Trans. Inst. Indian Geographers
Vol. 28, No. 2, 2006

Voting Preferences in Lok Sabha vis-à-vis Assembly Elections: A Case Study of Indian National Congress in North–East Rajasthan (1991-1993 & 1998-1998)

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Abstract

Electoral preferences are guided by quite different sets of considerations while exercising franchise in elections to the State Assembly vis-à-vis the Lok Sabha. The present paper attempts to investigate the changing voters' hues in north eastern part of Rajasthan with respect to the Indian National Congress party for the period between 1991 and 1998. Electoral performance of the party has been analysed for two successive Lok Sabha and Assembly contests with an object to identify the spatial patterns of electoral support and to delineate areas of significant contrast at the two levels of election. The correspondence between the socio-economic milieu of the region and the spatial distribution of support for the party has also been examined. The findings suggest that despite its strong base, voter preferences in the study area for the party are significantly conditioned by the prevailing socio-political scenario. Local issues, caste affiliations, political equations and ethnic conflicts give rise to scattered support patterns during Assembly elections. In contrast, electoral decisions are guided by wider national perspectives during Lok Sabha elections resulting into well defined support patterns. The socio-economic base for the party is more clearly defined during Lok Sabha elections as compared to the Assembly ones.

Introduction

India is a federal democracy with autonomous states functioning within an overall constitutional setup guaranteed by the Union Government. To govern and supervise the affairs of the states, political elites are elected via State Assembly elections (Vidhan Sabha elections).On the other hand, to supervise the all India administration, to look after the affairs related to subjects falling under the Union and Concurrent lists under the Constitution of India, political elites are recruited to the Parliament through Parliamentary (Lok Sabha) elections. Owing to a seemingly dualistic political structure under a federal system, electoral preferences of the voters are guided by different sets of

considerations in elections to the Assembly vis-à-vis the Parliament (Dikshit and Sharma, 1993). The patterns of electoral support for a party are quite well defined in case of Lok Sabha elections whereas there is absence of any clearly defined pattern in the Assembly elections. This may be accounted for by the fact that "in case of the recruitment of representatives for the State Legislature, caste affiliations and other local/regional interests and conflicts play a more pronounced role in influencing voters' choices"(Dikshit and Sharma, 1993). This often leads to significant differences in the patterns of voting even between constituencies having similar political and economic characteristics. Such differences are mitigated in the much wider national perspective during the Lok Sabha elections and regions with similar socio-economic base tend to exhibit similar voting behaviour. Secular factors exercise a greater influence on voter preferences in the Lok Sabha contests vis-à-vis the Assembly ones.

INC, owing to its historical association with the freedom movement, has strong moorings in the state and commands a state-wide appeal. The Jats, along with the Muslims, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, and Gujars have been a major electoral base for the party. The study period marks a departure from the hitherto dominance of INC in the state politics and the emergence of Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) as a formidable rival party. In the wake of *Ram Janma Bhoomi - Babri Masjid* issue, BJP gained strength and emerged as a strong second force with a state-wide base. The electoral outcomes ever since have been significantly characterized by fluctuating fortunes of both the political parties.

The primary objective of this paper is to present a comparative analysis of the differential electoral behaviour in the Assembly elections vis-à-vis the Lok Sabha ones with respect to the Indian National Congress (INC) party in north–east Rajasthan. Accordingly, the electoral performance of the party has been examined with respect to the following two sets of Lok Sabha and Assembly elections which were held at a relatively short interval of time:

(1) 1991 Lok Sabha and 1993 Assembly elections; and

(2) 1998 Lok Sabha and 1998 Assembly elections.

The electoral performance of INC for each of the two pairs of elections has been analyzed with a view to delineate core areas of party support; to identify the spatial patterns and degree of spatial variation of party support during each election; to determine the nature and extent of temporal consistency in the areal distribution of the party's electoral support; and to quantify the degree to which the selected socio-economic contexts explain the vote variance of the party.

About the Study Area

The study area extends from 25°41'N to 28°31'N latitude and 74°44' E to 78°71'E longitude in the north eastern part of Rajasthan state. Out of 25 Lok Sabha and 200 Assembly constituencies in the state, the study area consists of nine Lok Sabha constituencies namely Alwar, Bayana, Bharatpur, Dausa, Jaipur , Jhunjhunu, Sawai Madhopur, Sikar and Tonk which cover 72

Assembly segments spreading wholly and partially over eleven districts in an area of 61783.24 sq.kms (Fig. 1). Among the Lok Sabha constituencies, Bayana and Tonk are reserved for Scheduled Caste and Sawai Madhopur is reserved for Scheduled Tribe candidates. During Assembly elections, 13 and 6 constituencies are reserved for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates respectively. Six Assembly constituencies namely Alwar, Bharatpur, Banipark, Hawa Mahal, Johari Bazaar and Kishanpole are urban and 66 constituencies are rural in nature.

Methodology

The analysis is based on 'an areal ecological approach' with Assembly segment as the unit of analysis. The electoral data have been collected from the published election reports of the State Election Department. The socio-economic data have been generated by aggregating the data of 1991 District Census Handbooks from village/ward level to the Assembly constituency level. Since the same areal unit is an Assembly constituency during Assembly elections and a segment of a larger Lok Sabha constituency in Lok Sabha elections, it has been referred to as 'Assembly unit' at some places to avoid confusion.

