

PREFACE



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With over a billion people, the Republic of India is the world's largest democracy. The 2014 General Election of India with more than 834 million electoral was the largest ever election in the world, considering the magnitude of the electoral exercise and the numbers involved. Under the Election Visitors Programme (EVP) conducted by the Election Commission of India, over 140 visitors from more than 30 countries had the occasion to get first hand exposure to the largest electoral event in the world. The use of technology in various fields of election management came in for high praise. The electoral process of India holds lessons that could serve as a model of an excellent electioneering process for many countries to follow.

Since India's independence in 1947, parliamentary democracy has been the central political mechanism governing India. Every five years, the election system returns representatives of the people to the Lok Sabha (House of the People in the Union) as well as to State Legislative Assemblies (House of the People in the State). As a whole, this constitutes a network of election politics in contemporary India, and is the basic framework of India's democratic regime. Thus, elections form the essence of Indian democracy.

The Indian General Election of 2014 was held to constitute the 16th Lok Sabha, electing members of parliament for all 543 parliamentary constituencies of India. Running in nine phases from 7th April to 12th May 2014, this was the longest election in the country's history. For the first time, Indian voters had the option to reject

all candidates using the NOTA (None of the above) button. India turned into an e-democracy in the 2004 General Election when 10.75 lakh EVMs (Electronic Voting Machines) were used across the country. In 2014, 17.20 lakh Control Units were used. The total electors were 83,41,01,479; male electors: 52.40%; female: 47.60% in 2014, while the same were 71,69,85,101; 52.27% and 47.73%, respectively, in 2009. This indicates an increase of more than 117 million electors (16.33% growth). The newly introduced gender category of "Others" constitute 28,314 (0.0035%) of total electors.

The measuring and mapping of a constituency in its pre-election exercise requires lots of information from surveys, feedback, news and media reports, networking, demographic, socio-economic and electoral data analysis, social-media and many more inputs to investigate the mathematics of elections for a particular constituency. During the General Election – 2014, various tools of technology have transformed electoral planning and its implementation. Candidates want to dig more deeper into data for their election analysis. The visualization of data with the help of thematic maps and infographics play a very significant role and facilitate to understand the performance of parties and candidates within a period of previous and current elections.

India Elects – 2014 is a comparative analysis of India's General Election of 2009 and 2014 with the help of 205 maps, over 235 graphs and lots of stats to reveal interesting highlights and insights. The maps of the last two general election results i.e. 2009 and 2014 have been placed juxtaposed to aid visual comparison. A comparison of the electoral data as per the final publication of summary revision 2014 (released by the Election Commission of India on 14th February, 2014) with that of previous General Elections shows that – India's electorate is larger than the combined populations of the US and Western Europe. The largest constituency by geographical area, Ladakh has more landmass (172,374 sq. km.) than many sovereign nations such as Bangladesh, Nepal and North Korea. For the first time in India, a party other than the Congress won a clear majority.

The insights reveal how the BJP-NDA increased its vote share in 2014, compared to the INC-UPA vote share of 2009 and the swing in favour of the BJP-NDA is apparent event among the minorities. The General Election 2014 witnessed the highest-ever voters' turnout with 66.4% voting as compared to the previous highest which was

64.01% in 1984. In 2014, 8,251 candidates contested, compared to 8,070 in 2009. In 2014, 7,578 (91.8%) male candidates contested compared to 7,514 (93.1%) in 2009. The vote difference and swing impact between the main national parties are also enlightening. The above results indicate a clear swing and increase in vote share of the BJP-NDA, including among the minority communities, compared to the INC-UPA, which may have implications in the forthcoming elections across India.

The electoral facts and figures with thematic maps perhaps have never been available in such a comprehensive manner as here. The book is aimed to serve as a reference book for politicians, policy makers, scholars, psephologists, media professionals and academia who have interest in election politics of India.

I am grateful to Dr. Prannoy Roy, Executive Chairperson, NDTV Ltd. who is the most recognised psephologist in India was the first media professional to anchor the television coverage of general elections in India, who very humbly accedes to my request and pen down the foreword of this book. I would like to appreciate and thank all the staff members of field data collection, research, process, GIS, designing and technical teams who worked hard to make this book as an indispensable collection of contemporary election studies in India.

Ideas and opinions are solicited to make this book better and hope readers would enjoy **India Elects – 2014** to the utmost.

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