

PREFACE

The election in India is a humungous exercise and often referred to as the 'greatest show on earth' not merely because of the scale, size, and diversity of the whole exercise but because of the vibrant volatility of the Indian democracy. In India, people are the propelling force, the fuel of India's electoral democracy. Among all other elections in India, Parliamentary Election or General Election is a grand stage in the fulfillment of the ideal democracy outlined in the Indian Constitution. The Parliamentary Election also constitutes the signpost of the democracy of the Indian sub-continent. Thus, a clear picture of the Parliamentary Election is an important step towards a better understanding of Indian democratic framework.

A thriving electoral democracy is the distinct and durable identity of India. Since India gained independence in 1947, parliamentary democracy was adopted as the central political mechanism governing India and reflecting popular will. At a regular interval of five years, the people of India get an opportunity to realize their actual democratic power concerning election to the Lok Sabha or the Parliament (House of the People in the Union) and the State Legislative Assemblies or the Vidhan Sabha (House of the People in the state). As a whole, this directly or indirectly constitutes a network of election politics in contemporary India, since election forms the basic substance of India's democratic regime.

Nowadays, Election is not only to cast one's vote, but it is also an exercise of faith for the Indian citizen. People's loyalty towards the democratic framework of India has equally enhanced and deepened with every successive election. It is the singular way through which the Indian voter can fully realize the value of their vote and the power of the ballot. The attitude of the voters towards the election is also changing with the time. The voters of the first general elections in 1952 were very simple compared to the voters of 2014 who are far more politically aware and alert. In the same way, the entire electoral system of India has witnessed numerous remarkable changes from time to time. One of the noteworthy features of general elections was the embracement of technology with the more sophisticated electronic voting machine (EVM). For the first time the Election Commission of India (ECI) introduced EVMs partly in 1999 General Election but in the 2004 General Election India was turned into an e-democracy when 10.75 lakh EVMs were used across the country successfully. It saves the time in casting a vote as well as declaring the results compared to the earlier paper ballot system. Another notable change was occurred in the 2014 General Election; in which Indian voters had the option to reject all candidates using the NOTA (None of the above) button. The ECI is also trying to launch new methods and technologies to bring more transparency to the electoral system.

The political system of India has also undergone some dramatic changes from the first General Election in 1952 to the 16th General Election in 2014. After the attainment of independence, Indian National Congress was the single dominant party in the Indian politics. After the fourth General Elections in 1967, the entire political scenario of India had experienced some significant changes, because for the first time non-congress governments were formed in some states. And a new period of coalition politics emerged in India. The beginning of coalition politics at the state level sowed the seeds of coalition politics at the national level, the culmination of which was seen in 1977 General Election with the formation of the Janata Party Government at the centre. Finally, Congress lost its halo of hegemonic power in the 1989 General Election. In the next few General Elections, Congress barely managed to grab the power, but as the leader of an alliance of several parties. On the other hand, the BJP's fortune began to rise in national politics, and in 1999 General Election it emerged as the single largest party. Interestingly, the glorious victory of BJP in 1999 was repeated in the last 2014 General Election, and that resulted in a tectonic shift in the Indian political scenario from the Congress to the BJP. At present, the saffron party has successfully established its one-party dominant status in the Indian politics.

There is no doubt that the Indian book market is growing every day, but still, a book with encapsulated electoral data of year-wise Indian Parliamentary Elections is not easily accessible. This book is an effort to present the widely scattered electoral data of year-wise Indian Parliamentary Elections in an encapsulated manner. Hence, so far as Indian Parliamentary Elections are concerned, this book in the form of Atlas is the answer and absolute solution to empower electoral data-seekers. However, there is a need of more electoral data and more analysis on this so that more research in this field should come out, which is, a vital aspect of making India's democratic framework better.

This first-ever, Election Atlas of India is an indispensable and scholarly Atlas on the Indian Parliamentary Elections that presents the year wise comprehensive electoral data of the Parliamentary Elections from 1952 to 2014 with the help of thematic maps and statistical diagrams for better visualization. Every Parliamentary Election is a turning point in the history of a democratic nation like India thus; the time-line information of each Parliamentary Election has made it a unique book in itself. Most of the electoral data have been methodically compiled and examined in this absorbing analytical publication. The electoral data of each Parliamentary Election is divided into specific sectors likewise, Reserved and General Parliamentary Constituencies, Cluster of Electors, Voters, Voter Turnout, Polling Stations with Electors and Voters per Polling Station, Contesting Candidates including both Male and Female, Winner Parties, Runner-up Parties and much more. Moreover, it also covers the results of bye-elections and deleted or modified parliamentary constituencies according to delimitations and re-organisation of states since independence. As per the 2011 census, information on total population and share of different sections of the population have also been provided in this Atlas by using demographic maps.

This Atlas is broadly classified into three main chapters. The first part consists of thematic electoral maps that present the key electoral features through best-visualised GIS techniques for Parliamentary Elections chronologically i.e., from 1st Lok Sabha in 1952 to 16th Lok Sabha in 2014. It also includes some demographic maps which provide the demographic information based on 2011 census according to Delimitation 2008. Then the second part provides election timeline and general information with interesting diagrams, charts, and tables about the time series trend during the last parliamentary elections. It also covers the list of the presidents, the vice presidents, the prime ministers, the speakers and the chief election commissioners since independence. The third and last section consists of electoral features and results with the statistical tables of a particular constituency which cover the demographic and electoral features and also display the election results up to the fifth position candidates. The bye-elections and the electoral details of deleted or modified constituencies and states are the unique features of these datasheets which made this section a treasure trove of this Atlas. An index of parliamentary constituencies showing their related pages is mentioned under the section 'Supporting Info' to get the quick and easy access to any particular PC. The terms coined by Datamet India like Religious Dominance, Rural-Urban Classification and Polarity of parties have also been defined in its explanatory notes.

This work unravels the statistics behind the Parliamentary Elections. Furthermore, the Atlas is a useful resource for the vast electoral stakeholders including politicians, electoral administrators, political analysts, research scholars from different disciplines and others who are engaged in the systematic operation of electoral where there is a limitation to get the broader perspective.

We are very thankful to Dr. Nasim Zaidi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India who very humbly and kindly accepted our request to pen down the foreword of this Atlas.

Finally, we would like to thank and congratulate the entire team at Datamet India including the staff teams of field data collection, research, process, GIS, designing and technical cells for their scrupulous efforts and valuable contribution in the publication of this historical Atlas. Datamet India will continue to update the book with the latest electoral information, facts, and figures from time to time.

Constructive suggestions from our readers are earnestly solicited to improve this Atlas to its maximum potential. Hope that readers would find this Atlas as a must-have knowledge-worthy reference book on India's general elections.