The electoral support (or party performance) has been measured in terms of percentage of votes polled in favour of a party in relation to the total valid votes polled in each Assembly unit. The spatial pattern and degree of uniformity in spatial distribution of party support during each election has been defined using tools of descriptive statistics – in terms of average, coefficient of variation and frequency distribution of Assembly unit-wise percentage vote share of the party. The spatial variation in the intensity of party support has been studied in terms of Z-scores (standardized values). The values of the Z-scores have been interpreted as per following scheme (Table 1):

Table 1 : **Interpretation of Z-score values**

Z-score Values	Intensity of Party Support
Above 2	Extremely high
1 to 2	Very high
0 to 1	High
0 to -1	Low
-1 to -2	Very low
Below -2	Extremely low

Temporal consistency in party support has been determined in terms of nature of vote trends and extent of support surfaces. Vote trends refer to the ways in which the party votes have changed in the same Assembly unit over a pair of successive elections. Three main types of trends have been identified– constancy, growth and decline. Constancy of performance is defined as variation of less than 5 percent in the share of the votes received by the party as compared to the former of the elections in the pair. The basic idea of constancy is that the party has obtained the same general magnitude of support in a particular Assembly unit both the times. Growth in support indicates a situation when there has been an increase of more than 5 percent in the votes received by the party from the base election to the next one contested. The term decline refers to a drop of more than 5 percent from the base election to the next.

Fig. 1 Location Map of North East Rajasthan

To delineate the strong and weak support areas Assembly units have been classified on the basis of the level of floor support. Floor support is defined as the lowest support a party receives in the elections under review. The study region represents a case of biparty region where INC and BJP are the only two dominating parties in the election scene. Other parties do not possess a widespread voter base and are influential sporadically in only a few and scattered pockets. In this biparty scenario and on the basis of empirical evidences regarding electoral outcomes in the region, the floor support below 20 percent, from 20 to 40 percent and above 40 percent has been termed as low, medium and high respectively.

By combining the Assembly unit-wise vote trends for the party with levels of floor support, two broad types and three sub-types of support surfaces for the party in both sets of elections have been delineated. The support surfaces reflect a composite picture of intensity and continuity of support in favour of a party in an area. The two major types of support surfaces are stable and unstable support surfaces. Stable support surfaces include those areas where the nature of support for the party in terms of magnitude and continuity (constancy, growth or decline) has not exhibited substantial fluctuation during two successive elections. The stable support surface has been further classified into three subtypes:

(a) **Strong areas:** These include those Assembly units where the party has received a substantial proportion of the total votes polled in each election irrespective of the 'waves' in favour of or against it. These areas form dependable support bases for the party where the prospects of the party's victory in each election are high. Three types of Assembly units: Assembly units having constant support at high floor support level, declining support at high floor support level and growing support at high floor support level have been included in this category.

(b) **Weak areas:** This category includes those Assembly units where the party's support level has been far below what is required to either earn it a victory or to even set forth a substantial competition for the other parties in the fray. Assembly units having constant support at low floor support level (below 20 percent) and those having a declining or growing support but the party's vote share below 30 percent in both elections, have been included in this category

(c) **Marginal areas:** This category includes those Assembly units where the party has garnered a sizeable vote share in both the elections, large enough to be in tough competition with other contenders but fallen short to earn it a seat or victory. Assembly units having constant support at medium floor support level and growing or declining support at medium floor support level, with variation less than 10 percent have been included in this category.

The second main type, the unstable support surface comprises areas where the party support has witnessed drastic changes during successive elections. These areas are vulnerable to waves in favour of or against a particular party consequent upon current

Table 2 : **Rotated Factor Matrix for the Selected Socio-Economic Variables**

S. No.	*Variables*	Factors		
		I	II	III
1	Density of Population (per square km.)	0.77	0.01	-0.09
2	Sex- Ratio (females per 1000 males)	-0.12	-0.12	0.83
3	Urban Population (% of total population)	0.91	-0.15	-0.04
4	Literacy Rate (literate population as % of total population)	0.83	-0.26	-0.13
5	SC Population (% of total population)	-0.46	0.51	-0.32
6	ST Population (% of total population)	-0.03	0.81	-0.02
7	Working Population (% of total population)	-0.07	0.83	-0.06
8	Agricultural Laborers (% of W_P)	-0.70	-0.04	-0.09
9	Agricultural Workers (% of W_P)	-0.91	0.01	-0.16
10	Workers engaged in Trade & Commerce (% of W_P)	0.97	-0.09	0.03
11	Workers engaged in Transport & Communication (% of W_P)	0.81	-0.18	0.10
12	Workers engaged in Other Services (% of W_P)	0.92	-0.24	-0.02
13	Workers engaged in Manufacturing –Household (% of W_P)	0.17	-0.02	0.87
14	Workers engaged in Manufacturing - other than Household Industry (% of W_P)	0.87	0.02	0.18
	Eigen Value	6.897	1.804	1.647
	% variance explained	49.26	12.89	11.76
	Cumulative %	49.26	62.15	73.91

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Factor I: Urban Developmental Context, **Factor II**: Social Backwardness Context,

Factor III: Gender Context

issues and political equations, hence are also termed as 'vulnerable or floating areas'. The Assembly units at all floor levels in which the vote share of a party has fluctuated by more than 10 percent, be it growth or decline, between two successive elections, have been included in this category.

The distribution of Assembly units among the various categories of vote trends and stability of support outlined above

clearly highlight the areas which exhibit differential electoral behaviour in the two levels of electoral contest. The Assembly units ranking in growth, decline and the unstable support surfaces are the areas where the voter preferences exhibit a marked shift in Assembly vis-à-vis Lok Sabha elections.

Ecological bases of the electoral support for the party have been investigated and explained in relation to 14 socio-economic variables (Table 2) using tools of inferential statistics. These 14 variables were compressed into fewer and more manageable contextual dimensions of significantly interrelated variables by using the Principal Component method of factor analysis. Factors with eigen values higher than one were rotated to normal varimax position. This provided a set of three factors which explained 73.91 percent of the variance in the data set. Factor scores for each of the three contexts were computed for all the 72 Assembly units separately.

