

VOTER ADHIKAR YATRA

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

REPORT



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VOTER ADHIKAR YATRA REPORT

Survey Duration:

27th August to 8th September 2025



Voter Adhikar Yatra Assessment Report

Executive Summary

The Voter Adhikar Yatra was organized by INC and its INDIA alliance partners in Bihar to take the SIR and Vote Chori issue among the public and protest the systemic theft of voting rights and election mandate by the ruling NDA and ECI. The Yatra began from Sasaram with a rally on August 17 and ended in Aarah (Bhojpur) on 30st of August. It concluded with a Padyatra in Patna on September 1, 2025. To assess the political impact of the Yatra, a survey was conducted which followed the Yatra route across Bihar.

Methodology:

For the survey, two teams were made which followed the Yatra route across the state. The regions to be followed were divided in 2 categories- places from where the Yatra had passed recently (1-2 days gap) and places from where it passed comparatively earlier (5-7 days gap). This was done to establish the recall value and time factor in the impact of the Yatra.

Further, Systematic Proportionate Random Sampling technique was used to get the input of the respondents, keeping in mind all categories- age, gender, education, rural/urban, and significant caste/communities of the particular AC and district. The survey tried to capture the mood of the public and its response to the Yatra, issues raised in it and the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections 2025 through Sentiment Mapping technique. Open ended discussions on various questions were conducted with groups of people across Bihar in their natural setting.



Districts Covered:

Katihar, Purnia, Bhagalpur, Munger, Lakhisarai, Nawada, Gaya, Aurangabad, Sasaram, Chapra, Siwan, Gopalganj, West Champaran, East Champaran, Sitamarhi, Mujaaffarpur, Darbhanga, Madhubani, Supaul, Araria

Assembly Constituencies Covered:

Katihar, Kadwa, Korha, Purnea, Gopalpur, Bhagalpur, Sultanganj, Munger, Suryagarha, Lakhisarai, Sikandra SC, Sheikhpura, Barbiga, Warisiliganj, Nawada, Hisua, Wazirganj, Gaya, Tekari, Gurua, Rafiganj, Aurangabad, Kutumba SC, Dehri, Sasaram, Aara, Chapra, Ekma, Manjhi, Daraunda, Siwan, Hathua, Gopalganj, Nautan, Sugauli, Bettiah, Narkatiyaganj, Motihari, Chiraiyya, Dhaka, Sitamarhi, Riga, Runni Saidapur, Gaighat, Darbhanga Urban, Rural, Sakri, Jhanjharpur, Supaul, Narpatganj, Forbisganj, Araria

Findings of the Survey:

❖ General Reception of Yatra:

The general response to the Yatra is positive across all regions of the state. People across places and castes are saying that crowds turned up in large numbers in the Yatra at their own expanses. Majority respondents believe that although there were some people from outside, most of the crowd in the Yatra comprised of local people who had come to attend it and see Rahul Gandhi and Tejaswi Yadav. This response was similar in both urban and rural areas. Other than Baniyas and Brahmins at some places- who tried to paint it as flop, majority respondents considered it as a very charged event.



A significant number of respondents across categories dubbed it as a ‘celebration’ as after generations, a member of the Gandhi family was coming at their ‘doorstep’ and so nobody wanted to miss the chance. Overall, if one does not delve in its impact on caste arithmetic and voting trends of castes and limits the survey to perception of Yatra among common people, his/her findings may turn out to be overwhelmingly positive.

❖ **Psychological and Political Impact:**

“We are witnessing so many Congress flags for the first time in decades”, was the most common response from a large number of respondents across regions. But it was not just the Congress that benefitted from it. The Yatra charged the voters and cadres of India alliance and pumped them with the necessary enthusiasm before the elections. It also generated a sense of unity among the rank and file of the alliance partners from the Left to VIP, RJD and Congress. It also gave the opportunity to alliance partners like VIP and left- who are generally limited to one or two region of Bihar, to get a pan-Bihar exposure. At places, Tejaswi Yadav was a bigger crowd puller but Rahul Gandhi’s charisma was found to be working across the state. Further, it was observed that alike UP, Dalits (minus Paswan) and Muslims across regions have developed a greater liking for India alliance mainly due to Rahul Gandhi. These communities perceive him as honest and safeguard for their interests. Congress and VIP are adding a lot of value to the Alliance, softening its image among non Yadav voters as RJD is still considered a rogue party by majority respondents across the regions. The Yatra also weakened the traction that Jan Suraj of Prashant Kishore was getting in Bihar.



