Gujarat Elections 2002

Vote Shares across Regions

This paper attempts to analyse in each constituency vote shares accruing to the two major parties in the state with the use of triplot or ternary diagram method. A triplot enables a two-dimensional display of three categories of shares or proportions, in this case vote shares, accruing to the BJP, Congress and ‘others’. Triplot diagrams provide a thematic representation of the fact that an increase in vote shares of BJP and to a lesser extent the Congress does have a relationship with the decline of ‘other’ contestants.

Srijit Mishra

I

Introduction

Our present concern on the recently concluded Gujarat elections has its roots on the communal disturbances that began on February 27-28, 2002 and went on for months (Mishra 2002a). Varshney (2002) in a book published just before these disturbances began had mentioned about the absence of associational interactions in communally sensitive regions. Some of these polarisations have historical antecedents that can be traced prior to independence [Patel 2002]. However, in the walled city area of Ahmedabad the major post-independence riot was in 1969 and subsequently the frequency increased in the 1980s and, as Breman (2002) and Mahadevia (2002) suggest, this has something to do with the decline of industrial (particularly textile) activities and with it increasing unemployment and poverty. More recently, this communalisation is also spreading to poorer tribal regions [Lobo 2002]. The Congress that has ruled for four decades cannot be absolved of the blame on continuation of poverty and deprivation and also on communal politics; besides, there is no viable third alternative [Shah 2002]. At a general level these communal politics is to do with a feeling of humiliation by the majority community of being deprived of benefits [Kothari 2002], but as mentioned by Subramanian (2002) the gradual accession of such moral reasoning has neither morality nor reason.

It was in 1995 that BJP first came to power, it was also the first time that it contested in all the 182 seats in the Gujarat assembly elections. BJP increased its vote share from 26.7 per cent in 1990 to 42.5 per cent and the number of seats increased from a little over one-third (67) to nearly two-thirds (121). The 1995 election is also interesting in the sense that the Janata Dal (JD), the party that ruled from 1990 to 1995 did not win a single seat and forfeited its deposit in 109 of the 115 seats it contested. This possibly is the beginning of a trend towards a two-party system with the BJP and the Indian National Congress (Congress) that is also evident in the recently concluded elections of December 2002. This is evident from declining share of votes, seats and even contestants from among others to an increase in vote share and seats of BJP and Congress (Section II). We take the analysis of vote share further by making use of triplots [Katz and King 1999; also see Salomon and Murray 2002] to show the move away from others towards BJP and Congress in Section III. The emerging regional pattern of the December 2002 results between BJP and Congress are discussed in Section IV.

II

Trend Towards a Two-Party System

A look at trends in vote share suggests that the BJP has been increasing its vote shares/seats almost steadily from the very beginning (Table 1). The major beneficiary in 1995 in Gujarat was BJP. After attaining power, it also had its share of problems. Its first chief minister was replaced after about seven months and its second chief minister could not complete a year. This

Table 1: Trends in Vote Share, Seats Contested and Seats Won of BJP, Congress and Others

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<tr>
<td>Vote share BJP</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>49.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>10.9</td>
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<td>Seats contested BJP</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>181</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
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<td>168</td>
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<td>181</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>1565</td>
<td>2182</td>
<td>764</td>
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<td>Seats won BJP</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
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Note: BJP denotes Bharatiya Janata Party that was Jan Sangh till 1972, Congress denotes Indian National Congress, and others denote all others. In 1962 there were 154 constituencies, in 1967 and 1972 there were 168 constituencies and since 1975 there have been 182 constituencies, but in 1975 election was not held in Viramgam and in 2002 election has been countermanded in Surat City West due to the death of BJP candidate. The deceased candidate’s wife contesting in a BJP ticket won when election was held on January 9, 2003. The seats contested by others happen to be more than total seats because it includes contestants from all other parties/independents.

was because of a split engineered by Shankarsinh Vaghela who formed the Rashtriya Janata Party (RJP) and ruled for about one and a half years with support from Congress. Despite this split BJP came back to power with an increase in its vote share but a slight decline in the number of seats by four, which coincide with the number of seats won by RJP.