Values of coefficient of determination (R^2) have been derived from simple linear regression of the factor scores of individual contexts on INC's vote share per seat which measured the proportion of variance in the party's electoral support explained by the individual socio-economic contexts. R^2 values of multiple coefficient of determination have been derived by multiple regression of all socio-economic contexts together on the electoral performance of INC, which provided the total explanation of variance in voting patterns for the party accounted for by all the variables related to the socio-economic-political contexts as a whole.

Factorial Ecology of the Study Area

Table 2 shows the rotated factor matrix for each of the 14 variables.

Factor I has been named 'urban developmental context'. It alone explains nearly half i.e. 49.26 percent variation in the data set. Urban population, literacy rate, workers engaged in trade and commerce, workers engaged in transport and communication, workers in other services and workers engaged in manufacturing (other than household industry) loaded very high (above +0.8) on this factor. Density of population also recorded considerably high loading of +0.77 on this factor. All these variables are indicators of socio-economic development and urbanisation.

As contrasted to the above, the agricultural labourers and agricultural workers variables have recorded high negative values of -0.70 and -0.91 respectively. These variables are indicators of rurality. The urban and semi-urban Assembly units record positive scores on this context whereas rural Assembly units generally record scores on the negative side. Majority of the Assembly units in the study area are rural in nature whereas urban areas are very few and scattered which mainly comprise district headquarters and regions surrounding the Jaipur city.

Factor II has been termed as 'social backwardness context'. This factor explains 12.89 percent variation in our dataset. The percentage of working population and proportion of Scheduled Tribe population show very high positive loadings on this factor (above 0.8 in each case), while the proportion of Scheduled Caste population also loaded fairly high (above 0.5) on this

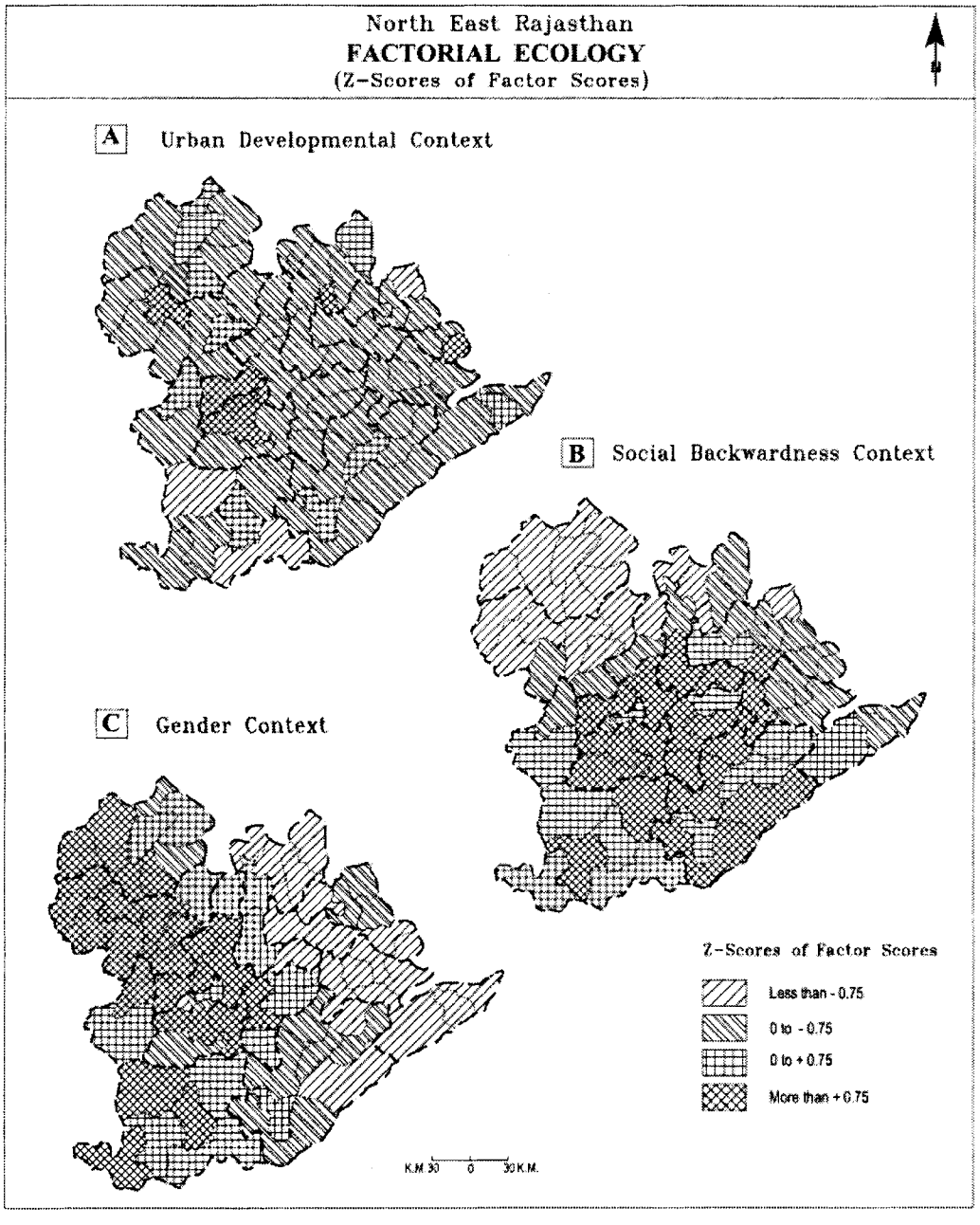

Fig. 2 Factorial Ecology

context. The positive scores of this context indicate a substantial concentration of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population and labour class of workers.

