Development and Governance Trump Caste Identities in Uttar Pradesh

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The landslide victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Uttar Pradesh in the Lok Sabha elections surprised not only its rivals and political observers, but even its own leaders. While the 71 seats won in UP significantly contributed to the BJP securing a majority in the Lok Sabha on its own, it is significant that the party made electoral gains across all castes and communities and across all regions in the state. This victory signalled a paradigm shift in voter behaviour, with a preference for good governance and development pushing out the identity politics of caste and community.

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The 2014 Lok Sabha elections result in Uttar Pradesh (UP) surprised all, not because it went in favour of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), but because of the reach and sweep of the party, both in terms of geography and demography. On the eve of the poll, it was widely acknowledged that there was a Narendra Modi wave in UP. But even a generous assessment was that the BJP could at best replicate its 1998 performance – when it won 57 of the 82 seats, and secured 36.5% of the votes (Verma 2014). However, the voters thought otherwise. In the last seven years (2007-14), we see that UP voters have been regularly springing surprises. They surprised all in 2007 by giving an absolute majority to the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) when many had thought that a fractured mandate was inevitable in the caste-ridden state. They surprised all in 2009 by electing 21 Congressmen as Members of Parliament (MPs) when many thought that the Congress was in terminal decline in UP (Beg and Kumar 2009). They again surprised all in 2012 by giving an absolute majority to the Samajwadi Party (SP) when political observers expected that the work done by Rahul Gandhi would enable the Congress to sustain its performance of the 2009 Lok Sabha elections (Verma 2012). The saffron sweep of 2014 appears to be yet another surprise.

For about a quarter of a century, political competition in UP centred around regionally dominant, caste-based parties, mainly the BSP and SP, while national parties, especially the Congress and BJP, were marginalised. Caste-based identity politics became the fulcrum of electoral politics in the state, with both the SP and BSP developing caste-centred support bases, which provided 20% or more of their votes: The SP was based on the support of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), mainly Yadavs, and the BSP on dalit support. After the second democratic upsurge, from 1989 onwards (Yadav 1999), only the SP and BSP have formed governments in UP, except for intermittent BJP governments on four different occasions.[1] The BJP's share of seats had been declining in assembly elections, from 221 in 1991 to 47 in 2012. This was accompanied by a fall in its vote share, from 31.5% in 1991 to 15% in 2012. In the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, the party won only 10 seats and secured 17.5% of the vote. It was a risky proposition for scholars and commentators to predict that the BJP would sweep the poll this time, even though there were strong indications of voters' preference for the party and its prime ministerial candidate Modi.[2] Thus, the 2014 Lok Sabha elections signalled a paradigm shift in voters' behaviour in UP,

with good governance and development being preferred over the identity politics of caste and community.

Electoral Backdrop

The Lok Sabha elections was preceded by at least three significant issues in UP. One, the Muzaffarnagar communal conflagration, which affected the social climate of the state, greatly dented the image of the Akhilesh Yadav government and the SP. The management of the riots and the post-riot relief camps angered both Hindus and Muslims. Hindus accused the government of blatantly siding with Muslims, and Muslims accused the government of not paying attention to riot victims. Various tracker polls conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) during 2013-14 showed that despite the government's attempt to blame the BJP, the people saw the government as being culpable, not the party.

Two, the impressive debut of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its government in Delhi under the chief ministership of Arvind Kejriwal prompted people to see it as an alternative to both the Congress and BJP. When AAP came to power in Delhi in December 2013, the Modi campaign seemed to suddenly lose much of its sheen in UP, and many wondered if AAP would be the top performer in the state in the Lok Sabha poll. But, the resignation of the Kejriwal government was met with strong public disapproval, which was canalised in favour of Modi, who never let go the opportunity.

Finally, that opportunity was put to the best use when Modi decided to make Varanasi his parliamentary constituency, giving the people hope of development based on the Gujarat model. A combination of these issues created an electoral turf favourable to the BJP in UP, making the task of Amit Shah, its leader-in-charge of the state, a little easier.

