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Do Aligned States Deliver for SC/ST? Central Welfare Transfers, Partisan Alignment, and Reservation Utilisation in India, 2000–2022

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Central Welfare Transfers, Partisan Alignment, and Reservation Utilisation in India, 2000–2022

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Abstract

Does partisan alignment between state and central governments affect how much SC/ST-targeted welfare spending Indian states receive, and does more spending translate into better reservation outcomes? We examine three SC/ST-specific central transfer streams—the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP), PM Post-Matric Scholarship (PM-PMS), and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)—alongside SC reservation utilisation in higher education and government employment, using an annual state-level panel of 20 states over 2000–2022 ($N = 446$ state-year observations).

Three findings emerge. First, aligned states (state and centre governed by the same party) receive more SC/ST-specific transfers, but the alignment premium is systematically smaller than for general discretionary transfers: SCSP premium = +7.8% (TWFE), PM-PMS = +3.3%, versus general discretionary = +12.1%. Second, BJP-aligned states receive a *smaller* SCSP alignment premium (+6.7% TWFE) than INC-aligned states (+9.5%), despite receiving a larger general-transfer premium. This BJP–INC contrast—reversed between general and SC/ST-targeted channels—is consistent with ideological differences in welfare targeting across party families. Third, SC higher-education seat utilisation shows a modest alignment

premium (+0.41 pp TWFE, $p = 0.028$), but SCSP per-capita transfers do not significantly predict utilisation in fixed-effects models, indicating that demand-side constraints and administrative capacity bind more tightly than central fiscal allocations.

These findings qualify the standard partisan fiscal federalism result: while alignment increases transfers broadly, it does not proportionally increase SC/ST-targeted welfare spending, and the alignment dividend for SC communities is substantially smaller than that received by state governments as a whole.

Keywords: SC/ST welfare, partisan alignment, fiscal transfers, SCSP, PM-PMS, reservation utilisation, India, political economy.

JEL: J15, H77, D72, I23, O15.

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1 Introduction

India's central government transfers resources to states through both general-purpose channels (Finance Commission devolution, discretionary grants, Centrally Sponsored Schemes) and targeted SC/ST welfare programs. The latter include the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP)—which mandates earmarked plan expenditure proportional to SC population—the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), and demand-driven scholarships such as the PM Post-Matric Scholarship (PM-PMS), which grew from Rs 4,000 crore pre-2014 to Rs 35,534 crore over 2021–2026.

A foundational result in India's fiscal federalism literature is that partisan alignment between state and central governments generates a transfer premium [1, 3, 7]. States whose ruling party matches the central government receive more discretionary transfers, as the centre rewards political allies.

This paper asks a distinct but related question: *does partisan alignment generate an equal dividend for SC/ST-specific welfare programs, or does the alignment premium flow disproportionately through general transfer channels?* The answer matters for equity: if alignment premiums bypass SC/ST welfare programs, the political economy of fiscal federalism reinforces rather than reduces historical deprivation patterns.

It also matters for understanding party behaviour: BJP and INC have different electoral coalitions and stated ideological commitments to social justice. If INC-aligned states receive proportionally more SCSP funding while BJP-aligned states' general-transfer advantage does not extend to SC/ST programs, this reveals a party-specific pattern in welfare targeting beyond the average alignment premium.

We document the alignment premium for each SC/ST transfer channel separately, test BJP–INC heterogeneity, link SC/ST fiscal transfers to downstream reservation utilisation, and interpret the results through the lens of both partisan targeting and demand-side constraints.

Organisation. Section 2 reviews the literature. Section 3 describes SC/ST transfer architecture. Section 4 describes the data. Section 5 presents the empirical strategy.

Section 6 reports results. Section 7 discusses. Section 8 concludes.

2 Related Literature

2.1 Partisan Transfers in Indian Fiscal Federalism

Arulampalam, Dasgupta, Dhillon, and Dutta [1] document that alignment with the central ruling coalition generated a 30–45% transfer premium across Indian states during 1987–1995. Dasgupta, Dhillon, and Dutta [3] show this premium concentrates in discretionary grants, not Finance Commission formula allocations. Khemani [7] confirms alignment effects using state election timing as instruments. Rao and Singh [11] document systematic deviations from need-based formulae in discretionary channels.

These papers establish the general partisan-transfer result but do not disaggregate by transfer type (SC/ST-specific vs. general). Our contribution is to examine whether the alignment premium extends equally to constitutionally mandated SC/ST welfare spending.

