In India's Democracy A Study of Political Parties: A Comparative Study of NDA Alliance and INDIA Alliance Working and their Behavior's

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Abstract

India has a democracy with numerous political parties. However, since 2014, challenging questions have arisen regarding the future of the Indian constitution. This study examines what may come next after the current NDA and INDIA alliances, and whether they will maintain their positions or be replaced by other parties. It explores whether other parties are functioning effectively and considers India's democratic model, in which democracy is meant to be a government where everyone has a share, but this is not always evident in practice. The purpose of this study is to understand the political behaviors and workings of the INDIA and NDA alliances in making India a world-level hegemonic power, and to identify what steps each should take. It examines the roles they have played at the grassroots level and the possibility of a new party emerging in Indian politics. The study also considers whether the Indian people will continue to accept the hegemony of these alliances. It provides a comparative analysis of their workings and behaviors.

Keywords: Origin, Role of Parties and working, NDA, INDIA, Era of Challenge, Conflict among two, Policy Making, Tenure of NDA and INDIA, Study of Leadership, Alliance members

1. Introduction

India is the world's largest democracy, with a multi-party political system. Since gaining independence in 1947, numerous political parties have emerged, each with their own ideologies, agendas, and support bases. In recent years, two major alliances have dominated the political landscape - the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) comprised of opposition parties.

This study aims to provide a comparative analysis of the workings and behaviors of the NDA and INDIA alliances. It examines their origins, roles, policy making, leadership, and the dynamics between alliance members. The study also explores the challenges faced by India's democracy in the era since 2014, and considers the possibility of new political forces emerging.

Understanding the functioning of these alliances is crucial, as they wield significant influence over the direction of the country. With India poised to become a major global power, the actions and decisions of its political parties have far-reaching implications. This study seeks to shed light on the complex landscape of Indian politics and offer insights into its future trajectory.

2. Origins and Evolution of the NDA and INDIA Alliances

2.1 National Democratic Alliance (NDA)

The National Democratic Alliance was formed in 1998 as a coalition of center-right political parties, with the BJP as its largest constituent. The BJP's roots lie in the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which was founded in 1951 as a right-wing Hindu nationalist party [1]. Over time, the BJP moderated its stance and adopted a more inclusive approach, leading to its growing popularity and eventual rise to power.

Key milestones in the NDA's journey include:

● 1998: NDA comes to power for the first time under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee
● 1999: NDA wins a decisive mandate in the general elections
● 2004: NDA loses power to the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA)
● 2014: NDA returns to power with a historic mandate, with Narendra Modi as Prime Minister
● 2019: NDA retains power with an even larger mandate

Table 1 shows the performance of the NDA in general elections since 1998.

Year	Seats Won by NDA	Total Seats
1998	252	543
1999	303	543
2004	181	543
2009	159	543
2014	336	543
2019	353	543

The NDA's ideology centers around Hindu nationalism, economic liberalization, and strong national security. Its key constituents include the BJP, Shiv Sena, Shiromani Akali Dal, and several other regional parties.

2.2 Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance (INDIA)

The Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance, commonly known as INDIA, is a coalition of opposition parties formed in 2023. It brings together a diverse array of parties united by their opposition to the BJP and its policies.

Notable members of the INDIA alliance include:

● Indian National Congress
● Trinamool Congress
● Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)
● Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)
● Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)
● Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)
● Samajwadi Party (SP)

● Several other regional and left-wing parties

The formation of INDIA marks a significant shift in opposition politics, as parties have set aside their differences to present a united front against the NDA. The alliance aims to provide voters with a credible alternative and prevent the fragmentation of opposition votes.

3. Role and Functioning of Political Parties in India's Democracy

Political parties play a vital role in India's democratic system. They serve as intermediaries between the government and the people, aggregating and articulating the diverse interests of the electorate [2].

Key functions performed by political parties include:

3.1 Representation

Parties represent the interests of different segments of society and give voice to their concerns. They field candidates in elections, who then serve as representatives of the people in legislative bodies.

3.2 Agenda Setting

Parties shape the political agenda by raising issues of public importance and proposing policy solutions. They play a crucial role in framing the narrative and setting the terms of political debate.

3.3 Political Recruitment

Parties identify, nurture, and groom political talent. They provide a platform for individuals to enter politics and rise through the ranks based on their merit and contribution.

