

was also aided by the positive public image of its candidates and leader Arvind Kejriwal. What remains to be seen is whether the Aam Aadmi party would be able to maintain this momentum and become an important player in Punjab politics. Also, as for the party's hope to bring in a cataclysmic shift in the basic nature of electoral politics of the state, the verdict is awaited.

(Endnotes)

Notes:

- ¹ In a total of 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab, 1,38,45,132 people voted out of the total electorate of 1,96,08,008. There were 266 candidates in the fray including the independents. Voter turnout was 70.6 per cent, which was higher than the turnout in 2009 - 69.7 percent.
- ² Majha region has three Lok Sabha constituencies namely Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Khadur Sahib. Doaba region comprises of Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur (both seats are reserved for the SC candidates). Malwa region comprises of Anandpur Sahib, Fatehgarh Sahib, Ludhiana, Patiala, Sangrur, Faridkot, Ferozpur and Bathinda (Fatehgarh Sahib and Faridkot seats are reserved for the SC Candidates).

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BJP's Rise in 2014 Loksabha Election in Uttarakhand

Annpurna Nautiyal*

There is no doubt that the 2014 election for the five Lok Sabha seats in Uttarakhand generated immense interest and excitement among the people. The seemingly one dimensional fight between Modi and the rest not only made it quite thrilling but the higher voter turnout in Uttarakhand also invited serious analysis as well as guess work on the poll outcome and who would make the government at the centre. The high voter turnout of 61.6 percent in the state made it clear that the people's perception about casting their votes and the political leadership is changing; as a result the BJP won all the five seats which were captured by the Congress in 2009 election. This election also witnessed a higher voter turnout of 62.48 percent among the females which not only indicated the interest of the female voters in the election process but it also became a deciding factor for the Congress party's defeat and BJP's outstanding win. The high voter turnout of nearly 72 percent in the plain areas of Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar also indicated that the people in the plain areas had understood the value of their vote and were desperate to see changes in the political set up. The high voter turnout of nearly 59 percent and 56 percent even in the disaster affected areas of Kedarnath and Badrinath of the Garhwal Loksabha seat also pointed towards people's desperation with the inaction and policy paralysis of the UPA government at the centre and desire for transforming the system.

Although Uttarakhand is not a very big player in the election scenario of India as it sends only five MP in the Lok Sabha but from the point of view of throwing political tantrums and drama it is not far behind than the other states or political parties. Elections in India have not only become interesting by the frequent mud- slinging, use of filthy and most of the time unparliamentarily language to attack each other and other variety of events

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but also due to the round of leaving one political party and joining the other political party by the candidates of different parties. The Ayaram Gayaram politics has affected all the parties equally and Uttarakhand is also not an exception to it. The alacrity by which the leaders leave one party and join the other party not only surprises the general public but also shows how mercurial the temperament of the candidates can become if their political aspirations are not fulfilled in any particular party. During the election this scenario was witnessed very frequently in both the national parties in Uttarakhand.

The Party Politics During Elections

The BJP faced a revolt like situation with the resignation of Bachhi Singh Rawat, a seasoned and influential leader and a former Union Minister for state, from all the party portfolios due to the indifferent attitude of the party towards his concerns and ignoring his claim for a seat from the Nainital parliamentary constituency. Actually besides the three ex chief ministers of the BJP namely Major Gen. (Retd.) B.C. Khanduri, B.S. Koshiyari and Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank who were given tickets from Pauri Garhwal, Nainital and Haridwar Lok Sabha parliamentary constituencies respectively, there were many other old timers who had been staking their claim on these seats and making the BJP uneasy. The Congress party was also facing the same music because of the leadership change in Uttarakhand just before the Lok Sabha election which saw removal of Vijay Bahuguna from the Chief Minister ship of the state and induction of Harish Rawat at the helm of affairs. Though the change in leadership took place on account of the slow progress in the reconstruction work after the natural disaster of June 2013 but it could not satisfy the local leadership as even after the change most of the minister and leaders had been showing open resentment towards the new leader and their newly assigned portfolios. Due to its internal problems and factionalism, the Congress party in the midst of election saw the exit of the stalwarts like Satpal Maharaj who joined the BJP in a shocking manner. The other leaders like Matabar Singh Kandari who had joined Congress in 2012 left the Congress party and joined the BJP once again. Stupal Maharaj's move of leaving the Congress and joining the BJP