2.2 SC/ST Welfare Programs and Fiscal Architecture

The SCSP was introduced in 1979–80 as the Special Component Plan for SCs, requiring states to allocate plan funds proportional to SC population share. Compliance has varied substantially across states and over time. Thorat and Newman [14] document persistent under-spending relative to the mandate in many North Indian states. The Dalit Component Plan (the SCSP's successor) has been criticised for flexible definition of what counts as "SC-focused" expenditure.

PM-PMS is a demand-driven central scholarship for SC students enrolled in post-secondary education, with disbursement conditional on state applications and administrative absorption. Sahoo [12] shows that PM-PMS expansion during 2014–2020 significantly improved SC enrollment in private colleges.

The TSP parallels the SCSP for ST communities. States with large ST populations (Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Assam) have the highest TSP entitlements but also the most complex implementation challenges due to forest-area administration constraints.

2.3 Party Ideology and SC/ST Welfare

Jaffrelot [5, 6] argues that BJP's electoral coalition has historically been upper-caste, generating weaker structural incentives for vigorous SCSP implementation. Pande [10] shows that legislative SC/ST reservation increases SC/ST-targeted public spending, but through electoral incentive rather than party ideology. Subramanian [13] argues that Dravidian parties' monopoly on Tamil Nadu's backward-class vote share drove institutionalised SC/ST welfare delivery independent of central alignment.

Whether BJP or INC governments deliver more SC/ST-specific welfare through central transfer channels is the empirical question we address.

2.4 Reservation Utilisation and Fiscal Inputs

Bertrand, Hanna, and Mullainathan [2] show demand-side constraints (eligible candidate pipeline) bind more tightly than supply-side fiscal inputs for SC engineering college reservation utilisation. Deshpande and Ramachandran [4] find SC/ST enrollment growth driven by scholarship expansion (a demand subsidy), not party governance changes. Our paper tests this supply–demand distinction directly: does more SCSP or PM-PMS funding translate to more SC seats filled?

3 SC/ST Transfer Architecture

3.1 Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP)

The SCSP operates as both a state fiscal mandate and a central matching contribution vehicle. States are required to earmark a share of their total plan expenditure equal to the SC share of state population for SC-specific programs. Central support comes through Article 275(1) grants, SCSP-tagged CSS components, and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment programs. We measure the central SCSP contribution per SC capita using Ministry of Finance Statement 21 (Outlay for SC-Specific Schemes).

3.2 PM Post-Matric Scholarship (PM-PMS)

PM-PMS subsidises tuition and maintenance allowances for SC students enrolled in post-matriculation courses (Classes 11 and above through professional and vocational degrees). The scheme is demand-driven: states submit student applications and the centre releases funds in arrears. The scheme's budget was substantially enhanced under the National Education Policy framework 2021–26, with a new direct-benefit-transfer modality introduced in 2020 to reduce disbursement delays. PM-PMS per SC capita varies significantly across states due to differential application rates, administrative efficiency, and SC population concentration in urban vs. rural areas.

3.3 Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)

The TSP mirrors the SCSP for ST communities. We restrict TSP analysis to states with ST population shares above 5% ($N = 285$ state-years), as TSP transfers are near-zero for states with negligible ST populations (Punjab, Haryana, UP). TSP is particularly prominent in the eastern tribal belt: Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Assam.

3.4 Predicted Alignment Effects

The general partisan-transfer literature predicts aligned states receive more across all discretionary channels. But SC/ST-specific transfers may differ because: (i) SCSP mandates create formula-like constraints that limit political discretion; (ii) parties with different SC/ST electoral coalitions will vary in how aggressively they translate alignment into SC/ST-specific (vs. general-purpose) allocations; (iii) PM-PMS is demand-driven and partly insulated from political targeting by its application-and-reimbursement structure. We test whether the alignment premium is smaller, equal, or larger for SC/ST-targeted programs compared to general discretionary transfers.

4 Data

4.1 Panel Structure

Annual panel: 20 major states, 2000–2022 ($N = 446$). Telangana included from 2014. Same state and party coverage as described in the companion paper on general fiscal transfers.

4.2 SC/ST Transfer Outcomes

SCSP per SC capita. Central SCSP contribution (Ministry of Finance Statement 21, Ministry of Social Justice Annual Reports) divided by Census 2011 SC population (grown at a 1.4% trend rate). Reflects earmarked central spending on SC welfare programs.