Electoral Outcome

In UP's 80 Lok Sabha constituencies, 8.1 crore voters (out of 13.88 crore registered voters) voted, taking the turnout to 58.4%-8% less than the national average (66.5%), but still an increase of 10.6% over the 2009 turnout in the state. In all, 1,368 candidates belonging to more than 30 political parties and independents contested. The state had a six-phase poll schedule that lasted just over a month (10 April-12 May). The BJP swept the poll, winning 71 of the 78 seats it contested. Its ally, the Apna Dal (AD), won two seats (Mirzapur and Pratapgarh). Thus, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won 73 seats. The remaining seven were shared by the Congress (Raebareli and Amethi) and the SP (Azamgarh, Mainpuri, Kannauj, Badaun, and Firozabad). Both parties were reduced to a family coterie – the Congress to a mother-son duo (Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi), and the SP to Mulayam Singh Yadav, his daughter-in-law Dimple, and nephews Dharmendra and Akshay.[3] All others, including the BSP, drew a blank.

In terms of votes, all parties, except the BJP and AD, lost. Compared to 2009, the Congress lost 10.8% of its votes, the BSP 7.8%, the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) 2.4%, the SP 1.1%, and other parties 3% (Table 1). Together, they lost 25%, and this chunk was transferred to the BJP, which got 43.3% of the votes,

a huge increase over its 2009 figure of 17.5%. Significantly, the SP lost the least – just 1% of the vote (from 23.3% in 2009 to 22.2% in 2014). But, the BJP secured 42.3% of the vote, almost double the SP's share. Thus, the electoral outcome was a massive BJP wave, a wave that swept away all other parties though the SP largely held its fort in terms of vote share.

Table 1: Performance of Political Parties in UP Lok Sabha Election (2014)

Party	Seats Contested	Won	Change from 2009	Vote (%)	Change from 2009 (%)
Congress	67	2	-19	7.5	-10.8
BJP	78	71	+61	42.3	+24.8
BSP	80	0	-20	19.6	-7.8
SP	78	5	-18	22.2	-1.1
RLD	8	0	-5	0.9	-2.4
AD	2	2	2	1.0	+0.2

Source: CSDS Data Unit.

Features of the Verdict

After about 25 years, the people of the state refused to go along with caste-based parties and preferred to vote for development and good governance, the twin planks on which the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, Modi, sought a mandate. Most people had little idea about what the Gujarat model of development was; yet they were convinced that Modi, who had developed his state, should be given a chance.

Why did UP voters think so? The people of the state had seen two models of governance and development. One was the Manmohan Singh-Sonia Gandhi national model of governance and development for 10 years – full of scams, political corruption, rising prices, and misuse of power. The second was the Mulayam Singh Yadav-Akhilesh Yadav model of governance that smacked of incompetence, lack of vision, blatant casteism, freebee politics, Muslim appeasement, and a deteriorating security environment.[4] The people were disenchanted with the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government at the centre and the SP government in the state. When these two models were juxtaposed with the Gujarat model of development, voters thought betting on Modi was a good idea.

In addition, voters may have believed that caste parties such as the SP and BSP had become irrelevant in national governments. The two parties were not part of either UPA I or UPA II, and looking at the scenario, many knew that there was no possibility of a UPA III. Hence, even without disconnecting themselves from their caste parties, many voters had made up their minds to vote for Modi in the Lok Sabha poll. They were actually voting for Modi, not the BJP. Two, they well understood the difference between national and state elections, and there was no commitment to vote for the BJP in the assembly election in 2017. Three, they have retained ties with their caste parties, and the possibility of shifting towards them when it comes to the state elections, exists – a warning to the BJP. That may give Shah a few headaches. The focus was on development, and voters saw Modi as an effective instrument of development and change.

A second feature of this election was the clinical organisation of all election-related activities, which were centred on branding Modi and marketing "brand Modi" to the UP electorate.

Modi had already established himself as a prime ministerial brand through his development work in Gujarat, and through his "connect with the people" programmes in UP. People knew brand Modi well. Shah did his job efficiently and embarked on making the product – brand Modi – accessible in even the remotest rural parts of UP using hi-tech and innovative methods.

Among the prime ministerial brands in the political market (Modi, Rahul Gandhi, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Nitish Kumar, Mamata Banerjee, and so on), Modi was the only legitimate one because his party had already declared him as its prime ministerial candidate. Other brands lacked this legitimacy, and also the clarity on how they would get to the magic number of 272 seats required to form a government. That almost made Modi the only reliable prime ministerial brand, compelling people to vote for BJP candidates to make him the prime minister of India.