❖ **Complaints regarding the Yatra:**

Due to the long route and hectic schedule, the Yatra could not reach everywhere in time. Further, there were huge crowds lined up on roads but everywhere they could not see Rahul Gandhi or the other leaders as there were no designated stops there, or the leaders were sitting inside their vehicles. This caused a number of people complaining that they had come to see Rahul Gandhi but could not even see which vehicle he was sitting in. In Bhagalpur's Tetri village in Gopalpur AC where RG stayed at night, people said they too could not get a glimpse of the leader and he did not interact with locals despite staying nearby. In Sultanganj, the Yatra route changed at last minute and people kept waiting at the older route. In Ghorghat of Munger, RG was supposed to unveil a statue of Dr Ambedkar but the cavalcade did not stop there.

In some places, people termed it as a 'race' and not Yatra as the cavalcade sped past their area. In Narpatganj AC of Araria, majority respondents termed it as 'flop' since the Yatra halted outside of town, reached their well past midnight and left early without entering the town, thus giving locals no chance to witness it. Further, RG could not attend the Yatra in Sheikhpura and people said that he skipped Sheikhpura town as attending any event here is 'cursed for the Gandhi family'.

❖ **Penetration of the issues raised:**

In terms of the penetration of the vote-chori and SIR issue, there is a clear political divide. A large number of respondents considered it a fabricated charge. Only the voters and supporter castes of India alliance- particularly Muslims and Yadavas considered it to be real. However, a large number of them too could not explain very clearly how SIR was working. Majority respondents believed that election will be fought on local issues, candidature, caste affinities and other major issues like jobs, welfare, infrastructure etc.

❖ **Impact on established voting trends:**

A thorough enquiry along the lines of caste and vote preference reveals that the Yatra is unable to add new castes to the India alliance block and has failed to alter old voting patterns. No new caste/communities got added to the India alliance vote bank due to the Yatra. The Kurmis, EBCs and women voters- especially those associated with the JIVIKA (who number in millions) are more inclined towards Nitish Kumar while BJP has support among the forward castes, Baniyas and EBCs in some pockets. Paswans in majority areas were inclined towards Chirag Paswan while Harijans and Musahars along with smaller SC communities like Rajaks were divided. It was surprising to find that most core BJP voters hate Nitish Kumar and don't consider any state BJP leader worth being CM but have an extremely positive attitude towards Chirag Paswan. Muslims and Yadavs were strongly towards India alliance and in some pockets like Champaran and Mujaffarpur, Bind-Mallahs are with VIP.



Congress has small pockets of influence across castes from Brahmins and Bhumihars to Dalits but most of these are driven by local leaders of these castes having strong influence. Among the non-Yadavs OBCs, Dhanuk or Kushwahas are the most divided and numerically powerful castes. They vote for India alliance in most of south Bihar, but not so in north. Most of respondents from these communities said that Yatra won't change their old established voting patterns and "jo jahan deta tha vahin dega". However, it was observed that major non-direct beneficiary communities of the incumbent government like EBCs are taking an open approach towards the India alliance now. ***But as of now, the NDA seems to be having an edge over the INDIA alliance in terms of weightage of castes and communities rooting for them.***

❖ **Suggestions:**

In this scenario, amicable seat sharing and representation in tickets becomes extremely significant. Majority respondents stated that tickets will matter a lot. A significant number of EBC respondents said they are not averse to voting for India alliance if proper representation is given to them in terms of tickets. The PDA strategy of Akhilesh Yadav worked very well in 2024 Lok Sabha in UP where tickets of MY candidates were brought down and more candidates were fielded from other communities. However, it was also observed during the survey that Tejaswi Yadav does not have as strong a hold over Muslim and Yadav voters as Akhilesh has in UP and hence reducing their tickets could cause a rebellion which could be counter-productive.