PM-PMS per SC capita. Annual PM Post-Matric Scholarship disbursement (Ministry of Social Justice Annual Report disbursement schedules) per SC capita. Captures central demand-subsidy for SC students in higher education.

TSP per ST capita. Analogous to SCSP for ST communities, restricted to high-ST states.

Log transformations. All outcomes log-transformed; coefficients interpret as percentage changes.

4.3 SC/ST Population Controls

SC and ST population shares from Census 2011 (held constant at 2011 census values; demographic composition shifts only at decadal census intervals). SC population share ranges from 7.1% (Gujarat) to 31.9% (Punjab). ST population share ranges from 0% (Punjab, Haryana) to 34.2% (Assam).

4.4 Linked Utilisation Outcomes

We link the fiscal panel to SC reservation utilisation data for 2012–2022 from the companion vacancy study panel ($N = 218$ matched state-year observations):

- SC higher-education seat utilisation: fraction of 15% reserved seats filled in government and aided institutions (AISHE data).
- SC government job utilisation: fraction of 15% Group A/B reserved posts filled (NCSC Annual Reports).

4.5 Party Alignment and Controls

Party coding, alignment indicator, and structural controls (literacy, log GSDP per capita, poverty rate, urbanisation, log population) identical to the companion fiscal federalism paper.

5 Empirical Strategy

5.1 Progressive OLS Specifications

For each SC/ST transfer outcome Y_{st}:

$$\text{(S1)} \quad \ln Y_{st} = \alpha + \beta\, \text{Aligned}_{st} + \varepsilon_{st} \tag{1}$$

$$\text{(S2)} \quad \ln Y_{st} = \alpha + \beta\, \text{Aligned}_{st} + \boldsymbol{\gamma}'\mathbf{X}_s + \varepsilon_{st} \tag{2}$$

$$\text{(S3)} \quad \ln Y_{st} = \alpha + \beta\, \text{Aligned}_{st} + \boldsymbol{\gamma}'\mathbf{X}_s + \boldsymbol{\phi}'\mathbf{X}_{st} + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{st} \tag{3}$$

$$\text{(S4)} \quad \cdots + \boldsymbol{\mu}'\mathbf{Region}_s + \varepsilon_{st} \tag{4}$$

$$\text{(S5)} \quad \ln Y_{st} = \alpha_s + \beta\, \text{Aligned}_{st} + \boldsymbol{\gamma}'\mathbf{X}_s + \boldsymbol{\phi}'\mathbf{X}_{st} + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{st} \tag{5}$$

S5 (TWFE) identifies from within-state alignment changes via state elections.

5.2 BJP–INC Heterogeneity

We interact alignment with the central ruling party:

$$\ln Y_{st} = \alpha_s + \delta_t + \beta_1(\text{Aligned} \times \text{NDA})_{st} + \beta_2(\text{Aligned} \times \text{UPA})_{st} + \gamma\,\text{NDA}_t + \boldsymbol{\phi}'\mathbf{X}_{st} + \varepsilon_{st}$$

Testing $H_0 : \beta_1 = \beta_2$ distinguishes ideological from purely electoral motivations for SC/ST-specific targeting.

5.3 Utilisation Equation

To test whether SC/ST fiscal transfers translate to utilisation outcomes:

$$\text{SeatUtil}_{st} = \alpha_s + \delta_t + \beta\,\text{Aligned}_{st} + \phi\,\ln \text{SCSP}_{st} + \boldsymbol{\gamma}'\mathbf{X}_{st} + \varepsilon_{st}$$

A significant $\hat{\phi}$ would indicate SCSP transfers raise utilisation; an insignificant $\hat{\phi}$ with significant $\hat{\beta}$ would indicate alignment improves utilisation through channels other than transfer volume (e.g., administrative mobilisation, faster scholarship disbursement, state-level follow-through).

5.4 Wild Cluster Bootstrap

$G = 20$ state clusters; Rademacher weights; $B = 999$ replications. WCB 95% CI reported for main SCSP and PM-PMS alignment estimates.

6 Results

6.1 SCSP Per SC Capita (Table 1)

S1 (party only). Raw alignment coefficient = +0.069 ($p = 0.239$). No significant raw gap—SCSP allocations are more formula-constrained than general discretionary transfers, limiting unconditional variation.

S3 (full controls, year FE). Aligned = +0.071 ($p < 0.001$). SC population share: +0.004 ($p < 0.001$)—states with larger SC populations receive proportionally more SCSP, consistent with the mandate logic. Log GSDP: +0.455—richer states attract more central matching contributions (absorption capacity channel).

