Psephology is a branch of political science devoted to the study of elections and voting patterns. It is derived from the Greek word psephos, which means pebbles. (Ancient Greeks used to vote by dropping pebbles into jars.) Psephologists use historical voting data and exhaustive questions in opinion polls to understand trends in voting. In India, given complexities such as caste dynamics, religious formations, pressing local issues (which may be different from State and national issues), a huge population, shifting party alliances and varying voter turnouts, psephologists find it all the more challenging to capture the mood on the ground and analyse the final results.