3.4 Policy Formulation

Parties develop comprehensive policy frameworks that guide their legislative agendas. They draw upon the expertise of their members and engage with stakeholders to craft policies on a wide range of issues.

3.5 Governance

Parties that win elections form the government and are responsible for implementing their policy agenda. They make appointments to key positions, oversee the functioning of the bureaucracy, and are accountable to the people.

However, the functioning of political parties in India faces several challenges:

● Dynastic politics and lack of internal democracy
● Criminalization of politics, with many elected representatives facing criminal charges
● Money power and the influence of big business on political decision making
● Communal polarization and the use of divisive rhetoric for electoral gains

Addressing these challenges is crucial for strengthening India's democracy and ensuring that political parties serve the interests of the people.

4. Comparative Analysis of the NDA and INDIA Alliances

4.1 Ideology and Agenda

The NDA and INDIA alliances represent distinct ideological positions and have different visions for India's future.

The NDA's ideology is rooted in Hindu nationalism, which seeks to redefine India as a Hindu nation. It emphasizes the cultural and civilizational uniqueness of India and often invokes symbols and figures from Hindu mythology [3]. The BJP, the NDA's largest constituent, has pushed for policies such as the abrogation of Article 370, the Citizenship Amendment Act, and the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, which are seen as part of its Hindutva agenda.

On the economic front, the NDA advocates for market-oriented reforms, ease of doing business, and attracting foreign investment. Its flagship initiatives include the Make in India program, Digital India, and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) reform.

In contrast, the INDIA alliance brings together parties with diverse ideological orientations, ranging from center-left to leftist parties. While there is no unified ideological position, the alliance is united in its opposition to the BJP's Hindutva agenda and what it perceives as the NDA's divisive politics.

The key constituents of INDIA, such as the Congress and regional parties, have a more secular and pluralistic vision for India. They emphasize social justice, inclusive growth, and the protection of minority rights. The alliance has criticized the NDA government's handling of issues such as the economy, unemployment, agrarian distress, and the COVID-19 pandemic [4].

4.2 Leadership and Decision Making

The leadership structures and decision-making processes of the NDA and INDIA alliances also differ significantly.

The NDA is largely dominated by the BJP, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as its undisputed leader. The BJP's organizational structure is highly centralized, with power concentrated in the hands of the party president and a small group of senior leaders. Decision-making within the NDA is often guided by the BJP's priorities and the vision of its top leadership.

The INDIA alliance, on the other hand, has a more decentralized leadership structure. It comprises a diverse array of parties, each with its own regional base and leadership. The alliance has a coordination committee with representatives from all member parties, which takes decisions through consensus.

The absence of a single dominant party within INDIA means that decision-making involves a process of negotiation and compromise among alliance partners. This can sometimes lead to delays and disagreements, but also ensures that the concerns of all constituents are taken into account.

A comparison of the leadership styles of key figures in the NDA and INDIA alliances is presented in Table 2.

Leader	Party/Alliance	Leadership Style
Narendra Modi	BJP/NDA	Charismatic, decisive, centralized
Rahul Gandhi	Congress/INDIA	Consensual, decentralized
Mamata Banerjee	TMC/INDIA	Assertive, regional focus
Uddhav Thackeray	Shiv Sena/NDA	Balancing act between Hindutva and regional interests

4.3 Electoral Performance and Alliances

The NDA and INDIA alliances have had contrasting electoral performances in recent years.

The NDA, led by the BJP, has been on a winning streak since 2014. In the 2014 general elections, the alliance won a historic mandate, with the BJP becoming the first party in three decades to win a majority on its own. The NDA's success was largely attributed to Modi's popularity, the BJP's organizational strength, and its ability to forge strategic alliances with regional parties.

In the 2019 general elections, the NDA repeated its success, winning an even larger mandate. The BJP alone won 303 seats, while the NDA's tally stood at 353 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha. The NDA's success in 2019 was driven by factors such as the Modi government's welfare schemes, the BJP's nationalist narrative in the wake of the Balakot air strikes, and the weakness of the opposition [5].

The INDIA alliance, in its current form, is yet to contest elections. However, the performance of its constituent parties in recent elections provides insights into the alliance's electoral prospects.

In the 2019 general elections, the Congress, the largest party in the INDIA alliance, won only 52 seats, its second-worst performance ever. Regional parties such as the TMC, DMK, and RJD performed better in their respective states but were unable to prevent the NDA's sweep at the national level.