S5 (TWFE). Aligned = +0.078 ($p < 0.001$). Within-state alignment premium for SCSP: +7.8%. Compare to +12.1% for general discretionary (companion paper, S5): the SCSP alignment premium is 65% of the general transfer premium.

Wild cluster bootstrap 95% CI: $[0.043, 0.097]$—excludes zero.

6.2 PM Post-Matric Scholarship (Table 2)

S3. Aligned = +0.039 ($p < 0.001$). SC population share: +0.005 ($p < 0.001$)—states with more SC students generate more scholarship applications. The year FE absorbs the post-2014 national PM-PMS expansion.

S5 (TWFE). Aligned = +0.033 ($p < 0.001$). PM-PMS alignment premium: +3.3%—only 27% of the general discretionary premium. PM-PMS's demand-driven, application-reimbursement structure substantially limits political targeting: students must apply, states must process applications, and the centre reimburses. The small alignment premium likely reflects aligned states' faster administrative processing of PM-PMS claims rather than political allocation decisions.

Wild cluster bootstrap 95% CI: $[0.024, 0.057]$—excludes zero.

6.3 Tribal Sub-Plan (Table 3, Panel—high-ST states)

Among states with ST share > 5% ($N = 285$): aligned = +0.066 TWFE ($p < 0.001$). TSP alignment premium (6.6%) sits between SCSP (7.8%) and PM-PMS (3.3%), consistent with TSP's mixed formula/discretionary structure.

6.4 BJP vs. INC: The Key Heterogeneity (Table 3)

This is the paper's central finding.

General discretionary transfers (TWFE):

- BJP-aligned: +13.0% ($p < 0.001$)
- INC-aligned: +10.8% ($p < 0.001$)

SCSP per SC capita (TWFE):

- BJP-aligned: +6.7% ($p < 0.001$)
- INC-aligned: +9.5% ($p < 0.001$)

PM-PMS per SC capita (TWFE):

- BJP-aligned: +3.1% ($p < 0.001$)
- INC-aligned: +3.5% ($p < 0.001$)

The BJP–INC contrast is *reversed* between general and SC/ST-specific channels. BJP-aligned states receive more via general discretionary transfers (+13.0% vs +10.8%), but INC-aligned states receive more via SCSP (+9.5% vs +6.7%). The difference in SCSP alignment premiums ($9.5\% - 6.7\% = 2.8$ percentage points) is economically meaningful. PM-PMS shows negligible BJP–INC differences (3.5% vs 3.1%), consistent with its demand-driven structure limiting ideological targeting.

This pattern is consistent with ideological differentiation: INC governments translate their aligned-state advantage proportionally more into SC-specific welfare programs, reflecting the party's historically stronger social-justice platform. BJP governments translate their (larger) general-transfer premium through general discretionary channels, with a smaller share reaching earmarked SC/ST programs.

6.5 Reservation Utilisation (Table 4)

SC seat utilisation (TWFE). Aligned: +0.41 pp ($p = 0.028$). Modest but significant: states switching into alignment with the centre show a 0.41 percentage-point increase in SC higher-education seat filling. SCSP per SC capita: −0.12 pp ($p = 0.927$)—not significant. The utilisation alignment premium operates through channels other than SCSP transfer volume.

SC job utilisation (TWFE). Aligned: −0.006 pp ($p = 0.969$)—zero. SCSP: +0.015 pp ($p = 0.989$)—zero. Government job recruitment is insulated from both alignment and fiscal transfer channels, consistent with the administrative-judiciary pipeline determining government employment outcomes.

Interpretation. The seat utilisation result suggests aligned states see better SC higher-education outcomes—possibly through faster scholarship disbursement, state-level application drives, or institutional support beyond raw central transfers. The disconnect between SCSP allocation and utilisation corroborates Bertrand et al. [2]: more central money does not by itself fill reserved seats when the candidate pipeline (eligible SC students meeting admission criteria) is binding.

7 Discussion

7.1 The Alignment Dividend Gradient

Across all specifications, the alignment premium follows a consistent gradient by transfer type:

$$\text{General discr. (12.1\%)} > \text{SCSP (7.8\%)} > \text{TSP (6.6\%)} > \text{PM-PMS (3.3\%)}$$

This gradient maps onto the degree of formula constraint and demand-driven structure in each program: general discretionary grants are the most politically malleable; PM-PMS is the most formula-constrained (demand-driven with mandatory reimbursement).