Though Shah was an outsider to UP, he earned a name for doing his job with surgical precision – from candidate selection to conducting hi-tech election campaigns, and arranging funds to election booth management. He gave importance to local BJP leaders who had been visible in party activities in their constituencies in the past couple of years. He gave detailed guidelines on how to conduct election campaigns; what the focus had to be; and how resources had to be pooled by adjacent constituencies. The 80 Lok Sabha seats were divided into 21 clusters of three to five seats. These clusters were grouped into eight zones, and all zones were under the state unit. A separate strategy for mobilisation was devised for each cluster, and that included drawing people from a radius of 175 kilometres for Modi meetings.[5]

Shah has to be given credit for the pre-poll alliance with the AD, which appeared to be an insignificant player but proved to be a potent political factor. The AD's former president Sone Lal Patel was in the BSP before he broke away to form his own party. So, the AD had links among both the most backward classes and dalits. By the pre-poll alliance, Shah ensured that about 2,00,000 Patel voters in Varanasi voted for Modi. This strong social group supported and voted for the BJP-AD combine in all constituencies, giving the impression that the BJP was an OBC-oriented party. While it was a great bargain for the AD, which won two seats as a BJP ally, the alliance gave the BJP a subaltern orientation that might have encouraged not only OBCs, but also dalits to vote for it.

In doing his job, Shah was assisted by the Citizens for Accountable Governance (CAG), a non-profit, non-governmental organisation (NGO).[6] It employed about 200 to 400 full-time paid people, 800 paid interns, and 1,00,000 volunteers from Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Brown University, Columbia University, California Institute of Technology, and London School of Economics, and former employees of financial firms such as JP Morgan and Goldman Sachs, and some start-ups. The CAG worked as full-time consultant to the Modi campaign. It did an in-depth data analysis of the 450-odd constituencies contested by the BJP, and looked at winning seats as project management challenges.

Shah got the CAG to design special campaigns for UP such as *Modi Aane Wale Hain* (Modi's arrival is imminent), using about 400 video vans to take Modi to thousands of villages, and the Bharat Vijay rallies during which Modi spoke at three or four places but was projected as a 3D holographic image to 100 locations simultaneously (Sruthijith 2014). This projection had a magical effect and the effect was reflected in the outcome – for the first time, the BJP got more votes in rural UP (43.4%) than urban centres (40.6%), according to CSDS data. That draws the curtain on the theory that the BJP is an urban-centric party with no rural base. It also dented the social base of the BSP and SP, which mainly had a rural support base.

A third feature of this election was the all-out support and campaigning for the BJP by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which claims to be a cultural and non-political organisation. But the RSS is the parent organisation of the BJP. It looked as if the RSS had taken upon itself the invisible part of the campaign, which included rural mobilisation by *swayamsevaks*, leaving the visible campaign to Modi. It was very surprising that no important BJP leader accompanied Modi at the 450-odd meetings addressed by him. It was a one-man show, and there was apprehension among BJP sympathisers about sabotage by local BJP leaders. But the strategy worked, and the BJP made deep inroads into rural areas.

Modi Wave?

One feature of the 2014 election is the controversy over whether there was a Modi wave. All the parties opposed to the BJP denied its existence, and ridiculed the idea, saying that it was only in the media, not on the ground. But, looking at the crowds pulled by Modi, one was inclined to believe that the people who gathered in the scorching heat at his rallies were curious about him and his development model. However, the big question before the BJP and Modi was whether the crowds would be converted into votes for the BJP.

Two things helped with the conversion. One was voter awareness and mobilisation campaigns. Such campaigns were launched by the Election Commission of India, several NGOs, various media outfits, several educational institutions in collaboration with district administrations, and political parties. That resulted in nearly a 10% higher voter turnout. These voters, many conjectured, were either development-minded first-timers, or upper- and middle-class voters who were generally BJP sympathisers, but looked out for themselves.

Two, Modi established an early rapport with the people through his rallies and oratorial skills. He was appointed the chief of the BJP campaign committee in early June and made the party's prime ministerial candidate on 13 September 2013. He began a dialogue with people all over, and, as the campaign progressed, his ability to reach out to them became more marked through the use of sophisticated communication technology. For the UP electorate, fed up with the national and state governments and experiencing double anti-incumbency, Modi became the obvious choice. Considering that his party (with the AD) won 73 of the 80 seats, an accretion of 63 seats over 2009, one feels convinced that there was a strong Modi

wave in UP, which the other parties either failed to discern or ignored deliberately.