came as a big blow to Congress in Uttarakhand as he is not only a leader with mass base but he was also the sitting MP from Pauri Garhwal Lok Sabha seat and being a Rajput caste leader was considered a good competitor for the BJP's Brahmin candidate, the former chief minister of Uttarakhand, Major Gen.(Retd.) B.C. Khanduri. From the caste calculations also Satpal Maharaj was also an appropriate candidate because of the dominance of the Rajput caste in the hill areas of Pauri Garhwal Lok Sabha seat. To balance the caste card the Congress though, fielded a Rajput candidate Dr. Harak Singh Rawat, a cabinet minister in the Harish Rawat government and considered close to the former chief minister of Uttarakhand Vijay Bahuguna, but he could not hold the fort and the Congress lost this seat with a big margin. Actually the exit of Satpal Maharaj created a very interesting situation in this particular seat as by joining the BJP he had to extend his support to his earnest rival B.C. Khanduri by canvassing in his favour and against his close associate Harak Singh Rawat of the Congress party. The change of parties by Satpal Maharaj also created problems for the fragile government of Harish Rawat as there are many supporters of Satpal Maharaj who has formed a disgruntled group within the Congress party and are acting as a pressure group against the Harish Rawat government in the state. This group also consists of Satpal Maharaj's wife Amrita Rawat who is also facing a typical situation in the Congress because of the exit of her husband from Congress.

For Harish Rawat this election posed severe challenges as on the one hand, he had to perform really well in all the five seats to silence the opposition and on the other, take all the groups together to secure his government which was surviving on the support of the 07 MLA of the progressive democratic front consisting largely of independents and MLAs of Bahujan Samaj Party. Under such circumstances and also to satisfy the various sections the Congress party preferred to allocate tickets to the relatives of the political heavy weights of Uttarakhand like the former Chief minister Vijay Bahuguna's son Saket Bahuguna for the Tehri seat and Renuka Rawat, wife of the chief minister Harish Rawat for the Haridwar parliamentary seat. However on the other hand from the Haridwar parliamentary

constituency, the BJP fielded the former chief minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank who was not only facing the threat of internal sabotage from the disgruntled groups of the BJP but also shares a tainted image due to the alleged corruption charges during the Kumbh Mela and from Tehri seat the BJP's sitting MP the queen of Tehri Mala Rajlaxshmi was again given the ticket. However the divisions and differences in the Congress party and the image of the Congress party in the eyes of the people as a non serious party towards people's problems and pains triggered the Congress' down fall in Lok Sabha election.

Performance of the Two National Parties

Although in Uttarakhand's history the role of these two national political parties has become very important as so far Uttarakhand has witnessed a bipolar election contest between the BJP and the Congress. The other parties like Uttarakhand Kranti Dal, Samjwadi Party and Bahujan Samjwadi Party could not registrar impressive presence in the elections. But, interestingly, the margin of wining and loosing the seats between these two parties has always been less than 2 percent particularly during the 2004 and 1999 elections. In both the elections the BJP finished marginally ahead of the Congress. While in 1999, the BJP polled 39.6 per cent of the votes; in the 2004 election it polled 41 per cent votes. Similarly, during the 1999 Lok Sabha elections the Congress polled 38.96 per cent votes, and in 2004 it polled 38.31 per cent votes. Although, the BJP got only 2.67 percent more votes than the Congress but this margin was enough to allow it to capture three Lok Sabha seats: Pauri Garhwal, Tehri and Almora in 2004 Lok Sabha elections, and the Congress could only capture the Nainital seat and the Haridwar seat went to the SP, but in 2009 with a vote percentage of 43.3 Congress captured all the five seats. In this election Congress' vote percentage increased to 43.3 percent and the vote share of BJP declined by almost 10 percent making it 33.9 percent and with the result the BJP lost all the five seats. With 15.3 percent the BSP secured third place the other parties got less than 7.5 percent vote share. The capturing of all the five seats by Congress was largely surprising for the Congress party also as the state was being ruled by the BJP. The BJP's loss of all the five

