

## Data Analysis of voting patterns in Assembly elections with special attention to ST constituencies

In the three heartland states of Chhattisgarh, MP and Rajasthan, the issue of forest rights act has played out in different ways. In all three states, the incumbent government (BJPs) implementation of the FRA has been extremely poor; and in Chhattisgarh, INC has made the implementation of FRA into a major issue. In Rajasthan and MP also, the FRA implementation has been included in the manifestos, and has been taken up as a campaign issue, including by Rahul Gandhi. In MP's Nimar region there are at least two INC Candidates had provided detailed "Vachanapatras" PESA and FRA, and both have won.

This analysis links the constituency wise potential for recognition of forest rights under Forest Rights Act to the outcomes of the elections. Patterns are more clearly visible in Rajasthan and MP, where the two main political parties were competitive.

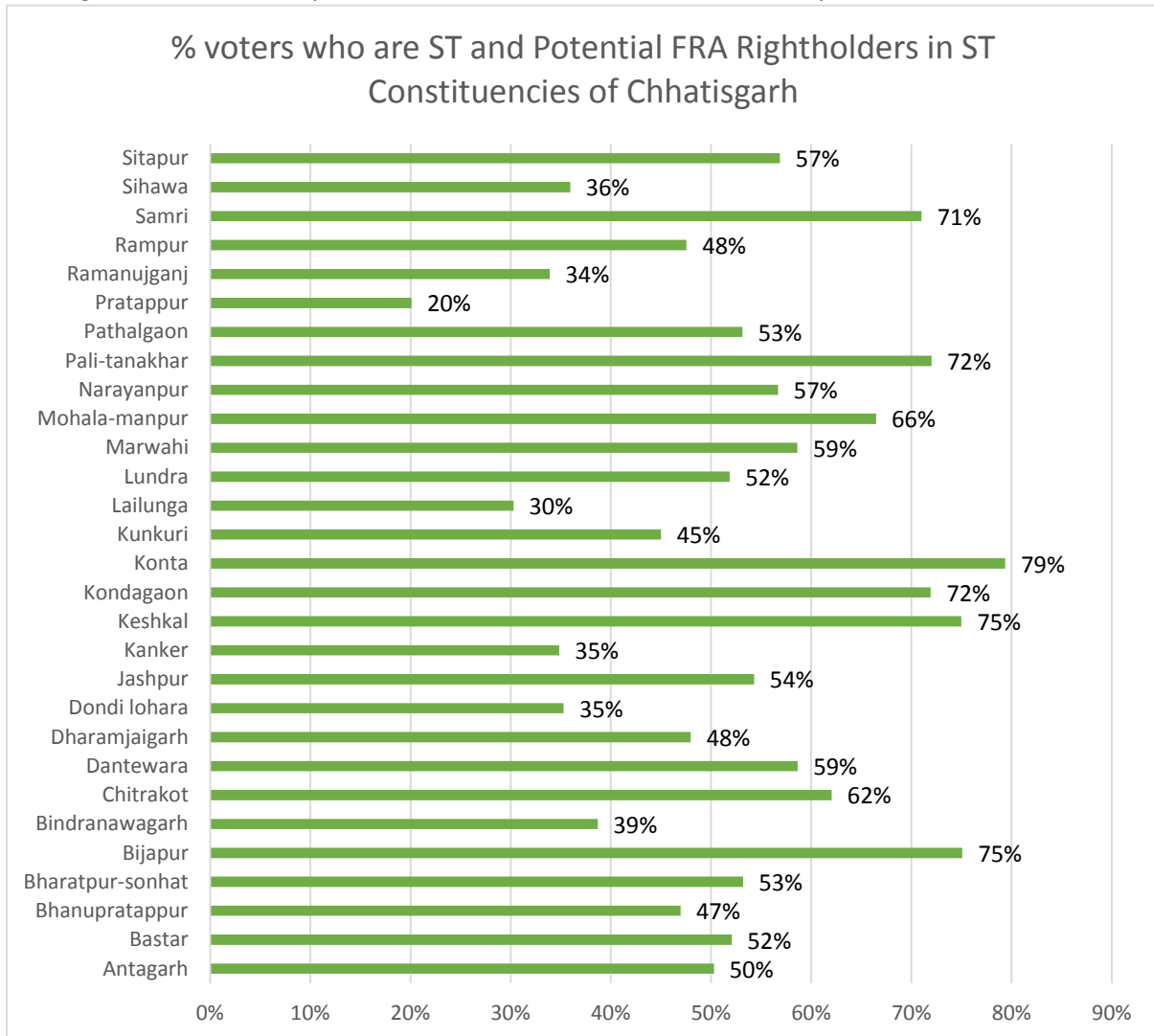
### Chhattisgarh

	All Constituencies	Urban	All Rural	General Rural	ST	SC	SC/ST
<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>39</b>
BJP 2013	49	7	42	22	11	9	20
BJP 2018	15	3	12	7	3	2	5
Change BJP	-34	-4	-30	-15	-8	-7	-15
INC 2013	39	2	37	18	18	1	19
INC 2018	68	6	62	30	25	7	32
Change Cong	29	4	25	12	7	6	13
Others 2013	2	0	2	2	0	0	0
others 2018	7	0	7	5	1	1	2
Change Others	5	0	5	3	1	1	2

In Chhattisgarh, INC has been doing better in the reserved 29 ST seats, and in 2018 elections, they have literally wiped out BJP, giving it victory in only 2 seats. As compared