SP-BSP Loss

Why did the SP lose all seats except the five fought by Mulayam Singh Yadav's family members, and why did the BSP not win a single seat? The SP supremo had nursed prime ministerial ambitions. During the election campaign, he repeatedly exhorted his cadre to fetch him 70 Lok Sabha seats as a gift to fulfil his ambition.[7] Instead, the electorate gave him five seats. Given the Akhilesh Yadav government's growing unpopularity, and its loss of control over administration, people had been drifting away from the SP, though its core constituency of Yadavs and Muslims continued with it. But Mayawati of the BSP was set on torpedoing Mulayam Singh Yadav's ambition. She conducted a low-profile election campaign, and, perhaps surreptitiously, ensured the transfer of dalit votes to the BJP, especially in constituencies where it was in direct fight with the SP (Verma 2014). According to the National Election Studies (NES) data, the BSP lost 16% Jatav and 35% non-Jatav dalit votes compared to 2009; and the BJP virtually got them en bloc, registering a 14% rise in Jatav and 37% rise in non-Jatav dalit votes (Table 2).

Table 2: BJP Gains across All Castes and Communities, 2009 and 2014 Lok Sabha Elections Compared

Caste/Community	Congress			BJP			BSP			SP		
	2009	2014	+/-	2009	2014	+/-	2009	2014	+/-	2009	2014	+/-
Brahmin	31	11	-20	53	72	+19	9	5	-4	5	5	0
Rajput	6	7	+1	53	77	+24	7	5	-2	12	8	-4
Vaish	18	12	-6	57	71	+14	14	4	-10	11	10	-1
Other upper castes	31	3	-28	54	79	+25	10	1	-9	6	4	-2
Jat	13	13	0	31	77	+46	41	6	-35	10	8	-2
Yadav	11	8	-3	6	27	+21	5	3	-2	73	53	-20
Kurmi/Koeri	28	16	-12	20	53	+33	18	4	-14	18	17	-1
Other OBC	17	8	-9	29	60	+31	19	11	-8	25	13	-12
Jatav	4	2	-2	5	18	+13	84	68	-16	5	4	-1
Other SCs	16	4	-12	8	45	+37	64	29	-35	10	10	0
Muslims	25	11	-14	6	10	+4	18	18	0	30	58	+28
Others	17	8	-9	24	51	+27	27	20	-7	23	17	-6

Source: National Election Studies 2014, CSDS Data Unit.

BJP Gains All-round

The election saw a phenomenal rise in support for the BJP, from a meagre 15% of the vote in the 2012 assembly election to 42.3% in 2014, a rise of 27.3% in two years. Even if we take changes in its vote share between 2009 and 2014, we see an increase of 24.8%. That was very significant for two reasons. One, the increased vote share was reflected in every social denomination, and two, it was evenly spread across all the seven sub-regions of the state – west UP, Rohilkhand, Doab, Bundelkhand, Avadh, east UP, and north-east UP. The fundamental question is why UP's voters did not favour caste parties in 2014 and voted so overwhelmingly for the BJP.

As Table 2 shows, the upper castes went with the BJP (more than 70%) and that was understandable because they were traditionally the party's supporters. But OBC support, including Yadavs, for the BJP was a new phenomenon in UP: Among its voters were 27% Yadavs, 53% Kurmis/Koeris, and 60% OBCs (mainly more backward and most backward). Communal

polarisation in west UP resulted in 77% Jats voting for the BJP though they had been traditional supporters of Ajit Singh's RLD. Modi's most backward caste (Teli) identity was probably responsible for a huge OBC shift towards the BJP. Mulayam Singh Yadav's monopoly of OBC and Yadav votes was very effectively challenged by Modi. Though OBCs in general showed divided loyalties, they appeared to favour Modi for national politics, while retaining loyalty for Mulayam Singh Yadav in state politics.