Some time after the 1998 elections Vaghela’s RJP merged with the Congress and they fought the 1999 Lok Sabha elections together. A simple arithmetic addition of the 1998 results suggest that Congress plus RJP combined vote share would be the leading partner in 98 constituencies (53 seats where Congress won, four where RJP won and in another 41 seats). However, this optimism did not get reflected in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections. Nevertheless, they were leading in 69 assembly segments, that is, 12 more than the number of assembly seats they had. Of the 69 segments, 39 were where Congress had won in 1998, two where RJP had won, 17 where both combined would lead and in an additional 11 segments.

The most interesting aspect of the 1999 elections was that there was not a single assembly segment where any party other than the BJP and Congress could take the first two positions and their combined vote share was a phenomenal 97.9 per cent (52.5 per cent of BJP that won 20 seats and 45.4 per cent of Congress that won six seats). The preponderance of the BJP and Congress in the parliamentary elections makes the two-party scenario complete.

To a lesser extent this trend is also visible in the state elections. From 1995 onwards the vote share of both BJP and Congress have been increasing. The BJP scores over Congress in the sense that its percentage point increase is greater. Besides, both the parties also have seen a decline in the proportion of candidates securing third or lower order ranks (Table 2). Note that in 2002 there are none from the BJP and Congress who have secured below third rank and from both there are only eight securing a third rank – three from BJP and five from Congress. These include the two seats retained by JD (United) and two independent winners of which one is a Congress rebel. From the other four (all independents) securing second position, two again are Congress rebels (BJP gained in one scenario only) and one is NCP who also BJP won.

One also observes decline in the number of contestants since 1995. In 1995 there were no seats with two- or three-cornered contests, there were three with four contestants and another three with five contestants and all the other seats had at least six contestants. In 1998 there was one two-cornered contest between BJP and Congress and 12 three-cornered contests in which in only three cases could the other obtain second rank. In 2002 there were 16 two-cornered contests between BJP and Congress in which BJP won 10 and 32 three-cornered contests in which BJP won 24, Congress 7 and a Congress rebel another.

Thus, it can be stated that the vote share of both BJP and Congress has been increasing since 1995, but in all three elections the percentage point increase of BJP has been greater than that of the Congress. This increase in vote share of both parties has been at the cost of others such that in 2002 their combined vote share is 89 per cent and in almost all constituencies the first and second positions are shared between them. The changing vote share and its move away from others to that of BJP and Congress can be visualised using triplots.

### Vote Shares through Triangular Plots

In the previous section the discussion on the emergence of two-party scenario is based on aggregate data for the state of Gujarat-based on the performance of each party. An attempt is made in

| Table 2: Ranks of BJP and Congress Candidates in State Elections of 1995, 1998 and 2002 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| **Ranks**                  | **Number of BJP Candidates** | **Number of Congress Candidates** |
| First | 122 | 117 | 126 | 45 | 53 | 51 |
| Second | 40 | 54 | 52 | 108 | 197 | 123 |
| Third | 19 | 9 | 3 | 23 | 26 | 5 |
| Fourth | 1 | 2 | - | 4 | 2 | - |
| Fifth | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Contested | 182 | 182 | 181 | 181 | 179 | 179 |

**Note:** Congress did not contest two seats in 2002 probably because it supported left parties – Communist Party of India (CPI) in Jamnagar and Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM) in Bhavnagar. In Jamnagar CPI secured fourth position but rebel Congress candidate secured second position and in Bhavnagar CPM secured second position.

**Source:** India (2002) and NDTV (2002).

| Table 3: Regionwise Performance (Won/Lost and Decline/Increase in Vote Share) of BJP, Congress and Others in 2002 Elections of Gujarat |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| **Elections Held** | **Saurashtra** | **North Gujarat** | **Central Gujarat** | **South Gujarat** |
| **Number of Seats** | **B** | **C** | **O** | **B** | **C** | **O** | **B** | **C** | **O** |
| 58 | 18 | 1 | 35 | 16 | 1 | 42 | 6 | 2 | 10 | 11 | 0 |
| 52 | 1 | 1 | 8 | - | 8 | 1 | 1 | - | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 50 | 13 | 5 | 1 | 3 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| 22 | 12 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 21 | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - |

**Notes:**
(a) Election was countermanded in Surat City West due to death of BJP candidate. Subsequently won by BJP.
(b) B, C and O denote BJP, Congress and others respectively.
(c) For others it does not refer to the total number of candidates contested.
(d) Won for one party indicates the loss for the other two. For others the win in Saurashtra is by an independent; the win in north Gujarat is by a Congress rebel who contested as an independent; and the two wins in central Gujarat are that of Janata Dal (United).
(e) Each row under this category is with reference to the number of seats won. Also note that the indication of a decline is that of vote share for a particular party or parties and it also indicates the increase in vote share of the parties not indicated. For instance, B decline denotes that vote share of BJP has declined and that of Congress and others have increased.
the present section to make use of vote shares for each constituency through a graphical analysis.

A triplot or ternary diagrams is a method through which three categories of shares/proportions can be shown in two dimensions with the help of an equilateral triangle [Katz and King 1999; also see Salomon and Murray 2002, pp 214-15]. It makes use of a simple property of equilateral triangle that is as follows: from any point within an equilateral triangle (including the boundary) if one draws perpendicular from the three bases to this point then the sum of these perpendiculars will be a constant value. For the present context, we consider the constant value as unity so that the perpendicular from the base can be considered as the proportion share of votes. If one draws perpendicular from the midpoint of the bases then the point where the three per-
Figure 3: Regionwise Triplots of Gujarat 2002 Elections

3A: Saurashtra (N=58)  
Others

3B: North Gujarat (N=52)  
Others

3C: Central Gujarat (N=50)  
Others

3D: South Gujarat (N=21)  
Others

Note: As in Figure 1.

...
If one excludes the third rank among others in three-cornered contests then one observes that usage of vote share with first, second or third rank of a particular candidate among others in triplots has been declining. In 1995 they were 15, 34 and 30 respectively; in 1998 they were 12, 30 and 12 respectively; and in 2002 they were four, six and eight respectively. This point is of relevance for the fact that an increase in vote share of BJP and to a lesser extent of Congress seems to have a relationship with the decline of other contestants. Data were taken from India (2002) and NDTV (2002) to draw triplots in Figures 1, 2 and 3 by using a programme by Thompson (2001).

A look at Figures 1A, 1B and 1C confirm our earlier point that there is a move away from others towards BJP and Congress. The data points are relatively more spread in Figure 1A occupying position towards the vertex other, whereas the data points are towards the vertices of BJP and Congress in Figure 1B and this aspect becomes even stronger in Figure 1C. As the data points are reduced to a smaller space they also look more clustered between BJP and Congress vertices. In extreme situations, when others hardly have any vote share then the data points will be clustered around the base joining the BJP and Congress vertices.

This clustering of data points around BJP-Congress base is clearly evident for the assembly segment wise data of 1999 parliamentary elections as depicted in Figure 2. In fact, the combined vote share of the others were less than 1 per cent in 57 assembly segments, between 1-2 per cent in 68 segments, 2-5 per cent in 50 segments, and above 5 per cent in seven assembly segments only. The total dominance of the parliametary elections by BJP and Congress in 1999 is not there in the 2002 state elections. Nevertheless, the decline of combined vote share of others that started in 1995 has continued through 1998 to 2002. In this background an attempt is made in Section IV to disaggregate 2002 election results across regions within Gujarat.

IV
Regional Patterns in 2002 Elections

The purpose of disaggregating is to capture something that might not be possible with aggregate data. Table 3 and Figures 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D point out very interesting patterns. It was in Saurashtra that has the maximum number of constituencies, where one sees heavy concentration around an imaginary perpendicular line from BJP-Congress base to the centre of the triplot. Of course the concentration is more towards BJP and heavier towards the base but there is some gap between the base and the concentration of data points. Despite BJP having won 39 of the 58 seats in this region, the number of seats won reduced by 11 when compared with 1998. More interestingly the BJP vote share declined in 40 seats that includes 24 of the 39 won; the others also saw a decline of vote share in 40 seats; vote share of Congress declined in 13 and increased in 45, but it won only 18 seats.