to all seats, where BJP could win 17% of the constituencies, in Reserved ST Constituencies their performance was only 10% win. The wipeout of BJP in ST seats is linked to the terrible implementation of FRA in tribal areas and the strong manifesto promise of INC about proper implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

The potential of FRA implementation in Chhattisgarh is immense. In the 29 Tribal seats, CFR-LA estimates that scheduled tribes who are also potential FRA right holders (collective or individual rights) constitute 52% of the total voters in these constituencies. The percentage ranges from 20% in

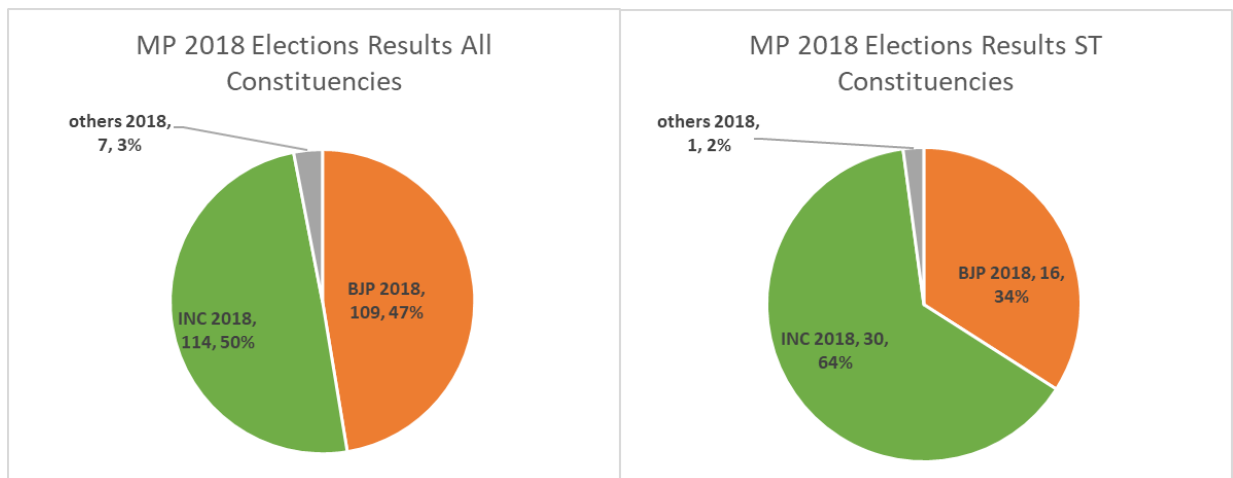
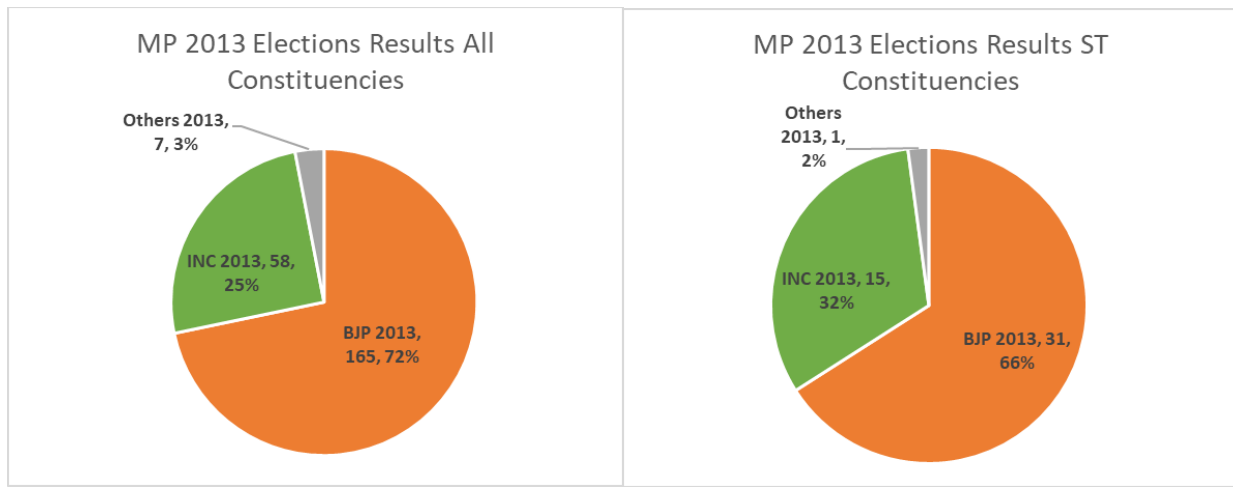
Pathalgaon ST Constituency to as much as 79% in Konta ST Constituency.