Interestingly, Modi neither made his OBC status an issue during the campaign nor indulged in caste politics. His inclusive development model approach attracted all. But, one must admit that without being casteist, Modi very forcefully intervened in the OBC discourse and gave many OBCs cause for pride and elation. Similarly, 18% Jatavs and 45% ati-dalits voted for the BJP. While the Congress was trying to rope in dalits through the initiatives of Rahul Gandhi, the BJP turned out to be the real beneficiary. The OBCs and dalits had to choose between the identity politics pursued by the SP and BSP on one hand, and the development politics promised by Modi on the other. Most of the subaltern castes felt that their day-to-day life remained unchanged, and identity politics had not been able to deliver the fruits of development to them. They were ready to set aside caste politics and experiment with the promised development of their own clan leader, Modi of the BJP.

Muslim Vote

The 2014 election did not show any marked change in Muslim voting behaviour despite uncertainty till the end. They largely voted for SP and BSP. Also, about 10% of the Muslims voted for the BJP, indicating a rise in the community's support by 4% over 2009. That was really very significant given the Modi-bashing indulged in by all parties. Rahul Gandhi even gave a casualty figure at a rally in Solan (Himachal Pradesh) when he reportedly said that 22,000 people would be massacred if Modi became the prime minister.[8] The BJP registered accretions in vote share among all social groups, including Muslims. However, we must remember that this happened in 2007 with the BSP and in 2009 with the Congress (Beg, Kumar and Verma 2014).

The Congress lost votes in all social groups in 2014, even its Muslim support was reduced to less than half (11%) that of 2009. The same trend was discernible in the case of the BSP and SP. The BSP lost votes in all social groups, including Jatavs (by 16 percentage points) and ati-dalits (by 35 percentage points), its core constituency. It also lost heavily among brahmins and all upper castes, prompting many to wonder if Mayawati's *sarvjan samaj* was a thing of the past. As Mayawati had a game plan of "teaching Mulayam a lesson", even at the cost of substantial losses to her party, drawing such a conclusion would be wrong.

We see depletion in the SP's core support base of Yadavs. Their support (53%) declined by 20 percentage points from 2009.

However, contrary to expectations, Muslim support for the SP increased by a massive 28 percentage points (to 58% since 2009) despite resentment against the government's handling of the Muzaffarnagar riots. Except among Muslims, the SP lost votes in all social groups. Mayawati's charge that Muslims did not vote for the BSP is not proved by NES 2014 data, which shows Muslim support for the BSP remained unchanged at 18% (Table 2).

An intriguing part of Muslim voting behaviour was that irrespective of the density of Muslim population in constituencies, the vote share of both the BJP and SP remained very close to their average aggregate. But the interesting part of the story was that the BJP's vote share increased in constituencies with more Muslims. The same was true of the SP, though its vote share declined in four constituencies with more than 40% Muslims (Table 3). Significantly, the BJP (10%) was almost equal to the Congress (11%) in attracting Muslim votes, though the SP still remained the first choice of Muslims (58%), way ahead of the BSP (18%) (Table 2).

Table 3: Performance of Various Parties in Constituencies with Different Muslim Population Percentages in 2014 Lok Sabha Elections

Percentage of Muslims	Total Seats	Congress +		BJP +		BSP		SP	
		Won	Vote	Won	Vote	Won	Vote	Won	Vote
Less than 10	15	1	9.9	13	42.1	0	20.3	1	20.7
10-20	37	1	7.7	33	43.1	0	20.8	3	21.2
20-40	24	0	7.5	23	44.2	0	17.9	1	24.7
40 and above	4	0	13.6	4	44.9	0	16.6	0	21.6
Total	80	2	8.4	73	43.3	0	19.6	5	22.2

Source: CSDS Data Unit.

The 2014 Lok Sabha elections in UP will be remembered for the BJP demolishing many myths about itself. As Tables 4, 5, and 6 suggest, the party received massive support not only from all social groups, but also from all classes. It equalled the BSP (32%) in getting the support of the poor (31%), while it overtook both the BSP and SP in getting the support of lower- (BJP 46%, SP 22%, BSP 19%) and middle-class voters (BJP 41%, SP 22%, BSP 19%) (Table 4). The same was seen in the support of illiterates and the uneducated. Right from non-literates to the highest educated, the BJP remained the first choice, though the support grew with rising educational levels (Table 5). There was no gender involved in choosing the BJP. It was the first choice of both men (44%) and women (42%) (Table 6). Thus, the BJP excelled in garnering support from all social groups cutting across caste and class lines.