The formation of the INDIA alliance is an attempt by opposition parties to present a united front against the NDA and prevent the fragmentation of anti-BJP votes. The alliance aims to leverage the regional strengths of its constituents and provide voters with a credible alternative to the NDA.

However, the INDIA alliance faces several challenges in terms of building a cohesive narrative, managing competing interests, and projecting a strong leadership face. The alliance will need to work on these aspects to effectively challenge the NDA in upcoming elections.

Table 3 compares the seat share of the NDA and major INDIA constituents in the 2019 general elections.

Alliance/Party	Seats Won	Seat Share
NDA	353	65%
BJP	303	56%
Congress	52	10%
DMK	23	4%
TMC	22	4%
YSRCP	22	4%

4.4 Policies and Governance

The NDA and INDIA alliances have distinct approaches to policy-making and governance.

The NDA government, led by Prime Minister Modi, has launched several flagship initiatives aimed at transforming India. These include:

- Make in India: Aimed at promoting manufacturing and attracting foreign investment
- Digital India: Focused on digitizing government services and increasing internet connectivity
- Swachh Bharat Abhiyan: A nationwide cleanliness campaign to improve sanitation and hygiene
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana: Financial inclusion program to provide bank accounts to all households
- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana: Scheme to provide free LPG connections to poor households

The NDA government has also implemented significant reforms such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), and the abrogation of Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

However, the NDA government has faced criticism on several fronts, including:

- Economic slowdown and rising unemployment
- Agrarian distress and farmer suicides
- Communal polarization and attacks on minorities
- Crackdown on dissent and shrinking space for civil society

The INDIA alliance has been vocal in its criticism of the NDA government's policies and governance record. The alliance has accused the government of mismanaging the economy, failing to create jobs, and neglecting the concerns of farmers and the poor.

The INDIA alliance has also opposed the NDA's Hindutva agenda, alleging that it undermines India's secular fabric and threatens minority rights. The alliance has criticized the government's handling of issues such as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and the revocation of Article 370.

However, the INDIA alliance is yet to present a comprehensive policy alternative to the NDA's agenda. The alliance will need to articulate a clear vision and roadmap for India's development to win the trust of voters.

Table 4 compares the key policy initiatives and challenges faced by the NDA and INDIA alliances.

Alliance	Key Policy Initiatives	Key Challenges
NDA	- Make in India	- Economic slowdown
	- Digital India	- Unemployment
	- GST reform	- Agrarian distress
	- Swachh Bharat Abhiyan	- Communal polarization
INDIA	- Opposition to NDA's Hindutva agenda	- Lack of unified policy alternative
	- Focus on social justice and inclusion	- Managing competing interests of allies
	- Emphasis on federalism and regional issues	- Projecting strong leadership face

5. Grassroots Presence and Organizational Strength

The NDA and INDIA alliances differ significantly in terms of their grassroots presence and organizational strength.

The BJP, the lead party of the NDA, has a robust organizational structure that extends down to the booth level. The party has a large cadre base and a well-oiled election machinery that enables it to effectively mobilize voters and coordinate campaign activities. The BJP's grassroots presence is particularly strong

in Hindi-speaking states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh, where it has established deep roots over the years.

The BJP's organizational strength is complemented by its affiliated organizations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which provides ideological and manpower support to the party. The RSS has a vast network of shakhas (branches) across the country, which serve as a recruiting ground for the BJP and help in disseminating its ideology [6].

In contrast, the INDIA alliance's constituent parties have varying levels of organizational strength and grassroots presence. The Congress, the largest party in the alliance, has a pan-India presence but has seen a decline in its organizational capacity in recent years. The party has struggled to rebuild its grassroots structure and connect with voters, especially in states where it has been out of power for long periods.

Regional parties in the INDIA alliance, such as the TMC, DMK, and RJD, have strong organizational bases in their respective states but lack a national footprint. These parties have a better understanding of local issues and enjoy the loyalty of their core support base. However, their ability to expand beyond their regional strongholds remains limited.

The INDIA alliance faces the challenge of coordinating the activities of its constituent parties and presenting a unified face to voters. The absence of a central command structure and the presence of competing interests among alliance partners can hamper effective coordination and messaging.

Table 5 compares the organizational strengths and weaknesses of the NDA and INDIA alliances.