Factor III termed as 'gender context', explained 11.76 percent variance in the data. Two variables, sex-ratio and workers engaged in manufacturing in household industry, loaded significantly high on this context (above 0.8). It is noteworthy that both the variables have a fairly strong positive correlation of 0.5 with each other. This indicates the predominance of female workforce in the household industrial sector. The proportion of Scheduled Caste population has a weak negative loading of -0.32 on this context.

Fig. 2A, B &C portray the spatial variation in the contextual ecology of the study area in terms of the standardized (Z-score) values of the factor scores for various contexts. In this analysis the Z-score values of more than 0.75, 0.00 to 0.75, 0.00 to -0.75 and less than -0.75 have been interpreted as 'very high', 'high', 'low' and 'very low' respectively.

The Changing Patterns of INC Vote

Notwithstanding minor variations, the general magnitude of support for INC did not undergo any drastic fluctuations during the four elections under consideration. However, in terms of magnitude of success the party has improved remarkably and consistently, ranging from the party's victory in 24 Assembly units in 1991 to 54 in 1998 Assembly elections (Table 3).

(A) 1991 Lok Sabha vis-à-vis 1993 Assembly Elections

In the 1991 Lok Sabha elections the INC party polled 38.43 percent of the total votes polled in the study area. The average vote share of the party per Assembly unit was

Table 3 : **Performance of INC in North-East Rajasthan (1991-93, 1998-98)**

Election	Seats Contested		Seats Won		% Votes	Average votes(%)	SD	CV (%)
	A	B	A	B				
Lok Sabha 1991	9	72	3	**24**	38.43	37.58	12.29	32.7
Assembly 1993	72	...	30	...	36.63	**36.64**	10.71	29.23
Lok Sabha 1998	9	72	5	37	37.81	38.38	13.06	34.03
Assembly 1998	72	...	**54**	...	41.70	**41.54**	13.25	31.90

A - No. of constituencies, **B** - No. of Assembly segments

Average votes stands for average vote share of INC per Assembly unit.

Table 4 : **Frequency Distribution of Percent Votes Polled to INC (1991-93, 1998-98)**

Election	LS 1991		VS1993		LS1998		VS1998	
%votes polled	f	%f	f	%f	f	%f	f	%f
0 to 10	1	1.39	1	1.39	1	1.39	...	...
10 to 20	4	5.56	2	2.78	8	11.11	5	6.94
20 to 30	15	20.83	17	23.61	7	9.72	10	13.89
30 to 40	20	27.78	24	33.33	21	29.17	17	23.61
40 to 50	21	29.17	21	29.17	21	29.17	18	25.00
50 to 60	9	12.50	6	8.33	14	19.44	19	26.39
60 to 70	2	2.78	1	1.39	...	...	3	4.17

'**f**' stands for frequency, '**%f**' stands for relative frequency

37.58 percent. The inter-Assembly unit variation in party vote share ranged between 7.75 percent in Kaman and 65.39 percent in Khandela. In 20 Assembly units its vote share was less than 30 percent, and in 11 Assembly units it polled more than 50 percent votes (in 2 of them the vote share was more than 60 percent) (Table 4).

The standard deviation in the distribution of the party's vote share was 12.29 percent and the coefficient of variation was 32.7 percent. This underlines that there existed considerable disparity in the spatial distribution of electoral support for the party.

In 1993 Assembly elections, INC polled 36.63 percent of the total votes polled. The average vote share per Assembly unit was 36.64 percent, 0.94 percent lower than in the preceding Lok Sabha elections. The inter-Assembly unit vote share of the party ranged from 5.81 percent in Nagar to 65.88 percent in Nadbai. The number of Assembly units recording less than 30 percent vote share for the party was 20. The number of Assembly units where the party polled above 50 percent votes declined to 7, out of which 1 Assembly unit recorded a vote share above 60 percent. The standard deviation of Assembly unit-wise vote share of the party was 10.71 percent and the coefficient of variation was 29.23 percent. The relatively lower value of coefficient of variation, as compared to 1991, indicates a relatively uniform areal pattern of party support during 1993 Assembly elections.

A comparative view of the spatial patterns of electoral support for INC during 1991 Lok Sabha and 1993 Assembly elections (Fig.3A & B) clearly reveal that during Lok Sabha elections there was a well-marked demarcation of the study area into areas of high and low support, whereas, during Assembly elections, areas recording high and low support were widely scattered. In several Assembly units the intensity of support for the party varied drastically at the two levels of electoral contest. The party

Table 5(A): **Vote Trends for INC at Various Floor Support Levels (1991-93, 1998-98)**

Floor	Number of Assembly Units									
Support	**Constant**		**Growth**		**Decline**		**f**		**%f**	
	A	**B**	**A**	**B**	**A**	**B**	**A**	**B**	**A**	**B**
0 to 10%			1	1	1		2	1	2.78	1.39
10 to20%	1		3	8	1	5	5	13	6.94	18.06
20 to 30%	6	2	9	5	8	8	23	15	31.94	20.83
30 to 40%	13	5	4	11	8	5	25	21	34.72	29.17
40 to 50%	10	6	1	5	4	2	15	13	20.83	18.06
50 to 60%	2	6		3			2	9	2.78	12.50
N	32	19	18	33	22	20	72	72		
% Total	**44.44**	**26.39**	**25.00**	**45.83**	**30.56**	**27.78**				

f stands for frequency (no. of Assembly units)

% f stands for relative frequency at various floor support levels

% Total indicates proportion of total Assembly units for vote trend categories.