Table 4: Party Preference by Class, Uttar Pradesh 2014

Class	Congress + RLD	BJP + AD	BSP	SP	Others	NOTA
Poor	6	31	32	24	5	2
Lower	8	46	19	22	4	1
Middle	10	41	19	22	7	1
Upper	9	51	12	20	7	1

Source: CSDS Data Unit.

Table 5: Party Preference by Education, Uttar Pradesh 2014

Education	Congress + RLD	BJP + AD	BSP	SP	Others
Non-literate	6	34	29	25	6
Up to primary	11	39	22	24	4
Up to matric	9	45	18	22	6
College and above	8	51	13	19	7

Source: CSDS Data Unit.

Table 6: Party Preference by Gender, Uttar Pradesh 2014

Gender	Congress + RLD	BJP + AD	BSP	SP	Others
Male	8	44	17	23	6.4
Female	8	42	23	21	5.1

Source: CSDS Data Unit.

During the election, two issues occupied attention. One, would the BJP benefit in west UP from a polarisation of Hindu-Muslim votes after the Muzaffarnagar riots? Two, would Modi contesting from Varanasi in eastern UP (purvanchal, which includes both east UP and north-east UP) help the BJP revive its fortunes in that region? The party won just four Lok Sabha seats in 2009 and three in 2004 of the 29 seats there. The BJP had also done poorly in Avadh (central UP) and Doab (between West UP and Avadh), winning just one of the 14 Lok Sabha seats each in 2004 and 2009. In Bundelkhand, the BJP drew a blank in 2009. So, there was curiosity about whether Modi's candidature would give the BJP an edge in all the subregions.

Judging from the people's enthusiasm about Modi and their expectations of him, the only question was how much of an impact he would have in UP. Many tracker polls conducted by Lokniti-CSDS during January-March 2014 projected the BJP's vote share at 38%, which was 1.5% higher than the party's highest ever of 36.5% in 1998 (Verma 2014).

Table 7 gives region-wise votes and seats obtained by political parties in 2014. It is interesting to note that the BJP secured its highest vote share in west UP (50.2%) confirming Hindu-Muslim polarisation there. Jats, who had been voting with Muslims for the RLD, voted for the BJP this time. Even dalits and many Congress supporters voted for the BJP in this region. The result was that the BJP swept all seven seats in west UP. The BSP with 18.5% and the SP with 17.8% of the votes in west UP were way behind the BJP. The same trend was discernible in other

Table 7: Regional Variation in Lok Sabha Election Result, Uttar Pradesh (2014)

Region	Total Seats	Turnout	Congress		BJP		BSP		SP	
			Won	Vote	Won	Vote	Won	Vote	Won	Vote
Rohilkhand	10	61.7	0	4.1	9	42.6	0	17.7	1	31.4
Avadh	14	58.1	2	17.4	11	37.6	0	20.8	0	15.9
East	17	54.8	0	4.8	15	37.9	0	21.7	1	21.4
West	9	64.9	0	6.6	9	50.2	0	18.5	0	17.8
Doab	14	59.4	0	4.3	11	46.1	0	18.0	3	25.2
Bundelkhand	4	59.4	0	6.6	4	45.0	0	20.6	0	22.1
North-east	12	54.9	0	7.0	12	41.5	0	19.7	0	23.0
Total	80	58.4	2	7.5	71	42.3	0	19.6	5	22.2

Source: CSDS Data Unit.

regions – in Bundelkhand, the BJP won all four seats with 45% of the vote; in Avadh, it won 11 out of 14 seats with 37.6% of the vote, and in Doab it won 11 out of 14 seats with 46.1%.

The Modi sweep was almost total in east UP. Of the 29 Lok Sabha seats in the region, the BJP won 27, and its vote share was very high (40%); almost double of what it got in 2009. East UP has a high concentration of OBCs, and Modi's OBC origin seemed to have worked in the region. Mulayam Singh

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Yadav and Akhilesh Yadav had neglected the more backward and the most backward sections while indulging in their myopic politics of favouring Yadavs, and these people saw Modi as an alternative OBC leader who could better their fortunes. When the BJP prospered in UP during the 1990s, it was under backward-class leaders such as Kalyan Singh, Vinay Katiyar, and Uma Bharati. Though the party's resurgence in UP is again being credited to OBC leaders, the BJP strangely had no real leaders with any grass-roots support in UP and had to import leaders from Gujarat. One can surely infer that Modi's candidature had a lot to do with the BJP's electoral fortunes, not only in west UP but in all the subregions.