In north Gujarat the data points are more concentrated towards the BJP-Congress base and also towards the BJP vertex. It not only points out the high vote share of others but also points out...
some seats with very high vote shares for BJP – there are about six constituencies where BJP got more than 65 per cent of vote share. Independents have made some mark in two situations. In one case the rebel Congress candidate who was MLA in 1995 won and in another case where Congress won, the independent got third rank but got more than 25 per cent of the vote share. In this region BJP won 35 of the 52 seats that is two less from 1998. In this region the vote share of BJP declined in 12, five of which it won; vote share of Congress declined in 14, two of which it won; but it was among others that there was decline in vote share in 46 seats. Note that seven of the 16 two-cornered contests between BJP and Congress are in this region. It is also interesting that there was not a single seat, excluding the one won by the independent, where the vote share of BJP and Congress declined together – there were five such instances in Saurashtra when BJP won. Thus, indicating that the decline of others has been relatively greater in north Gujarat.

In central Gujarat the relative performance of Congress seems to be the worst (it got only seven of the 50 seats); it is here that others, particularly JD (United), retained two seats (both are also reserved for scheduled tribes). The BJP seems to have got almost everything. This is the only region where BJP increased its seats compared with 1998, that is from 16 seats in 1998 to 42 in 2002, 26 more. Thus, compensating for the net loss of seats in all the other three regions. There is not a single seat in central Gujarat where BJP’s vote share declined; vote share of Congress declined in 32; vote share of others declined in 37 including the two retained by JD (United). In north Gujarat the decline was mostly for others, but in central Gujarat there was a decline for both Congress and others. Note that this is a region where BJP did not have much of a presence in 1998 and it is here that Godhra happens to be.

The BJP performed its worst in south Gujarat in the sense that it got less than 50 per cent of the seats in only this region. It has 10 seats from 21, which is four less than 1998 (now BJP has exactly 50 per cent seats after winning Surat city west that was earlier countermanded). What is unique about south Gujarat is that BJP’s vote share declined in 19 seats of this region and in the two seats where its vote share increased were the ones that it wrested from either Congress or JD. This decline in BJP’s vote share was not entirely because of Congress whose vote share declined in 11 seats, rather, it is because others whose combined vote share increased in 17 of the 21 seats. In fact, from the 11 seats that Congress won there are five where the relevance of others is reflected in the fact that the decline in vote share of BJP is greater than that of Congress. The scatter in Figure 2D also implies that the combined vote share of others is relatively greater where Congress won than where BJP won.

Conclusions

A graphical portrayal of vote shares between BJP, Congress and others in 1995, 1998 and 2002 point out a trend where others seem to be on the decline. In an aggregate sense the vote share of both BJP and Congress has been increasing. However, disaggregating vote shares for 2002 election across regions show that there are regional differences. In Saurashtra vote share of BJP and others declined and net loss in number of seats was the highest for BJP here. In north Gujarat the decline in vote share was basically among others. In central Gujarat BJP increased its vote share in each and every seat and was the only region where BJP had a net gain in seats, a gain that was greater than the net loss in all the other three regions. It is in south Gujarat that BJP’s vote share declined in almost all seats, but the shift was towards others and as a result Congress benefited indirectly. To sum up, the verdict is not clearly in favour of BJP as the overall increase in vote share and two-thirds majority in number of seats won suggest. The voters did behave differently in different regions and in Saurashtra and south Gujarat there was a swing against the BJP, but it did not entirely get transferred to the Congress. The result is thus a lesson for both BJP and Congress. If BJP has to continue to rule it should emphasise on real issues and good governance (‘Ram Rajya’ not ‘Ram Mandir’).

Note that BJP gained only in central Gujarat where it did not have any substantial presence, and hence, governance could not have been a major voting concern. Of course, and unfortunately, it may not be a concern elsewhere when fight against terrorism and national security seem to overrule the real issues such as illiteracy, ill-health and other aspects of social deprivations – the unfreedoms (Drèze and Sen, 2002 and references therein). Now that BJP is in a predominant position in almost all the regions of Gujarat it is the real issues that will subsequently become increasingly relevant. The Congress should also come up with a viable alternative, develop inner party democracy and not just depend on the charisma of a single family (the Nehru-Gandhi family). It is this that provides hope and optimism in the election results of Gujarat.

References


Address for correspondence:
srijit@igidr.ac.in
srijitmishra@hotmail.com