Table 5 (B): **Support Surfaces for INC (1991-93, 1998-98)**

Support Surface	A	B
Stable	47 (65.28)	36 (50)
(a) Strong	17 (23.61)	22 (30.56)
(b) Weak	6 (8.33)	1 (1.39)
(c) Marginal	24 (33.33)	13 (18.05)
Unstable	25 (34.72)	36 (50)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage of total no. of Assembly units (72)

A – 1991 Lok Sabha & 1993 Assembly elections. **B** - 1998 Lok Sabha & 1998 Assembly elections

faced a complete rout in the eastern part of the study area comprising Alwar, Bharatpur, Bayana and western part of Sawai Madhopur constituencies during the Lok Sabha elections. Among these, the support for the party was of low order in Assembly segments located in the southern and eastern part of the study area whereas in the northern part of Alwar and Bharatpur constituencies it was of very low to extremely low order. During Assembly elections several of these Assembly units recorded a remarkable increase in support for the party, viz. Mandawar, Tizara, Ramgarh, Thanagazi, Bari, Bamanwas and Khandar voted high to very high in favour of the party. Contrastingly, in the western and central part of the study region, comprising Jhunjhunu (except Khetri and Gudha), Sikar, eastern and southern Jaipur, Tonk and Dausa constituencies, the party fared quite well recording high to very high support in the Lok Sabha elections but during Assembly elections the electoral support for the party lowered considerably in several of these areas. In the northern and southern part of Jhunjhunu, central part of Sikar (most conspicuously Khandela) Lok Sabha constituency, Dudu, Amer, Kotputli and Bandikui, the vote share of the party sharply declined to low and very low during the Assembly elections. In the western part of Jhunjhunu, parts of Sikar, Tonk and Dausa constituencies, Jaipur constituency, Mahuwa, Nagar, Todabhim and Karauli the intensity of support for the party was more or less consistent during the two elections.

An analysis of vote trends and spatial patterns of support stability for the party reveals that in as many as 40 Assembly units growth and decline was recorded in the party's vote share, of which in 25 Assembly units the variation was large enough to be termed as 'unstable' (Table 5A&B).

Growth in support, indicating improvement in performance during Assembly elections, was recorded in 18 Assembly units including a majority of the segments of Alwar, eastern part of Bharatpur and western part of Sawai Madhopur constituencies; Khetri, Lachhmangarh in Sikar, Nadbai and Dholpur. The electoral support for the party suffered a decline in 22 Assembly units which included a large part of Dausa (except Sikrai and Bairath), eastern segments of Sawai Madhopur, central and eastern part of Sikar, scattered parts of Jhunjhunu and Jaipur constituencies; Phulera, Dudu, Mahuwa, Rajgarh and Nagar (Fig. 4A). The unstable support surface comprised Assembly units of the northern part of Alwar and Bharatpur, western and southern Sawai Madhopur, central parts of Sikar, Dausa and a few scattered areas in Bayana and Jaipur constituencies along with Pilani and Khetri in Jhunjhunu (Fig. 4B). On the whole, the unstable areas located in the western part of the study region recorded a decline in support whereas those located in the eastern part of the study region voted more enthusiastically for the party in the Assembly elections as compared to the Lok Sabha ones.

In 47 Assembly units the support for the party was 'stable'. In 17 Assembly units it received consistent strong support which included southern and eastern part of Tonk, western Jhunjhunu, scattered areas in Sikar and Dausa, Bassi and Todabhim. Areas of weak support comprising 6 Assembly units were mainly part of Alwar constituency along with Nagar and Sawai Madhopur.