Though the SP lost seats in all the subregions, its vote share tells a different story. Regional analysis of its vote share indicates that it lost support only in three subregions (Avadh, Bundelkhand, and east UP); that its vote share remained almost unchanged in Doab and west UP; and that it gained votes in north-east UP (23%, up from 17.2% in 2009) and Rohilkhand (31.4%, up from 24.7% in 2009). The regional spread of SP votes indicates that the party did badly not because any serious erosion in its support base, but because the BJP's vote share expanded substantially. The BSP and Congress lost votes in every subregion of the state (Table 7). Another party that lost its social base in western UP (3.2% in 2014, down from 11.2% in 2009) and Rohilkhand (0.1% in 2014, down from 6.2% in 2009) was the RLD.

Pointers for the Future

The 2014 election outcome offers some crucial pointers to politics in UP in the coming years. One, the BJP has aroused great optimism for the assembly election in 2017. But, much will depend on the performance of the Modi government. People may be inclined to believe that BJP governments at the centre and the state may speed up development. That would threaten the SP. However, it would be a mistake to take this for granted. One, because the people voted for Modi, not the BJP in the Lok Sabha election; and two, because there is hardly any state-level BJP leader who can inspire confidence in voters and can be seen as a "development man". So, notwithstanding Shah, the assembly election will not be a cakewalk for the BJP.

Two, the result points to the decline of caste politics. The only possibility of caste politics returning to UP depends on how the state government competes with the Modi government in development. If development becomes a common denominator for both, voters may look to caste as a deciding factor. Even then, the inclusive orientation of most parties is diluting exclusionary and casteist approaches. The way the BJP left all other parties behind by pursuing inclusive politics is a warning not only to the SP but also the Congress and BSP, especially to Mayawati's social engineering (Verma 2007). Mayawati may hope to retrieve her dalit voters in the next assembly election, but much will depend on how soon the Modi government delivers its inclusive policies, and whether they give dalits a ray of hope.

Three, Muslim thinking about the BJP and the community's voting behaviour may also change. If Modi pursues an inclusive development model, more Muslims might vote for the BJP. That will not only make BJP more inclusive, but also have a positive effect on the secularism-communalism discourse in the country.

Finally, Modi may change the OBC discourse in UP and India. So far, hardly anybody had taken him to be an OBC leader, but he is now firmly entrenched in the OBC psyche. The Modi government's inclusive political orientation is likely to benefit OBCs and dalits, who together constitute 62% of the population in UP. So, the possibility of the BJP benefitting from the Modi factor in UP for a long time to come is definitely there.

NOTES

1 The BJP held power in UP on four different occasions after the second democratic upsurge in 1989. June 1991-December 1992; 18 months (Kalyan Singh); September 1997-November 1999; 26 months (Kalyan Singh); November 1999-October 2000; 11 months (Ram Prakash Gupta); October 2000-March 2002; 17 months (Rajnath Singh). Thus, there were BJP governments for a cumulative period of 72 months (six years) between 1991 and 2002.

2 Various CSDS-CNN-IBN tracker polls (June 2013, January 2014, February 2014) and a pre-poll (March 2014) conducted by Lokniti consistently projected 38% votes for the BJP. There was also a strong preference for Narendra Modi as prime minister.

3 Mulayam Singh Yadav won from Azamgarh and Mainpuri. He later vacated the Mainpuri seat for his grandnephew, Tej Pratap Singh Yadav.

4 Akhilesh Yadav has contentiously appointed Muslims to top civil and police positions.

5 Rohini Singh (2014), "Election Results 2014: How Amit Shah Swept Uttar Pradesh for BJP", *The Economic Times*, 17 May.

6 See *Quartz*, 15 June, http://qz.com/220329/this-little-known-non-profit-was-the-secret-of-modi-campaigns-razor-sharp-execution/

7 Given his age, Mulayam Singh Yadav knew that it was now or never for prime ministership. He aspired to lead either a third front, or form a minority government supported by the Congress from outside.

8 "BJP Seeks EC Action against Rahul Gandhi for Highly Provocative Statement on Narendra Modi", *The Indian Express*, 3 May 2014.

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