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— ASHUTOSH VARSHNEY

HOW INDIA VOTES

A STATE-BY-STATE LOOK

EDITED BY

Ashutosh Kumar
Yatindra Singh Sisodia

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Chhattisgarh

A Repetition of BJP's Performance in 2014

Anupama Saxena

Chhattisgarh, the newly-emerged twenty-sixth state of India, came into existence in 2000 after bifurcation from Madhya Pradesh. Area wise, it is the tenth largest state and the sixteenth most populated state of India with a population of 25.5 million people. Except the states of the Northeast of India, Chhattisgarh has one of the highest shares of scheduled tribes (STs), accounting for about 10 per cent of STs in India. Thirty-two per cent STs and 12 per cent scheduled castes (SCs) together constitute around 44 per cent of the state's population. The demand for the creation of Chhattisgarh was based on the hope that the formation of a separate state would boost the process of development and everyone would benefit equally from the fruits of development, which would also resolve the prevailing issue of Naxalite disturbance in the state. Such optimism was based on the mineral wealth of the state. While Chhattisgarh recorded an average gross state domestic product (GSDP) growth of 8.87 per cent from 2005-06 to 2010-11, as compared to 8.37 per cent and 8.65 per cent in its parent state of Madhya Pradesh and in India, respectively, during the same period, on other indicators, the performance of state has not been satisfactory. As of 2011, Chhattisgarh had an HDI value of 0.358, the lowest of any Indian state, the national average being 0.467 (Suryanarayana, Agarwal and Prabhu 2011: 9). The simmering inequality has been viewed as a reason for the continued violence in Naxal-affected areas, which are among the poorest areas of India. Politically, Chhattisgarh can be divided into three parts—north, south and central—each having its own social profile. North and South Chhattisgarh are dominated by tribals and central Chhattisgarh is dominated by OBCs. The tribal population of Chhattisgarh is concentrated in two regions—the Bastar region in North Chhattisgarh and Sarguja region in South Chhattisgarh. Tribal voters have played significant role in all elections as, respectively, 34, 29 and 29 out of 90 seats were reserved for them in the 2003, 2008 and 2013 assembly elections. Twelve