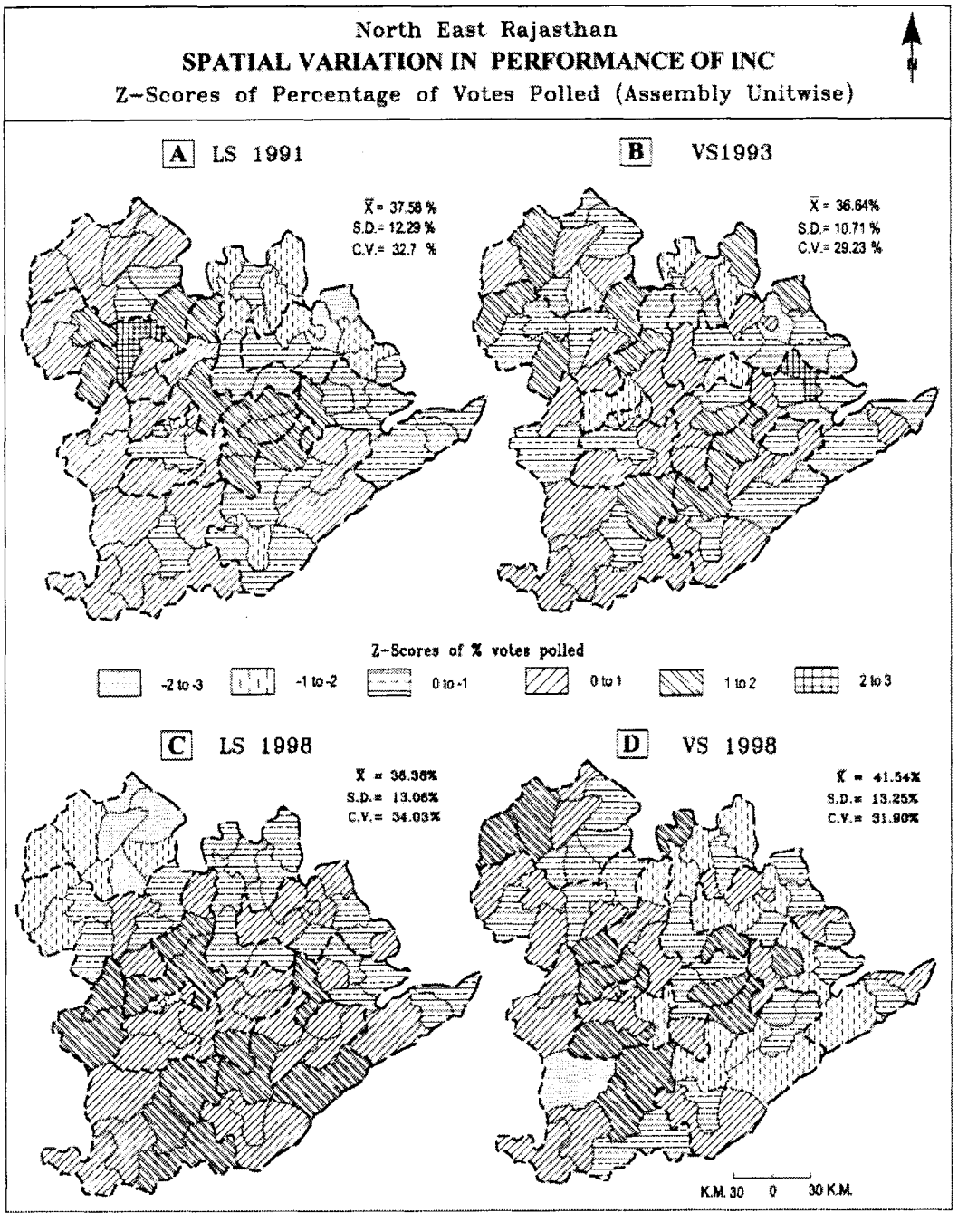

Fig. 3 Spatial Variation in Performance of INC

(B) 1998 Lok Sabha vis-à-vis 1998 Assembly Elections

In 1998 Lok Sabha elections INC polled 37.81 percent of the total votes polled in the study area. The average vote share of the party per Assembly unit was 38.38 percent. The inter Assembly segment vote share of the party ranged from 7.41 percent in Surajgarh to 58.52 percent in Niwai. The party's vote share was below 30 percent in 16 Assembly units, of which in 9 Assembly units it was as low as less than 20 percent. In 14 Assembly units it polled above 50 percent (Table 4).The standard deviation of distribution of party votes was 13.06 and the coefficient of variation was 34.03 percent which indicates considerable disparity in the areal distribution of party support.

In 1998 Assembly elections there was a strong pro-INC swing in the study area which resulted in a sharp increase in both the magnitude and territorial extent of support for the party. With an impressive 41.70 percent vote share, 3.89 percent higher than the preceding Lok Sabha elections, it bagged three-fourths of the seats in the study area. The average per seat vote share of the party was 41.54 percent, 3.16 percent higher than the preceding Lok Sabha elections. The Assembly unit-wise vote percentage of INC varied between 13.37 percent in Malpura to 66.52 percent in Chomu. In 15 Assembly units it secured less than 30 percent votes but the number of Assembly units where it secured more than 50 percent votes increased to 22, of which in 3 Assembly units the vote share was above 60 percent. The standard deviation of party votes was 13.25 and coefficient of variation was 31.90 percent, 2.13 percent lower than the preceding Lok Sabha elections which indicates that the areal pattern of INC support was relatively more uniform during Assembly elections as compared to the Lok Sabha ones. Nevertheless, the magnitude of C.V. indicates a substantial areal variation in party support.

The spatial distribution pattern of intensity of electoral support for the party during Lok Sabha and Assembly elections of 1998 (Fig. 3C&D) lacked congruence. During Lok Sabha elections, the study area was clearly divided into two parts: high support region comprising southern and central part of the study area and low support region comprising a majority of Assembly units of the northern part of the study area. During Assembly election the spatial pattern of electoral support was less well defined. In several areas the electoral preferences for the party were significantly in contrast at the two levels of elections. The entire Tonk, Jaipur (excluding Hawa Mahal and Bani Park), Sawai Madhopur, Dausa, northern and western part of Bharatpur and some parts of Bayana and Sikar constituencies rendered high to very high support to the party during Lok Sabha elections. Of these, Malpura and Uniara in Tonk, a majority of the Assembly segments of Sawai Madhopur (except Todabhim and Khandar), Bharatpur, some parts of Dausa (Dausa, Kotputli, Bandikui) Lok Sabha constituency, Bassi, Kaman, Nagar and Lachhmangarh polled low to very low for the INC during Assembly elections. In the Lok Sabha elections, the support for the party was very low to extremely low in Jhunjhunu and western parts of Sikar Lok Sabha constituency; in eastern Sikar, whole of Alwar, eastern part of Bharatpur and