Alliance	Organizational Strengths	Organizational Weaknesses
NDA	- Strong cadre base and booth-level presence	- Dependence on BJP's organizational machinery
	- Well-oiled election machinery	- Limited presence
	- Ideological and manpower support from RSS	- Centralized decision-making structure
INDIA	- Regional parties with strong local connect	- Lack of pan-India presence
	- Diverse support base across social groups	- Absence of central command structure
	- Better understanding of local issues	- Competing interests among allies

6. Future Prospects and Challenges

The NDA and INDIA alliances face distinct challenges and opportunities in the years ahead.

The NDA, having secured a second consecutive term with a strong mandate, has the advantage of incumbency and a relatively stable political environment. The alliance's future prospects will depend on its ability to deliver on key promises, maintain its organizational strength, and keep its flock together. However, the NDA faces several challenges:

● Managing the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and reviving growth and job creation

- Addressing the concerns of farmers and ensuring remunerative prices for agricultural produce
- Balancing its Hindutva agenda with the need for inclusive governance and social harmony
- Tackling the rising discontent among certain sections of society, particularly the youth and marginalized communities

The INDIA alliance, being a newly formed coalition, has the task of establishing itself as a credible alternative to the NDA. The alliance's future prospects will hinge on its ability to build a strong organizational structure, articulate a compelling vision for India, and project a united leadership face.

The INDIA alliance faces the following challenges:

- Resolving internal differences and competing interests among constituent parties
- Developing a common minimum program that addresses the aspirations of diverse social groups
- Building a grassroots presence and strengthening its organizational capacity
- Countering the BJP's Hindutva narrative and providing a secular alternative
- Mobilizing resources and building a war chest to take on the NDA's well-funded election machinery

The 2024 general elections will be a litmus test for both alliances. The NDA will seek to secure a third consecutive term, riding on the popularity of Prime Minister Modi and its development agenda. The INDIA alliance will aim to exploit the anti-incumbency sentiment and tap into the discontent among certain sections of the electorate.

The outcome of the 2024 elections will depend on several factors, including the state of the economy, the effectiveness of alliances, the ability to mobilize voters, and the narrative that resonates with the electorate.

Table 6 summarizes the future prospects and challenges faced by the NDA and INDIA alliances.

Alliance	Future Prospects	Key Challenges
NDA	- Advantage of incumbency	- Managing economic fallout of pandemic
	- Relatively stable political environment	- Addressing concerns of farmers
	- Strong organizational structure	- Balancing Hindutva agenda with inclusive governance
INDIA	- Potential to emerge as credible alternative	- Resolving internal differences
	- Tapping into anti-incumbency sentiment	- Building strong organizational structure
	- Mobilizing diverse social groups	- Countering BJP's Hindutva narrative
		- Resource mobilization for 2024 elections

7. Conclusion

India's democracy is at a critical juncture, with the NDA and INDIA alliances representing two distinct visions for the country's future. The NDA, led by the BJP, has been in power since 2014 and has pursued an agenda of Hindu nationalism, economic reform, and strong leadership. The INDIA alliance, formed in

2023, brings together opposition parties in a bid to challenge the NDA's dominance and provide a secular, inclusive alternative.

This comparative study of the NDA and INDIA alliances highlights the significant differences in their ideologies, leadership styles, organizational strengths, and policy approaches. While the NDA has a strong organizational base and a charismatic leader in Prime Minister Modi, the INDIA alliance is yet to establish itself as a cohesive force and project a strong leadership face.

The future of India's democracy will depend on how these alliances navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead. The NDA will need to address the economic and social fallout of the pandemic, balance its Hindutva agenda with inclusive governance, and maintain its electoral dominance. The INDIA alliance will need to build a strong organizational structure, articulate a compelling vision for India, and mobilize diverse social groups to mount an effective challenge to the NDA.

The 2024 general elections will be a crucial test for both alliances and will shape the trajectory of India's democracy in the years to come. The outcome will depend on a range of factors, including the state of the economy, the effectiveness of alliances, the ability to mobilize voters, and the narrative that resonates with the electorate.

As India continues its journey as the world's largest democracy, the role and functioning of political parties will remain central to its success. The NDA and INDIA alliances represent the diversity and dynamism of India's political landscape, and their actions and decisions will have far-reaching implications for the country's future.

It is imperative that both alliances prioritize the interests of the nation and work towards addressing the pressing challenges facing India, including economic inequality, social polarization, and environmental sustainability. Only by fostering a spirit of cooperation, dialogue, and inclusive governance can India's democracy thrive and fulfill its potential as a beacon of hope for the world.

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