Day 1: Observations

ACs covered- Katihar, Kadwa, Korha in Katihar and Purnea

1. Reception of Yatra- The Yatra is being received very well by the common people. Even respondents who support NDA said that there were huge crowds and people mostly came at their own to see Rahul Gandhi. There were some complaints though, that he did not speak or interact at most places.
2. Response on Vote Chori- Mostly Yadavs and Muslims, along with youths at some places are able to explain vote chori issue and accepted that it is a genuine problem faced by them. The NDA voters- EBCs and upper castes don't accept the vote chori charges and consider it fake.
3. Impact on adding new voters- The Yatra is not able to win new communities or castes for Congress. Caste lines are still quite like the old times- EBC and non Yadav OBCs along with upper castes are with NDA, MY with India alliance, Dalits divided.
4. Psychological Impact of Yatra- The Yatra has charged the voters and supporters of the opposition- especially those of RJD and Congress. This will also help some India alliance MLAs like Shakil Ahmed of Kadwa from INC who was facing slight anti-incumbency.
5. PK and Jansuraj are only in the hype and won't be able to win any of the seats surveyed.
6. AIMIM is also getting rejected by voters in this belt.
7. Rahul Gandhi is more popular in this area than Tejaswi. His image among common people is also improving day by day and his hard work to revive Congress is being praised.





Day 2: Observations

ACs Covered- Gopalpur, Bhagalpur, Sultanganj in Bhagalpur Dist and Munger

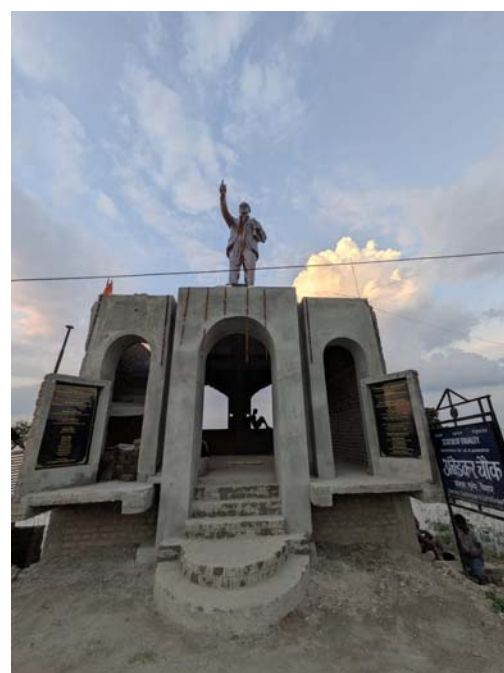
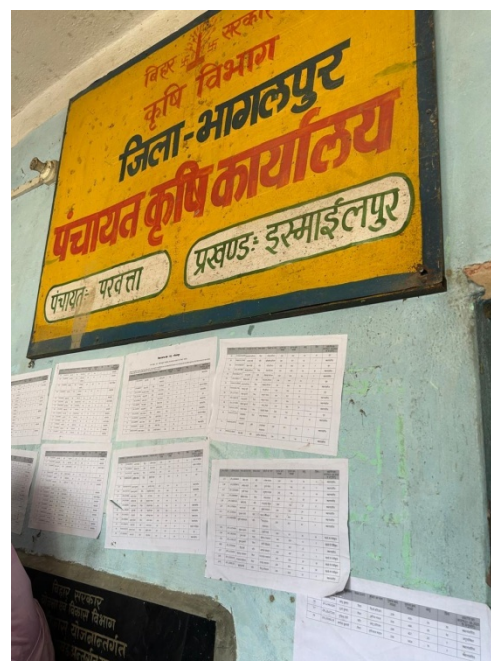
1. Overall positive appreciation amidst some complaints: The general response to the Yatra is positive. People across places and castes are saying people turned in large numbers on the Yatra route at their own expanses. However, in a couple of places there were complaints too. In Dumar, people said the Yatra didn't stop and they could not see RG. Near Tetri village in Gopalpur where RG stayed at night, people said they too could not get a glimpse of the leader. In Sultanganj, the Yatra route changed at last minute and people kept waiting at the older route. And in Ghorghat of Munger, RG was supposed to unveil a statue of Dr Ambedkar but the cavalcade did not stop there.
2. Old caste loyalties are persistent: The political inclination of various castes is still as per the old trends and the Yatra seems to be unable to break those patterns. MY voters are most positive about the Yatra and perception of change. EBC castes and non Yadav OBCs along with upper castes are mostly NDA inclined.
3. The Gangotri Mandal, Kurmis, Tatmas and significant number of Kushwaha are inclined towards Nitish and JD U. Nitish is still considered best option by these castes- even better than BJP. Women are also very positive about him.
4. In Munger and Sultanganj ACs, it was surprising to find that significant number of Harijan/Chamar voters prefer the NDA, while Paswans also vote for RJD in significant numbers.
5. Overall, if one does not delve in caste arithmetic and political inclination of castes and limits the survey to perception of Yatra among common people, his/her findings may turn out to be overwhelmingly positive. However, a thorough enquiry along the lines of caste and vote preference reveals that the Yatra is unable to add new castes to the India alliance block