The gradient confirms that the discretionary component of transfers is most sensitive to political alignment, while transfers with formula or demand-driven structures are partially insulated.

7.2 BJP vs. INC: Ideological vs. Electoral Targeting

The BJP–INC reversal (BJP bigger for general transfers, INC bigger for SCSP) points to ideological differentiation in how aligned states' alignment dividend is channeled. Three mechanisms could generate this pattern:

Coalition electoral incentives. INC's historically deeper SC/ST vote bank creates stronger incentives to demonstrate SC-specific welfare delivery in aligned states. BJP's post-2014 Dalit outreach strategy operated primarily through PM-PMS expansion (a national mandate absorbed by year FE) rather than differential state-level SCSP transfers.

Administrative prioritisation. INC-aligned states may have SC welfare ministries with closer links to the central Ministry of Social Justice, facilitating smoother SCSP fund flow. BJP-aligned states may route additional central transfers through general infrastructure and CSS schemes with larger political visibility than SCSP earmarks.

Mandate compliance. SCSP mandates are more rigorously enforced in states with longer INC governance traditions; BJP-aligned states, many of which are newer to sustained single-party governance, may show lower SCSP compliance.

Distinguishing these mechanisms requires state-audit-level SCSP compliance data, which is beyond our current dataset.

7.3 Demand-Side Constraints and Fiscal Inputs

The utilisation results confirm the Bertrand et al. [2] demand-side constraint: more central SC money (SCSP) does not translate into more SC students enrolling (seat utilisation). The alignment premium in seat utilisation (+0.41 pp) without a corresponding SCSP significance indicates that alignment improves outcomes through administrative or institutional channels— possibly faster PM-PMS disbursement reducing financial barriers for enrolled students, state-level awareness campaigns, or more active recruitment by

aligned state governments.

7.4 Policy Implications

Two implications follow for SC/ST welfare policy. First, the alignment-dividend gradient reveals that politically motivated transfers disproportionately bypass SC/ST-targeted welfare programs. Strengthening SCSP mandate enforcement—particularly ring-fencing SCSP funds from general-purpose reprogramming—would reduce the political targeting component and stabilise SC welfare financing across alignment and non-alignment periods.

Second, PM-PMS's small alignment premium (3.3%) and near-neutral BJP–INC heterogeneity suggest that demand-driven scholarship structures are more resistant to political targeting. Expanding demand-driven transfer mechanisms for SC/ST welfare reduces alignment-driven volatility while maintaining fiscal flow to beneficiaries.

7.5 Limitations

$G = 20$ **clusters.** Wild cluster bootstrap with 20 state clusters provides approximate inference.

Data quality. NCSC employment data are state-reported and unaudited; SCSP expenditure definitions vary across states.

Utilisation panel overlap. Utilisation outcomes are linked only for 2012–2022 ($N = 218$), limiting the SC/ST utilisation analysis to the NDA II period and the tail of UPA II.

Causal identification. TWFE identifies from alignment switches; parallel trends assumption is untested in the SC/ST transfer regressions due to limited switchers. An event study analogous to the companion paper is left for future work.

8 Conclusion

We examine whether partisan alignment between state and central governments generates an equal dividend for SC/ST-specific welfare spending as for general central transfers.

Using a 2000–2022 panel of 20 Indian states, we find:

1. **Alignment premium exists but is smaller for SC/ST programs.** SCSP alignment premium = +7.8% (TWFE), PM-PMS = +3.3%, versus general discretionary = +12.1%. The political alignment dividend disproportionately benefits general state budgets, not SC/ST welfare mandates.

2. **BJP vs. INC: reversed gradient.** BJP-aligned states receive larger general-transfer premiums but smaller SCSP premiums than INC-aligned states. The sign of the BJP–INC gap reverses between general and SC/ST channels.

3. **Money doesn't fill seats.** SCSP per-capita transfers do not significantly predict SC higher-education seat utilisation in TWFE. Demand-side constraints bind more tightly than fiscal allocation volumes. Aligned states show modest seat-utilisation gains (+0.41 pp) through administrative channels, not transfer volumes.

The core message: electoral coalitions shape not just whether alignment generates a fiscal premium, but through which channels that premium flows. SC/ST communities receive a systematically smaller share of the alignment dividend than state governments as a whole. Strengthening formula mandates for SCSP and expanding demand-driven scholarship structures (PM-PMS model) would reduce this political targeting gradient.

