



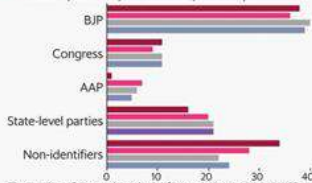
BJP hold intact, viable Oppn not emerging

BY RAHUL VERMA AND MELVIN KUNJUMON

With the Lok Sabha polls due next year, political parties are afoot carving pre-poll alliances. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) retains nearly two-fifths of the popular support in urban India, while the parties in the Opposition alliance have the combined approval of only 28%, the latest YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey found. The survey indicated that BJP was set to keep its dominance with a leadership story centred around Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the lack of consensus on a viable alternative. However, it also found some sections were strikingly less likely to support BJP ahead of 2024.

Parties' support bases remain stable, BJP the most preferred by far

Respondents, by the political party they identify with the most (in %)



The number of respondents in the four rounds was 12,900; 10,271; 9,698; and 10,072, respectively. Source: YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Surveys

1 Stable Lead

SINCE MARCH 2020, the biannual survey has asked respondents—who largely represent urban India's internet-using demographic—which party they identify with the most. In the latest round held in June, the survey found that support bases hadn't budged much in the six-month period preceding it. BJP had 39% of the support base and Congress was a distant second, with 11% showing support. One in five respondents picked state-level parties, while 24% said they did not identify with any political party. The latest round had 10,072 respondents across over 200 cities and towns.

Across its 10 rounds since 2018, the survey has tried to examine the aspirations, anxieties and attitudes of India's digital natives. Around 42% of the respondents in the latest round were post-millennials (born after 1996), and 41% were millennials (born between 1981 and 1996). Mint conducts the survey in association with survey partner YouGov India and Delhi-based think-tank Centre for Policy Research.

2 Top PM Picks

BJP'S STABLE—and high—support base is shaped by Modi's popularity. Around 40% of the respondents chose Modi when asked who they would like to see as the next prime minister in 2024. At a distant second spot was Congress leader Rahul Gandhi (15%). Yogi Adityanath, the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, stood third with 11% of respondents picking him. The support for Arvind Kejriwal, Mamata Banerjee, Nitish Kumar and Amit Shah was in single digits. Among those who preferred parties that are part of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), support for Modi as the next prime minister went up to 67%. However, among the parties that together call themselves Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), the support for Gandhi was just 37%. Even among INDIA coalition supporters, Modi was the second most preferred contender, at par with Kejriwal. Among those who preferred non-aligned parties, Modi still captured 32% of the support, followed by Gandhi (13%).

Modi the most preferred choice for PM, lacks strong opponent

Respondents on their preferred next prime minister in 2024 (in %)



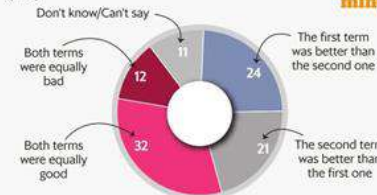
The survey covered 10,072 respondents. The remaining 20% included those who preferred other leaders or those who did not mention any name. Source: YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey (Jun 2023)

3 Modi 1.0 vs 2.0

OVERALL, 41% of the respondents said they identified with a party that was part of NDA, while only 28% picked parties that are part of the INDIA bloc. Non-aligned parties taken together mustered a mere 8% of the popular support. Responses to the question of performance by the BJP-led government in the last nine years indicated high approval for the party and the leadership, a possible reason for the stable support base. One-third of the respondents were of the view that both terms of the Modi-led government were equally good, whereas roughly a quarter rated the first term to be better than the current term. Almost one-fifth rated the current term as better than the first. Put together, 77% of the respondents viewed the performance of the government in a positive light. Just 12% felt both terms were equally bad, while the rest (11%) did not respond.

Modi-led government gets high ratings on its overall performance

Responses on Narendra Modi's 'overall performance' in his two terms (in %)



The survey covered 10,072 respondents. Source: YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey (Jun 2023)

Confidence in Congress as a challenger shows some improvement

Q: Among the Opposition, which of the following would you consider a viable alternative to the BJP?



The latest survey covered 10,072 respondents. Source: YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey (Jun 2023)

4 Counter to BJP

INDIA CONTINUES to be divided on the question of a national alternative to BJP. Compared to the last survey, the prospect of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as a viable alternative has substantially diminished, indicating that the spurt in its popularity after the Punjab win in early 2022 could be fading away. The prospect of a revitalized Congress as a viable counter to BJP has slightly picked up momentum. Both Congress and AAP are almost on a par with each other on this question. (Note that this doesn't indicate support for the two parties, and is based on a question that was asked to all respondents, including BJP supporters, about who could pose a real Opposition against a strong BJP.)

The coalition of regional parties continued to stand as the least preferred option among respondents with 18% votes. Roughly one-third of the respondents were still unable to pick an alternative to BJP at the national level.

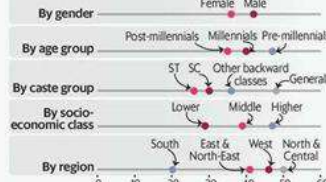
5 BJP's Thorns

WHILE BJP continues to dominate the political landscape, the party appears to have less penetration in some demographics. The ruling party's overall support of 39% falls to 30% in the post-millennial generation (those born after 1996). Women (36%) showed less proclivity compared to men (42%). The party has yet to get a strong support base in south India (20%) similar to its traditional ideological strongholds such as north and central India (50%). The preference for the party drastically falls among lower socio-economic groups (29%), and among disadvantaged caste groups (30%). If BJP wishes to repeat its 2019 performance, it must find ways to win over the support from these sections of the Indian society.

The authors are associated with CPR, New Delhi. Major findings of the survey were released last week ('The population puzzle: What Indians feel', 15 August 2023). More stories, raw data and methodology details available here: bit.ly/3NBu6B3.

BJP support less among youth, women and disadvantaged sections

Share of respondents who identify with the BJP (%)



The survey covered 10,072 respondents. Socio-economic class: Higher (NCCS-A1, 43% of sample), Middle (NCCS-A2, 26% of sample), Lower (all others, 31% of sample). Post-millennials: born after 1996; millennials: born 1981-1996; pre-millennials: born before 1981. Source: YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey (Jun 2023)