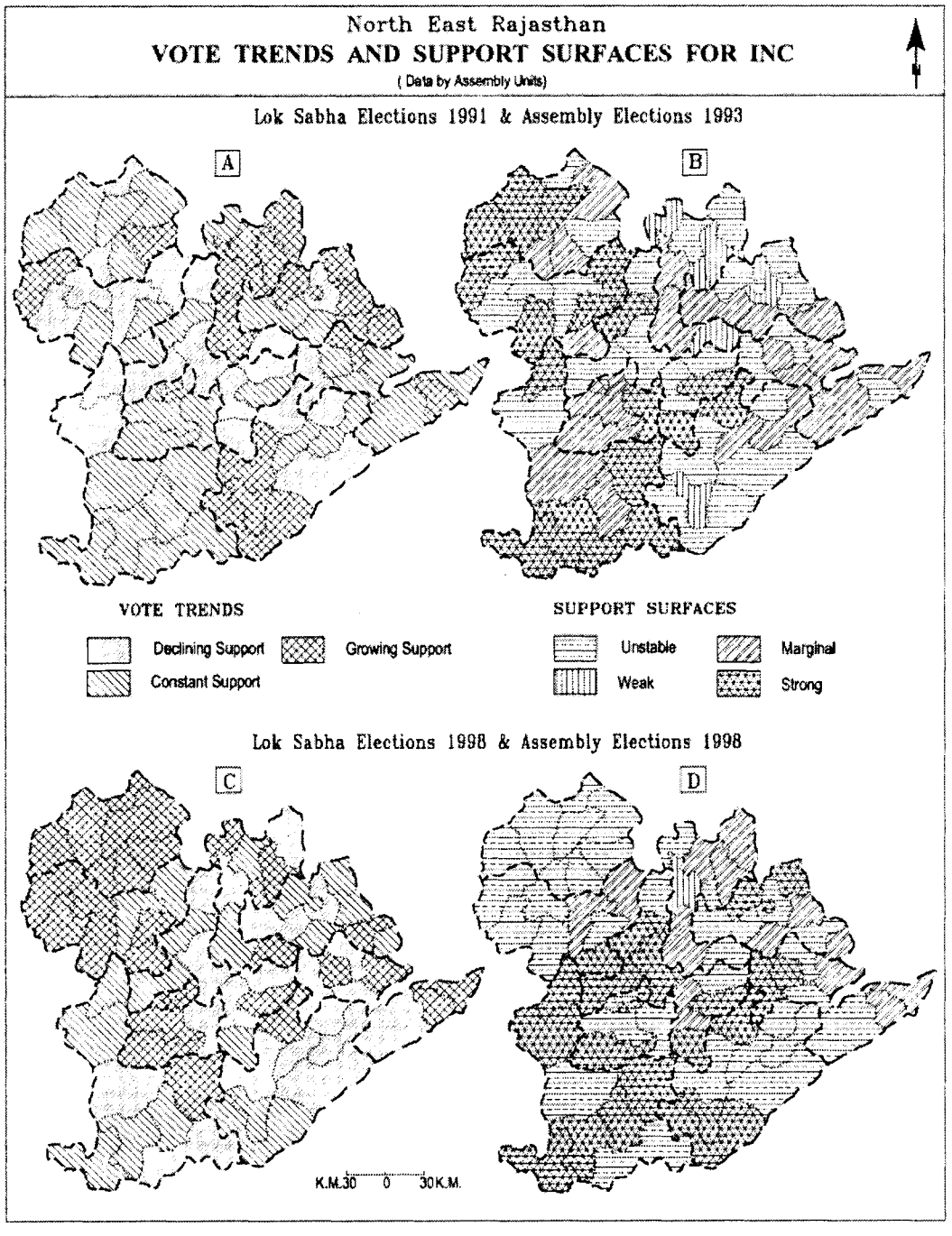

Fig. 3 Vote Trends and Support Surface for INC

Bayana constituencies the support was of low order. Western part of Jhunjhunu Lok Sabha constituency, Lachhmangarh, Sikar, Danta Ramgarh and Sri Madhopur in Sikar and isolated pockets in the east viz. Behror, Alwar, Kumher, Rajgarh and Rajakhera recorded a marked increase in their support for INC during Assembly elections. Except a few areas, in major part of Alwar, Dausa, Jaipur and Tonk Lok Sabha constituencies the pattern of support for the party was largely similar during both elections.

During 1998 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections the electoral preferences in the study area revealed even greater variation at the two levels of elections than the former pair of elections. The 'unstable' support surface increased from 25 in 1991-93 to 36 Assembly units in 1998-98. In 53 Assembly units the support for the party recorded growth or decline. Broadly speaking, the party support was constant or growing in the western part of the study area whereas in the eastern part, particularly the south eastern region, the party lost support during Assembly elections. Areas of growth included entire Jhunjhunu and Jaipur (except Bassi), major part of Sikar Lok Sabha constituency; Niwai, Todabhim, Weir, Rupbas, Dholpur and Rajakhera in Bayana, some isolated pockets in Bharatpur and Alwar, and Sikrai in Dausa Lok Sabha constituency. On the other hand, Bamanwas and Karauli region of Sawai Madhopur (excluding Todabhim), western part of Bayana (except Weir), substantial part of Dausa, scattered areas in Alwar and Bharatpur, and Malpura and Uniara in Tonk Lok Sabha constituencies voted less enthusiastically for the party during the Assembly elections (Fig. 4C). Out of these the fluctuation was of 'unstable' degree in entire Jhunjhunu, Sikar, the urban part of Jaipur along with Bassi, Sawai Madhopur, parts of Alwar and Bharatpur and Bayana Lok Sabha constituencies, Malpura, Uniara, Bandikui and Kotputli (Fig. 4D).

During 1998 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, the 'stable support' surface for the party shrunk to 36 assembly units as compared to 47 in 1991-93 but the number of Assembly units which gave consistent 'strong' support to the party rose to 22. The strong surface predominantly included south western and central part of the study region: a majority of the Assembly segments of Tonk (except Malpura and Uniara), Dausa (excluding Bandikui, Dausa and Kotputli), parts in western Bayana, northern Bharatpur and southern Sawai Madhopur Lok Sabha constituencies, Todabhim, Chomu, Phagi, Jaipur Rural and Johari Bazaar. Bansur was the only unit where the party's position was weak.

Contextual Explanation of Electoral Performance of INC

The regression of factor scores of the individual contexts and all the three contexts together on the vote share of INC for each election year reveals that the nature and magnitude of association between the electoral performance of the INC and the various socio-economic contexts has not been consistent.

(a) Urban Developmental Context

The relationship between urban developmental context and INC votes was negative in three of the four elections which suggests that the party acquired a relatively

Table 6 : **Equations obtained by Regressing the Vote Percentage of INC on the Urban Developmental Context**

Election	Regression Equation	R	R^2
LS 1991	$Y = 37.58 - 1.175\ X_1$	–0.096	0.009
VS 1993	$Y = 36.64 - 3.235^{**}X_1$	–0.302	**0.091**
LS 1998	$Y = 38.38 - 1.330\ X_1$	–0.102	0.010
VS 1998	$Y = 41.537 + 2.689^{*}X_1$	**0.203**	0.041

* Significant at 0.05 level. ** Significant at 0.01 level.

