disastrous for the INC, as the party failed to secure even a single parliamentary seat in Haryana. Even the Rohtak parliamentary seat, where the party had strong expectations of victory, has been lost by a narrow margin of 7,503 votes. While, the election turned out to be highly favourable for the BJP, which succeeded in winning all the parliamentary seats in the state. In the Rohtak Parliamentary constituency, the BJP effectively consolidated non-Jat voters by fielding a non-Jat candidate. With the defeat of INC, the election marked a significant turning point in the political history of Rohtak. The party has

recorded a lead of 4,649 votes in Jhajjar (SC), 11,554 votes in Badli, 14,105 votes in Meham, 25,993 votes in Beri, and 45,725 votes in Garhi Sampla-Kiloi assembly segment. Thus, despite securing a lead in five assembly segments, the election ultimately slipped out of the INC grasp.

On the other hand, the BJP secured a lead in the remaining four assembly segments. The party emerged victorious by 4,311 votes in Kalanaur (SC), 5,630 votes in Bahadurgarh, 19,741 votes in Rohtak and 74,980 votes in the Kosli assembly segment. Thus, the Kosli assembly segment has been the only assembly segment which has inflicted the greatest loss to the INC. While the INC had maintained a comparatively stronger position in the other assembly segments, the margin of defeat in Kosli has been exceptionally large. This substantial lead provided the BJP with a major electoral advantage, which ultimately proved decisive in securing this seat.

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