Ghorhat, Munger AC

A statue of Dr Ambedkar was installed here and Rahul Gandhi was supposed to inaugurate it while passing through here. A stone with his name was also established here but he Did not stop here.

This is a Paswan dominated village that are divided between LJP and Mahagathbandhan.





Day 3: Observations

ACs Covered- Suryagarha, Lakhisarai, Sikandra SC, Sheikhpura, Barbigha, Warisiliganj

1. Respondents said RG did not come to Sheikhpura and Sikandra ACs during Yatra. According to them, he attended Yatra till Barbigha and then flew by helicopter to Lakhisarai directly skipping Sheikhpura and Sikandra ACs. The reason people in Sheikhpura cited was a superstition that Rajiv Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi both came to Sheikhpura but died so it's a bad omen for Gandhi family.
2. Caste/community voting pattern is still as per the old trend and Yatra is failing to change it. However, it has charged the India alliance voters.
3. Most non Yadav OBC and EBCs prefer Nitish. This includes Kurmi, Chandravanshi, Dhanuk and Kewat Mandals. Kushwaha are divided but more towards India alliance. Dhobi/Rajaks prefer NDA. Paswans in Jamui/Sheikhpura are with LJP but elsewhere divided. Yadavs and Muslims prefer India alliance. Bhumihar are also divided in NDA and INC (RJD is not liked by them) but bigger percentage prefers NDA. JD U Munger MP Rajiv Ranjan alias Lalan Singh (Bhumihar) has more political influence than BJP deputy CM and Lakhisarai MLA Vijay Kumar Sinha, who is also a Bhumihar.
4. At most places, the Yatra's reception was positive and people said huge crowds gathered during it. However, majority respondents in Warsaliganj AC of Nawada said it did not generate much enthusiasm there i.e. crowd in Yatra was not good when it entered the town.

Note: Since RG was not part of Yatra in Sheikhpura and Sikandra ACs, these two were covered briefly.





Day 4: Observations

**ACs covered- Nawada and Hisua in Nawada district
Wazirganj, Gaya, Tekari and Gurua in Gaya district**

1. Same trends are continuing- Yatra attracted huge crowds and people turned up at their own to see RG and Tejaswi.
2. Most respondents don't understand the vote chori allegations. Some India alliance supporters also don't believe in it.
3. Old voting trends are continuing among castes and Yatra is not affecting it. In such situation, local issues and candidate choice will matter a lot in elections
4. Bhumihars- who are in good numbers in around half of the seats surveyed today hate RJD. Only INC can attract their votes in the India alliance
5. PK's Jan Suraj has failed to make any impact in any of the seats surveyed till now. It's only considered as some other party which is out of major contest by common voters. However, their branding, vehicles and posters are visible in all ACs
6. Tejaswi was a bigger factor than RG in ACs surveyed today. But even then, RG is a big crowd puller here as well







