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General Elections 2019 in India: Political Interludes behind the Success of BJP and NDA

M.R.Biju &
M.R.B. Anantha Padmanabha

The 2019 Indian general election was held in seven phases from 11 April to 19 May 2019 to constitute the 17th Lok Sabha. The votes were counted and result was declared on 23 May. About 900 million people were eligible to vote and turnout was over 67 per cent - the highest ever as well as the highest participation by women voters. The Bharatiya Janata Party won 303 seats, further increasing its substantial majority and the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance won 353 seats. The Indian National Congress won 52 seats, and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance won 91. Other parties and their alliances won 98 seats. The Congress again failed to secure the requisite 10% of the seats (54 seats) in the Lok Sabha. Keeping this in background an attempt has been made in this paper to examine the reasons behind the success of BJP and NDA in the recently concluded 17th Lok Sabha Polls in India. It has been categorized under five major heads. Part-I Unfolds the reasons/ under currents for the overwhelming success of the BJP. Part-

II Examines the Election Strategies framed and executed by the NDA and BJP, Part-III Evaluates the leadership exhibited by Narendra Modi, Part-IV Deals with the vote share gained by BJP and NDA in various segments and Part-V brings together the major findings of the study.

Part - I

Reasons for the Overwhelming Success of the BJP

The 2019 Lok Sabha election results have been marked by the poor performance of parties that are perceived to be family-run enterprises. Narendra Modi pilloried the Gandhis for not having worked their way up in politics. By doing so, he tapped into the growing disenchantment with the politics of entitlement - in particular, with political families of 'social justice' parties, such as Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal in the north and Janata Dal (Secular) in the south. Today, the Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal are staring at a bleak future, having won five, 10 and zero seats this time. Their performance was no less dismal five years ago. On both occasions, they were swept aside by the Modi wave. Their style of politics has also been rejected. Having set out to challenge feudal tendencies in society, they are paying the price for internalising them. With Amit Shah and Modi at the helm, the BJP has managed to project itself as the mascot for determined, self-made individuals who break out of their socio-economic constraints. They have termed this the New India - impatient with categories of not just caste, but more disconcertingly, 'secularism'. It is a sizeable force, which identifies with the rugged confidence of the present BJP top leadership; it is, of course, true that local BJP leaders have fielded their kith and kin who have won, riding the Modi wave.