The BJP Government in Chhattisgarh has been extremely poor at recognition of rights under the FRA, especially with regards to the community forest rights of tribal and forest dwellers. It has also been in the forefront in subverting both FRA and PESA for land acquisition/diversion to the corporate sector. INC has picked up the FRA issue as a critical part of its strategy, including it as a core issue in their manifesto. FRA was a major issue in the election campaign with INC doing a state wide jungle satyagraha to highlight forest rights issues. Impact of FRA was visible in the 2013 elections, where INC did much better in the ST Constituencies; whereas in 2018, BJP has been wiped out in these constituencies. The important tribal assembly segments of Surguja and Bastar have voted for INC. Other important constituencies where there is mobilization on tribal and forest rights issues like Kanker, Antagarh, Jashpur, Korba have voted for INC. The inclusion of FRA in the Manifesto and highlighting it in its campaigning paid INC good dividends.

### Madhya Pradesh

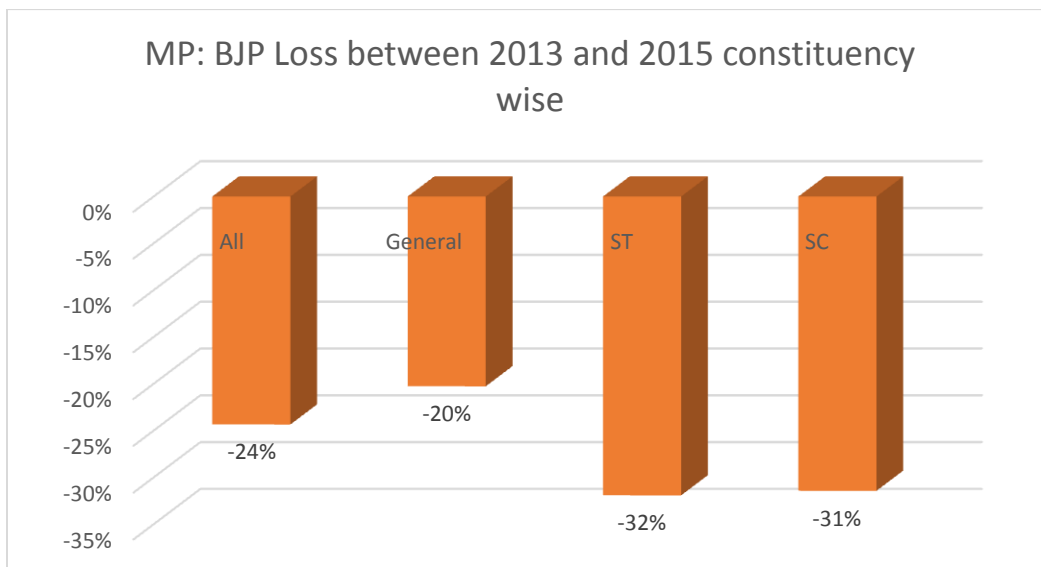
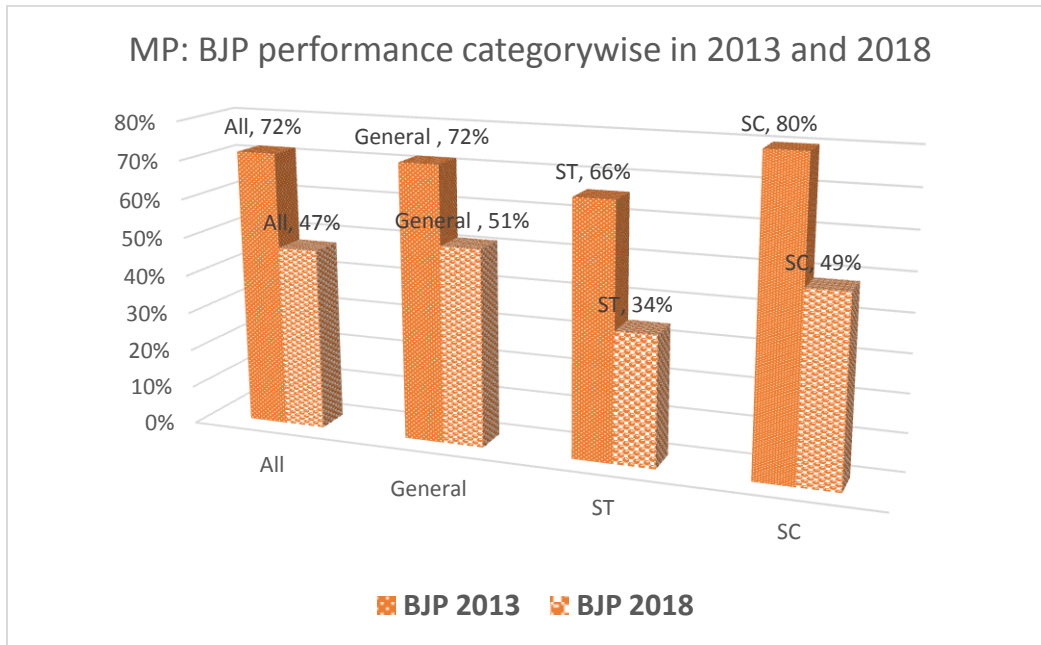
MP saw a much more competitive election between BJP and INC, with INC taking small lead. There was a significant shift in the reserved ST seats in favor of INC.



The tabular results for seats is as follows:

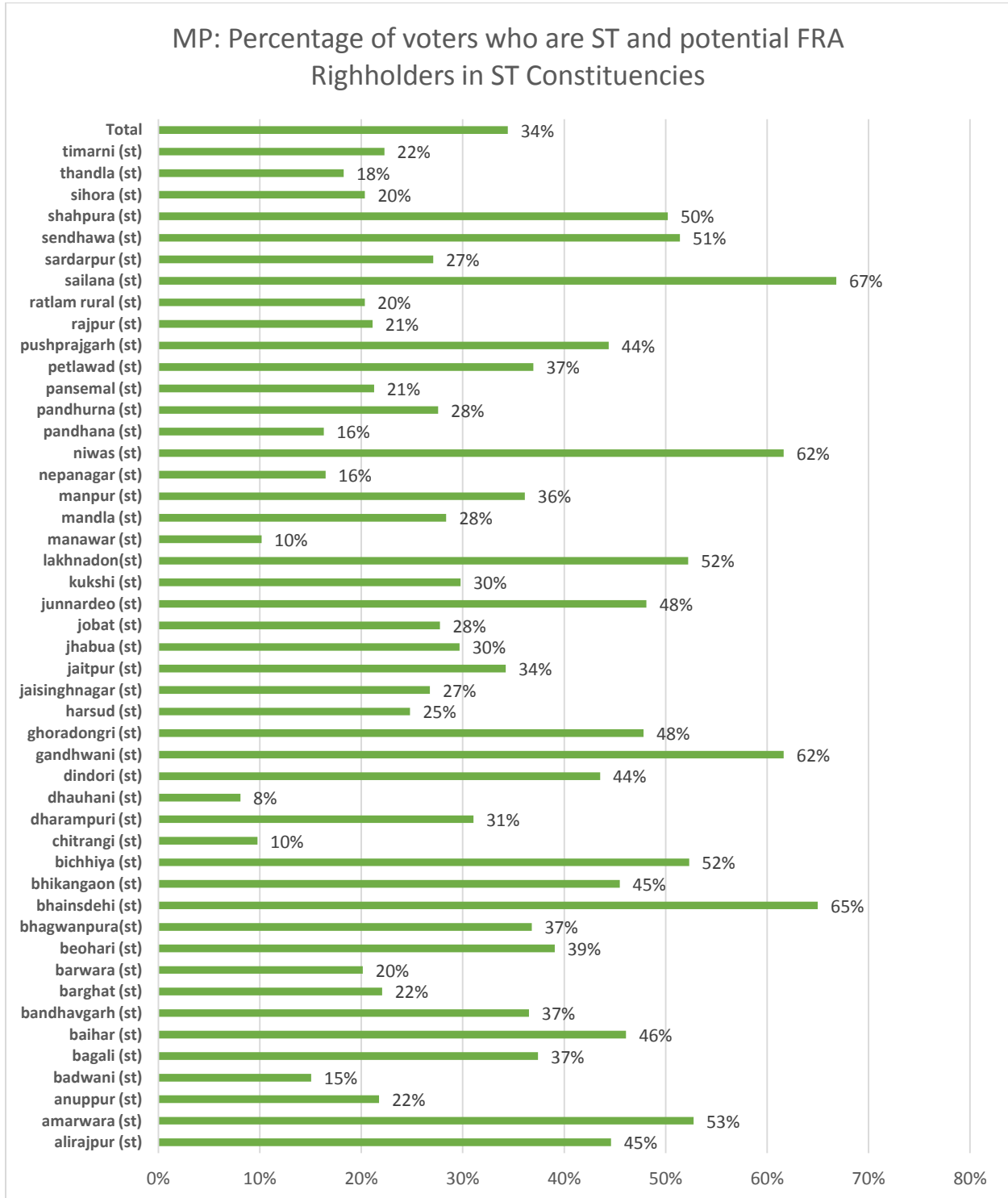
	All Constituencies	General Rural	ST	SC	SC/ST
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>82</b>
BJP 2013	165	106	31	28	59
BJP 2018	109	76	16	17	33
Change BJP	-56	-30	-15	-11	-26
INC 2013	58	39	15	4	19
INC 2018	114	66	30	18	48
Change INC	56	27	15	14	29
Others 2013	7	3	1	3	4
others 2018	7	6	1	0	1
Change Others	0	3	0	-3	-3

In 2018, BJP lost 25 % of all Assembly seats, mostly to INC, allowing INC to overcome BJP in the seats tally. However, BJP lost considerably less seats in the general category (not reserved for SC/STs) this swing was considerably less for General seats at 20%; whereas in reserved ST seats it lost 32% of the seats; for SC seats the loss was 31%.