Day 5: Observations

ACs Covered- Rafiganj, Aurangabad, Kutumba SC, Dehri, Sasaram, Aara

1. The India alliance did very well on these seats both in Loksabha 2024 and Assembly election 2020. It lost only 1 AC out of 6 covered today, that too narrowly . The social dynamic is still in favour of the India alliance. However, RJD and CPI ML call the shots here and not the INC.
2. Kushwahas are in good numbers here and overwhelming majority of them favour the India alliance. Rajputs are more inclined towards BJP but INC manages to get their votes in Aurangabad. MY is also with India alliance.
3. Among the Dalits, Musahar or Manjhis vote for NDA in Gaya due to HAM. However, Harijan or Chamar voters are with India alliance also due to the impact of CPI ML in Ara and Congress in Rohtas. Even Rajak/Baitha/Dhobi voters favour India along with Chaudharys.
4. However, INC state President Rajesh Ram is on a weak wicket in Kutumba, mainly due to lack of development work in his constituency. He should focus there now.
5. In terms of the Vote Chori issue, the response is mixed like elsewhere. Even all India supporters don't agree with it.





Day 6: Observations

ACs Covered: Chapra, Ekma and Manjhi

1. The yatra was successful in terms of pulling the crowds, charging the India alliance voters and making a psychological impact over general public.
2. Manjhi AC has a CPI M MLA while Ekma has an RJD MLA- both are Yadavs. However, the division of NDA votes due to rebel candidates helped the India alliance in 2020. If NDA remains united this time, then things will be difficult on these seats.
3. Rajputs here are BJP voters and so are Kushwahas. EBC castes like Nuniya/Chauhan, Prajapati/Padit, Sao/Baniya and minor EBC communities called Pachpaniya have switched to Bjp from JD U. Harijans here vote for India alliance along with MY voters. These communities are still favouring their respective party preference and the Yatra has failed to bring NDA voters close to the India alliance.
4. The response on Vote Chori issue is mixed. India alliance voters support the issue and consider it genuine while NDA voters alleged it's a fake charge thrown by the opposition.
5. Congress does not have much support in this area and slowly JD U is also weakening. It's becoming and RJD-BJP battleground now. After the demise of ex MP Prabhunath Singh (Rajput), RJD has lost support among the Rajputs.
6. Political bitterness among rival parties' supporters is very acute in this region and violent outbursts are not uncommon.
7. Women voters are divided on the issue of Inflation but still a large number of them favour Nitish Kumar.





Day 7: Observations

ACs Covered- Daraunda, Siwan (Siwan Dist) Hathua and Gopalganj (Gopalganj Dist)

1. In Siwan and Gopalganj, despite the fact that there were huge crowds in the Yatra, BJP supporters tried to downplay it by saying people were given money to come attend it.
2. Majority respondents in Daraunda believed that there is some fraud in election as according to them, CPI ML should have won here but it lost.
3. Kushwaha in this belt are divided; some favour NDA while some favour BJP
4. JD U is weakening here and BJP is increasingly becoming powerful at the cost of JD U.
5. In Gopalganj Bye election, India Alliance lost due to vote division by AIMIM but Muslim respondents said that this time they will vote unitedly for the India alliance and not fall for AIMIM
6. Musahars and Harijans in today's surveyed area favour the India alliance along with MY. All forward caste voters, along with Baniyas and EBC castes said they favour the BJP.
7. Yatra is not successful in terms of attracting new castes to India alliance. Old caste voting patterns are still at play and not appearing to change.
8. Women respondents favour Nitish mainly due to prohibition, Jivika and other women support schemes. MY community women associated with Jivika said they will vote for India alliance due to community feelings but all other caste women they know- who are associated with Jivika, will vote for Nitish.