Y stands for vote share of INC per Assembly unit and $\mathbf{X_1}$ for urban developmental context.

Table 7 : **Equations obtained by Regressing the Vote Percentage of INC on the Social Backwardness Context**

Election	Regression Equation	R	R^2
LS 1991	$Y = 37.58 + 3.085^{**}X_2$	0.251	0.063
VS 1993	$Y = 36.64 + 0.561\ X_2$	0.052	0.003
LS 1998	$Y = 38.38 + 7.827^{**}X_2$	0.599	**0.359**
VS 1998	$Y = 41.537 + 0.878\ X_2$	0.066	0.004

** Significant at 0.01 level.

Y stands for vote share of INC per Assembly unit and $\mathbf{X_2}$ for social backwardness context.

lower support in the urbanised and developed areas of north east Rajasthan (Table 6). Only in 1998 Assembly elections, the association was positive which may be attributed to the strong pro-INC wave during these elections, more a result of the widespread anti-incumbency wave against the BJP, which translated into gains for INC in urban areas hitherto more in favour of BJP.

During both the Lok Sabha elections, the influence of the context was negligible whereas during Assembly elections it was relatively higher as well as moderately significant.

(b) Social Backwardness Context

The consistently positive relationship between the social backwardness context and electoral support for INC party underlines that performance of the party has been relatively stronger in the areas where the proportion of the weaker sections of population is higher (Table 7). The level of explanation offered by this context has been

highly varying ranging from 0.3 percent in 1993 to as high as 35.9 percent in 1998 Lok Sabha elections.

The influence of the context has been negligible during Assembly elections whereas the explanatory strength of the context was considerably higher during the Lok Sabha ones, especially in 1998 Lok Sabha elections when the context accounted for more than a third of the vote variance of the party.

(c) Gender Context

The relationship between gender context and electoral performance of INC has also fluctuated sharply over various elections. In three of the four elections (except 1998 Lok Sabha elections) the association between the two has been positive which suggests that the party performed fairly well in areas scoring high on this context (Table 8). Among the Lok Sabha elections, the influence of the context has not been consistent. In 1991, 31 percent of the vote

Table 8 : **Equations obtained by Regressing the Vote Percentage of INC on the Gender Context**

Election	Regression Equation	R	R^2
LS 1991	$Y = 37.58 + 6.840^{**}X_3$	+0.557	**0.310**
VS 1993	$Y = 36.64 + 1.802\ X_3$	+0.168	0.028
LS 1998	$Y = 38.38 - 0.374\ X_3$	**–0.029**	0.001
VS 1998	$Y = 41.54 + 3.921^{**}X_3$	+0.296	0.088

** Significant at 0.01 level.

Y stands for vote share of INC per Assembly unit and $\mathbf{X_3}$ for gender context

Table 9 : **R^2 Values of Multiple Regression of Electoral Performance of INC on the Three Individual Contexts and Combined Context of All Three Taken Together**

Elections	X_1	X_2	X_3	$X_{1\text{-}3}$
LS 1991	0.009	0.063	**0.310**	**0.382**
VS 1993	**0.091**	0.003	0.028	0.122
LS 1998	0.010	**0.359**	0.001	**0.370**
VS 1998	0.041	0.004	**0.088**	0.133

variance of the party was explained by this context alone whereas in 1998 the influence of the context was negative and of an extremely low order (0.1 percent). During both the Assembly elections the influence of the context was positive. Although the explanatory strength of the context was of a moderate degree in 1993 but in 1998 it explained for a considerable proportion (8.8 percent) of variation in the electoral support for the party.

Overall Explanation of Voting Pattern of INC

Regression of the vote percentage of INC on the factor scores of all the three contexts taken together, for all the four elections, yielded the following results (Table 9):

In both the Lok Sabha elections, the various socio-economic contexts taken together explained for a significant proportion of the vote variance of INC which was 38.2 percent and 37 percent in 1991 and 1998 respectively. The influence of the contexts was markedly lower during the Assembly elections. The combined explanatory strength of the three contexts was 12.2 percent in 1993 and 13.3 percent in the Assembly elections of 1998. This points out that secular forces exercised a greater influence on voter preferences for the party in elections for the Lok Sabha vis-à-vis the Assembly ones.

The actual complexion of the socio-economic base of INC has varied from election to election. None of the contexts has exercised a consistent influence in determining the voting levels in favour of the party either during Lok Sabha elections or Assembly elections. In Lok Sabha elections of 1991, the gender context exercised a decisive influence in determining the vote share of the party. The social backwardness context was also significant but the influence of the urban developmental context was negligible. In the consecutive Assembly elections, urban developmental context explained for 9.1 percent of the vote variance of the party while the influence of the remaining two contexts was of a very low order. In Lok Sabha elections of 1998, the social backwardness context was most important amongst the three contexts, whereas the remaining two contexts were insignificant. The situation reversed in the Assembly elections of 1998 when the urban developmental context and gender context were important, although the explanation offered by them was not of very high order. The varying complexion of the relationship between the INC votes and the various contexts can be attributed to the aggregative nature of the party, which draws support from all sections of society, although the actual complexion of this support varies from one election to the next depending upon the prevailing socio-political climate at the time elections are held (Dikshit and Sharma 1993, Dikshit and Sharma 1982, Brass 1975). It may be concluded that the configuration of socio-economic support base of the INC has undergone marked shifts at the two levels of elections. This corroborates our contention that electoral preferences in the study area are conditioned by different sets of considerations at different levels of elections.

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