The losses for BJP and gains for INC have been far more dramatic in the ST constituencies. FRA implementation along with PESA; and Adivasi anger with the BJP incumbent had a major role to play. Though Shivraj Chouhan Government has implemented the recognition of individual titles (IFRs) under FRA, the high rate of rejection of forest rights claims (more than 60 percent) has been a major issue and caused resentment. The performance of collective titles for ownership and governance of forest land (CFR Rights) has been abysmal. Like Chhatisgarh, in the ST constituencies, the potential for FRA

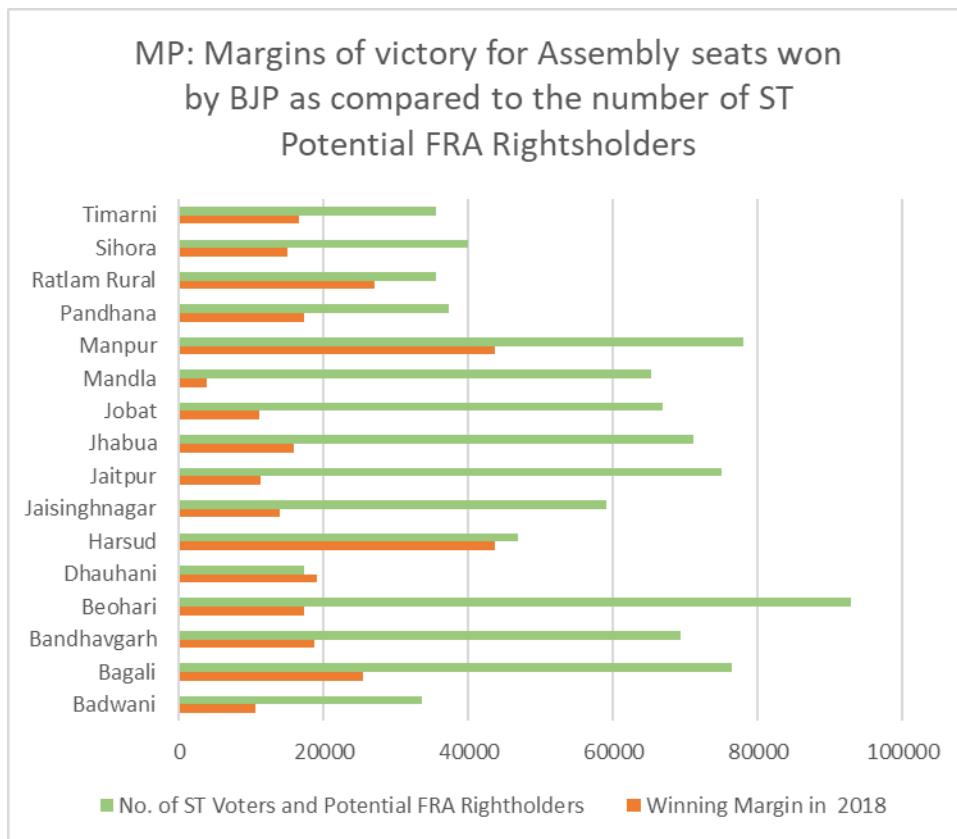
implementation remains extremely high as per the CFR-LA analysis, with 35% of the total voters being STs who are also potential right holders under FRA. The percentage of ST voters who are potential FRA rightholders varies from 8% in Dhauhani (ST) seat to 67% in Sailana (ST) seat (Please see table)



Again, INC was more proactive in pushing FRA as an election agenda in MP too. It included FRA implementation in its manifesto, and the FRA was mentioned in election speeches. The INC campaign on FRA was not as intense or high profile as in Chhattisgarh; and it is likely that if INC had made greater efforts, they would have done even better and completely swept the tribal seats like Chhhtaisgarh. It is also interesting that a few INC MLA candidates actually created separate detailed Vachanpatras addressing PESA and FRA, such as in Sendhwa (see <https://twitter.com/ForestRightsAct/status/1065686307010154498> ), who have won the elections.

It is also interesting to note that the ST constituencies won by INC have higher average number of ST Potential FRA rightsholder voters (39%) as compared to those won by BJP (27%), implying that INC’s campaigning on FRA may have had an impact.

It is interesting to compare the number of potential ST FRA rightsholders voters to the margins of victory in the ST constituencies won by BJP.



Out of sixteen seats, the winning margin was greater than potential ST right holding voters in only one seat. In most seats this number of ST voters eligible for FRA rights far exceeds the margin of victory, implying that if INC had a major campaign issue in FRA implementation. However, the patchy nature of campaigning on the issue seems to have militated against them taking away more ST seats.