Day 8: Observations

ACs covered- Nautan, Sugauli, Bettiah, Narkatiyaganj and Motihari

1. Yatra in this zone attracted huge crowds as it once was a Congress zone, before becoming BJP bastion. Old Congress loyalists got charged due to the Yatra.
2. EBC communities like Nuniya/Chauhan and Bind/Mallah are in good numbers here. Nuniyas are committed BJP voters while among the Mallah voters, Mukesh Sahani has a good following.
3. MY voters are also in significant numbers here and favour the India alliance. Among the upper castes- Brahmins, Rajputs are dominant while there are also some pockets of Bhumihars. Most of them favour the BJP but INC also has some influence among them.
4. The Baniya voters here are influential in urban seats and interestingly there is a churning going on among them. In urban pockets a sizeable number of Baniya respondents appeared to be positive about INC especially in Bettiah and Motihari. Giving tickets to them could impact electoral outcomes in favour of the India alliance.
5. Giving ticket to Muslims becomes counterproductive here as it leads to HM polarisation. In place, fielding Nishad candidates could yield better results as they are in good numbers at Sugauli, Narkatiyaganj and Nautan





Day 9: Observations

ACs Covered-Chiraiyya, Dhaka (East Champaran Dist) Sitamarhi, Riga and Runni Saidpur (Sitamarhi Dist)

1. In terms of psychological impact, reception and crowd, the response on Yatra is same. It attracted huge crowds and charged the India alliance supporters. At many places, people complained that they could not see Rahul Gandhi as the Yatra did not stop there.
2. In terms of the issue of vote chori, again the response is similar- only MY voters think that this issue is genuine. NDA supporters terms the charges as baseless.
3. In Dhaka AC, elections take a Hindu Muslim turn and BJP wins narrowly. This time, Jan Suraj is likely to cut off sizeable BJP votes which could make the NDA alliance lose here.
4. EBC voters are a key factor here and generally they move towards NDA as India alliance primarily fields Muslims or Yadavs. If tickets are given to non-Yadav OBCs by India alliance, then this zone could be swayed.
5. In Riga, we witnessed INC ex MLA Amit Kumar alias Tunna (Rajput) doing door to door campaign in villages. Common respondents said he remains active even after losing and can win this time. Even Rajput respondents across all 5 seats know him and are positive about him. The Yatra has given a momentum to India leaders like him and they can benefit electorally from it by not letting the tempo go down through remaining active. Otherwise the Yatra euphoria will subside eventually.
6. Since the Yatra at it's own is not bringing any new voter blocks to the India alliance, maha gathbandhan parties need to give tickets carefully ensuring significant EBC and non Yadav OBC representation to attract voters from those communities





Day 10: Observations

ACs Covered- Supaul, Narpatganj, Forbisganj and Araria ACs Also Pipra and Nirmali (partially)

1. In Narpatganj, the Yatra did not reach in time, stayed outside of town and left early- that too from outside so most respondents said it was a flop event there.
2. However, in the same AC incumbent BJP MLA is facing anti incumbency and ex MLA Anil Yadav of RJD has a lead for upcoming assembly elections.
3. In Supaul, almost all respondents said the Yatra was great and majority participants came at their own to see RG. However, most respondents also said JD U MLA and Minister Bijendra Prasad Yadav has done a lot of work here and he will win again in Supaul. Same was the situation at Nirmali AC in Supaul Dist where JD U's Aniruddh Yadav is very strong electorally.
4. Araria is a Muslim dominated AC and majority respondents were all praises for RG and the Yatra. The incumbent Congress MLA is old and suffering from visual handicap as well and a large number of respondents said he should be replaced or else he won't win. However, majority Muslim respondents said they vote for Congress due to RG and not due to candidates.
5. In Forbesganj and Narpatganj, we witnessed that a significant number of Yadavs are BJP sympathiser/workers and also have a BJP mindset. In Supaul and other parts of Seemanchal and Mithila-Kosi belt, this is an optly recurring theme.
6. In Forbisganj, BJP MLA is facing acute anti incumbency but managing to win just because of Hindu-Muslim polarisation as INC fields a Muslim candidate here.
7. EBC communities especially Mandals- Kewat and Amatya, are very important here. The India alliance should build leadership among them and give them representation if it wants to assert politically in this region.





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