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Name of the Topic: Emerging Trends of Single Party Dominance in India: A Study of Bhartiya Janata Party since 2014 Elections.

Keywords: Single-Party Dominance, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Second Dominant Party System in India, Cultural-Symbolic Mobilization, Leadership Centralization and Personalization.

Findings of the study:

The transformation of India's political landscape since the second decade of the twenty-first century presents one of the most consequential developments in the study of democratic politics in the Global South. The general elections of 2014 marked a decisive rupture in India's post-independence political trajectory, as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured an absolute parliamentary majority an outcome unprecedented since 1984 and only the second such instance in the history of Indian democracy after the Indian National Congress. While electoral alternation is a routine feature of democratic systems, the BJP's victory represented far more than a cyclical change in government. It signaled the emergence of a new political order in which a single party not only dominated electoral outcomes but increasingly redefined the ideological, institutional, and cultural parameters of political competition itself.

The findings of this research are derived from a systematic and multi-dimensional inquiry into the emergence and consolidation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as a dominant political force in India since 2014. By drawing upon historical analysis, cultural and ideological examination, electoral performance, comparative frameworks, primary survey responses, interviews with political experts, and secondary scholarly sources, this study has produced a set of interrelated findings that speak directly to its research questions and hypothesis. The outcomes are not confined to electoral statistics or campaign strategies; rather, they encompass the structural, cultural, and institutional shifts that have reshaped the nature of political competition in India's contemporary democratic framework.

One of the central findings relates to the historical and ideological foundations of the BJP's current dominance. The study demonstrates that the party's contemporary strength cannot be separated from its long-standing ideological roots in the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) and its subsequent transformation through the Janata Party phase and the reconstitution of the BJP in 1980. This ideological continuity, anchored in the doctrine of Integral Humanism articulated by Deendayal Upadhyaya, provided a philosophical base that shaped policy orientation, mobilization strategies, and organizational culture. The research further finds that the Ram Janmabhoomi movement in the late 1980s and early 1990s served as both a symbolic rallying point and a strategic breakthrough, allowing the party to reposition itself from the margins of national politics to the center of political discourse. This trajectory was marked by a deliberate

balancing of ideological steadfastness with pragmatic coalition-building during the coalition era of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The second major finding concerns the role of organizational reform and technological modernization in enabling the BJP to convert its ideological base into a nationwide electoral machine. Internal restructuring in the early 2000s, including the strengthening of the party's National Executive and state-level units, streamlined decision-making and facilitated coordination between the party and the Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Simultaneously, the integration of data analytics, targeted outreach, and digital platforms into campaign strategy expanded the party's reach, particularly among younger and first-time voters. The 2014 general election marked the first instance since 1984 in which a single party secured a parliamentary majority on its own—a result that this study attributes to the successful fusion of ideological appeal, organizational depth, and technologically enabled voter engagement.

A further key finding relates to cultural-symbolic mobilization as a structural feature of BJP's political strategy. The research reveals that, unlike earlier phases when cultural appeals were episodic and often tied to specific electoral cycles, post-2014 BJP strategy has embedded cultural narratives into everyday political discourse. Cultural and religious symbols—the construction of the Ram Mandir, cow protection campaigns, heritage site renaming, and historical reinterpretations—have been continuously invoked, not only as mobilization tools but as frameworks for defining national identity, and political loyalty. The study's analysis of manifestos from 2014, 2019, and 2024 shows a progressively higher prominence of these themes, accompanied by consistent messaging in both traditional media and an expansive social media ecosystem. Primary survey findings confirm that these narratives resonate differently across regions but collectively contribute to a shared ideological affinity that transcends immediate electoral cycles.

The findings also point to a reconfiguration of social coalitions as a foundation of electoral dominance. This research documents the BJP's ability to build a durable support base by mobilizing non-dominant Other Backward Classes (OBCs), significant segments of Dalits, and tribal communities, while retaining its traditional upper-caste supporters. This process, often referred to as social engineering, has been facilitated by welfare schemes that are both targeted and highly publicized, combining tangible economic benefits with symbolic recognition of community identities. These initiatives such as Ujjwala Yojana for rural women or PM-Kisan for small farmers serve not only as policy interventions but as instruments of political messaging that reinforce the party's connection to beneficiary groups.

Another significant finding is the centralization of leadership around Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Leadership personalization has amplified the coherence of campaign messaging, streamlined decision-making, and projected a strong governance image both domestically and internationally. The Modi persona, as reflected in campaign material, media coverage, and public opinion surveys, has become a key factor in electoral outcomes. However, the 2024 general election, in which the BJP won 240 seats and required coalition partners to form the government, underscores that while leadership centralization has been an asset, it also makes the party's dominance sensitive to shifts in individual popularity and regional dynamics.

Closely related to leadership centralization is the finding on electoral dominance. This research argues that BJP's electoral dominance since 2014 has been characterized by three interlinked features: (1) the ability to consistently secure a higher-than-average national vote share and a disproportionately large seat share due to vote distribution efficiency; (2) the nationalization of electoral competition, where local and regional contests are increasingly shaped by central-level narratives; and (3) the fragmentation and limited

coordination among opposition forces, which has reduced competitive pressure in many constituencies. Statistical analysis in this study shows that the BJP's vote share advantage is amplified by the first past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system, enabling majority control with less than an absolute majority of the popular vote. This structural advantage, when combined with targeted constituency-level campaigning and micro-management of electoral resources, has reinforced the party's ability to dominate successive national elections. Nevertheless, the results of the 2024 election indicate that while dominance persists, it is not immune to shifts in voter alignment, regional pushback, or opposition alliance-building in specific states.

The comparative dimension of the study yields findings on the differences between BJP's dominance and the earlier Congress system (1952–1977). While both achieved sustained control over the political system, the Congress system relied heavily on elite accommodation, internal factionalism, and a centrist ideological stance that absorbed dissent within party structures. By contrast, the BJP model is characterized by stronger ideological consolidation, tighter leadership control, and a programmatic rigidity that leaves less space for internal ideological variance. Moreover, BJP dominance is reinforced by a cultural-symbolic narrative that extends beyond electoral politics into the sphere of societal values and identity formation.

The research also finds that the BJP's dominance has reshaped the competitive landscape of Indian politics. Political competition increasingly takes place on terrain defined by cultural and identity-based issues rather than purely socio-economic or policy-driven debates. The BJP's ability to nationalize electoral narratives has placed opposition parties in a reactive position, often compelling them to respond within the BJP's preferred ideological frame. Nevertheless, the findings highlight that countervailing forces persist strong regional parties in states such as Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Kerala continue to resist BJP expansion, and opposition coordination as observed in select states during the 2024 general election can alter electoral outcomes under certain conditions.

Institutionally, the findings suggest that dominance is maintained not solely through electoral performance but through influence over narrative-shaping mechanisms such as media, think tanks, and public discourse platforms. While this has enhanced the BJP's agenda-setting power, the study notes that judicial oversight, federal structures, and civil society activism continue to function as checks, albeit unevenly, within the broader system. The findings indicate that BJP's dominance since 2014 is the outcome of a multi-layered process combining long-term ideological work, adaptive organizational strategies, strategic use of cultural narratives, targeted social coalition building, electoral efficiency, and leadership centralization all within a democratic framework that remains formally competitive but structurally skewed in favor of the dominant party.