Loksabha seats from a state like Uttarakhand not only reflected the people's mistrust and anger but also divisions and fractions within the BJP and its leaders at the state. During the 2004 elections the vote percentage in the state was only 48.07 percent and therefore, three seats went to the BJP and one seat each went to the Congress and the SP but in 2009 with the increased vote percentage the Congress emerged as the winner by wiping off the BJP and all other political parties from the election scene. In view of this it can be said that the increased vote percentage of 53.87 percent favoured the Congress party most and it won all the seats thus leaving nothing for the BJP or other parties. Actually the decline in the vote percentage of the BJP and increase in the vote share of the Congress changed all the equations. This supports the argument that the increase in the vote percentage in Uttarakhand can change the election results drastically. The 7 percent fall of BJP's vote percentage became a crucial factor for BJP's defeat and the rise of almost 4 percent vote share allowed Congress' win in 2009. The 2009 defeat of the BJP which was the result of the internal divisions and feuds was replicated in the Congress party in the 2014 elections in Uttarakhand as like BJP in 2009 it was also undergoing the similar phase of divisions and differences. The BJP on the other hand with its management of internal divisions, selections of candidates and Modi wave could increase the vote share and captured all the five seats.

Though interestingly the BJP could not secure a win in the assembly election of 2012 despite bringing B.C. Khanduri in and raising the slogan of "Khanduri Hain Jaroriee" but BJP by playing its game carefully and with the Modi wave was able to capture all the five seats of Lok Sabha in 2014 election. However like the previous elections the main contest during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections also remained confined between the two national parties: the Congress and the BJP. In 2014 Lok Sabha election the increased voter turnout of 61.6 percent created problems for the Congress party. Though AAP party in some seats particularly Tehri and Haridwar eat into the votes of both the parties but its vote shared just remained 1.60 in all the parliamentary seats, and the BSP secured third place by capturing 4.73 percent but the contest largely remained confined between the two national

Table 1
Seats and Vote Percentage in Uttarakhand Through Different Lok Sabha Elections

Year	Congress		BJP		BSP		Others	
	Seats	% vote	Seats	% vote	Seats	% vote	Seats	% vote
1996	0	9.9	3	32.0	0	14.0	2*	44.1
1998	0	20.2	5	47.3	0	13.1	0	19.4
1999	1	38.1	4	39.6	0	12.4	0	9.9
2004	1	38.3	3	41.0	0	6.8	1**	13.9
2009	5	43.3	0	33.9	0	15.3	0	7.5
2014	5	34.03	5	55.32	0	4.73	0	4.82

(1.09 used NOTA)

* Includes INC(T) 2 seats & 24.9% votes.

** Includes SP 1 seat & 7.9% votes.

Source: CSDS Data Unit

parties and a strong Modi undercurrent worked in the favour of the BJP. In 2014 Congress' vote share declined to 34.03 percent and BJP's vote share increased to 55.32 percent. The margin of almost 21 percent in the vote share allowed BJP to win all the five Lok Sabha seats. Interestingly, though the BJP was confident about the Modi under current but it was also not expecting such a win. The other parties like AAP because of Kejriwal's inapt handling of the Delhi issue and by earning the image of a escaper could not influence the voter, the BSP and other parties had no charismatic leader like Modi therefore, higher voter turnout favoured the BJP. The seats and vote percentage in different election has been provided in the following table.

Factors Responsible for Congress's Downfall

Since the Lok Sabha election in Uttarakhand in 2014 was contested under the shadow of the natural disaster which shook Uttarakhand in June 2013 and took away the toll of nearly 10000 people therefore, all the parties had to prepare their agenda and manifestos very carefully. The Congress initiated the change by bringing Harish Rawat in to address the problem of lethargy and non performance in the reconstruction work in the aftermath of the natural disaster as well as to deal with the anti incumbency factor in the elections. But to secure the win of the Congress candidates in all the five Lok Sabha seats under the political scene of open dissent and dissatisfaction among the Congress leaders proved an impossible task for a shrewd leader like Harish Rawat to achieve and as a result of the factionalism, dissent, internal sabotaging and lack of coordination all the five seats were lost by the Congress

The delay by the Congress party in announcing the names of the candidates of the three seats of Garhwal proved very costly for the Congress party. Congress party's failure in finalizing the names of its candidates for a long time because of the dearth of the suitable candidates and also due to the fact that no one was willing to contest for the fear of losing in the election had amply indicated that Congress party was ill prepared for the election. This delay was attributed to the internal factionalism and also to