Data Availability

Transfer data: MoF Union Budget Statement 21 (SC/ST-specific schemes), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Annual Reports (SCSP, PM-PMS), NCSC Annual Reports (NC government employment), RBI State Finances (rbi.org.in). SC/ST population: Census of India 2011 (censusindia.gov.in). Reservation utilisation: AISHE Annual Reports (Ministry of Education) and NCSC Annual Reports. Party tenure: PRS Legislative Research (prsindia.org) and ECI (eci.gov.in). Replication code (Python 3.11; statsmodels, pandas) and panel dataset available from the author upon request.

Table 1: Log SCSP Per SC Capita: Partisan Alignment

	G1		G2		G3		G4		
	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)	
Aligned (same party)	0.069	(0.058)	0.112***	(0.014)	0.071***	(0.011)	0.069***	(0.011)	0.0
SC pop. share (%)			0.002	(0.001)	0.004***	(0.001)	0.003***	(0.001)	
Base literacy (%)			−0.005***	(0.002)	−0.009***	(0.001)	−0.010***	(0.001)	
Log GSDP p.c.			1.092***	(0.013)	0.455***	(0.041)	0.510***	(0.049)	
Poverty rate (%)			−0.009***	(0.001)	0.000	(0.001)	−0.001	(0.002)	−
Log population			0.111***	(0.010)	0.075***	(0.008)	0.072***	(0.009)	−7
Urbanisation (%)			0.001	(0.001)	−0.006***	(0.001)	−0.004***	(0.001)	
Adj. R^2	0.001		0.949		0.970		0.971		
N	446		446		446		446		
Year FE	No		No		Yes		Yes		
Region FE	No		No		No		Yes		
State FE	No		No		No		No		

Notes: Robust SE in parentheses. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.10$. INC = reference. Dep. var.: log Schedu

Tables

Table 2: Log PM Post-Matric Scholarship Per SC Capita: Partisan Alignment

	H1		H2		H3		H4		
	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)	Co
Aligned (same party)	0.065	(0.059)	0.088***	(0.015)	0.039***	(0.006)	0.031***	(0.006)	0.033
SC pop. share (%)			0.003**	(0.001)	0.005***	(0.001)	0.005***	(0.001)	5.1
Base literacy (%)			0.004**	(0.002)	−0.002***	(0.001)	−0.002**	(0.001)	0.0
Log GSDP p.c.			1.084***	(0.014)	0.229***	(0.022)	0.284***	(0.026)	−58.7
Log population			0.091***	(0.011)	0.044***	(0.004)	0.042***	(0.005)	71.0
Adj. R^2	0.000		0.943		0.991		0.992		
N	446		446		446		446		
Year FE	No		No		Yes		Yes		
Region FE	No		No		No		Yes		
State FE	No		No		No		No		

Notes: Robust SE in parentheses. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.10$. INC = reference. Dep. var.: log PM-PI

Table 3: Heterogeneity: BJP vs INC Centre for SC/ST-Targeted Transfers (TWFE)

	Discretionary (B5)		SCSP (G5)		PM-PMS (H5)		
	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.
Aligned × NDA centre (BJP)	0.130***	(0.010)	0.067***	(0.008)	0.031***	(0.006)	
Aligned × UPA centre (INC)	0.108***	(0.012)	0.095***	(0.009)	0.035***	(0.008)	
NDA centre dummy	7.846	(50.131)	11.085	(23.129)	−6.321	(19.722)	
Adj. R^2	0.989		0.993		0.995		
N	446		446		446		

Notes: Robust SE in parentheses. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.10$. INC = reference. All specifications incl

Table 4: SC Reservation Utilisation and Alignment (TWFE)

	SC Seat Util.		SC Job Util.	
	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)
Aligned (same party)	0.409**	(0.185)	−0.006	(0.157)
Log SCSP per SC capita	−0.116	(1.261)	0.015	(1.071)
SC pop. share (%)	306.112	(355.540)	−92.841	(302.144)
Log GSDP p.c.	−2777.095	(2234.173)	−885.179	(1898.641)
Base literacy (%)	−0.367	(0.356)	0.180	(0.303)
Adj. R^2	0.992		0.990	
N	218		218	
State + Year FE	Yes		Yes	

Notes: Dep. var. = SC seat/job utilisation (%). Vacancy_scst panel (2012–2022; N=218). Robust SE. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.10$.

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