

Delhi 2014: AAP Mistakes Enabled BJP's Clean Sweep

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The Verdict

Five months after it failed to win a majority in Delhi in the Assembly election due to the rise of the Aam Admi Party (AAP), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) registered a roaring comeback in the Lok Sabha election in the national capital territory. It achieved the feat after a fifteen year gap and upstaged both the Congress and AAP by securing 46.4 percent votes and winning all the seven Lok Sabha seats (Table 1). As in the Assembly election of 2013, the Congress was once again pushed to the third position behind AAP with an embarrassing vote share of 15.1 percent, nine percentage points less than the 2013 Vidhan Sabha election and nearly one-fourth of its vote share in the 2009 Lok Sabha polls. While the AAP failed to win any seat in the

Table 1
Delhi Lok Sabha Election Results 2014

Party	Seats contested	Seats won	Seat change since 2009	Vote (%)	Vote change since 2009 (percentage points)	Vote change since 2013 Assembly election (percentage points)
Congress	7	0	-7	15.15	-41.96	-9.40
BJP	7	7	+7	46.41	+11.18	+13.34
AAP	7	0	0	32.92	+32.92	+4.43
BSP	7	0	0	1.23	-4.11	-4.12
Others	122	0	0	3.81	+1.49	-4.10
NOTA	7	0	0	0.48	+0.48	-0.15

Source: ECI data compiled by CSDS Data Unit

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Table 2
Delhi Lok Sabha Election 2014 – Constituency-wise Result

Parliamentary Constituency	Turnout %	Winner	Winner vote %	Runner up	Runner up vote %	Third party	Third party vote %	Fourth party	Fourth party vote %
Chandni Chowk	67.8	BJP	44.6	AAP	30.7	Congress	17.9	IND	2.9
North East Delhi	67.3	BJP	45.3	AAP	34.3	Congress	16.3	BSP	2.1
East Delhi	65.4	BJP	47.8	AAP	31.9	Congress	17.0	BSP	1.6
New Delhi	65.1	BJP	46.7	AAP	30.0	Congress	18.9	IND	2.1
North West Delhi (SC)	61.8	BJP	46.4	AAP	38.6	Congress	11.6	BSP	1.6
West Delhi	66.1	BJP	48.3	AAP	28.4	Congress	14.3	IND	6.3
South Delhi	62.9	BJP	45.2	AAP	35.5	Congress	11.4	IND	5.1

Source: ECI data provided by CSDS Data unit

city, it did manage to improve its vote share. The party secured 33 percent of the votes, a gain of four percentage points since the assembly poll. Another consolation perhaps for the party was that it emerged well ahead of the Congress on all seats (Table 2). The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) was reduced almost to a non-entity in Delhi with a meager 1.2 percent vote share. The party did not even finish in the fourth position on as many as four seats. What explains the BJP's huge success? And why was the AAP, which was expected to do better and pick up some seats in Delhi, not able to achieve the desired result?

Congress's Further Decline and a Realignment of Castes and Classes

Based on the election surveys conducted in Delhi by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, one can clearly find two processes shaping the city's political landscape. The first is a movement of the Upper castes and Other Backward Classes from the Congress and the AAP back towards the BJP, and the other is a simultaneous movement of Dalits and Muslims from the Congress towards the AAP. An examination of the voting pattern of different socio-economic categories in Delhi based on the NES 2014 clearly shows the nature of this realignment (Table 3). The Upper caste voters who had voted for the Congress in fairly large numbers in the 2009 Lok Sabha election did not favour the party this time resulting in a 38 percentage point drop in Congress's vote share among them. The BJP on the other hand consolidated its position among the Upper castes by securing a whopping 62 percent of their vote, a gain of 15 percentage points since 2009 and 22 percentage points as compared to the 2013 assembly election. Significantly, the AAP which had managed to secure 29 percent upper caste votes in the assembly election could not hold on to them and saw a decline in upper caste support. As far as OBCs are concerned, among them too the Congress suffered a massive loss and the BJP gained in a major way. The Congress got only 11 percent OBC votes as opposed to 65 percent in 2009. The BJP on the other hand secured 48 percent OBC votes gaining considerably since the 2013 assembly election. AAP too gained votes among OBCs but the gains were marginal. Where the AAP gained in a big way was among the Dalits and all of these gains came at the expense

Table 3

Caste and Community Voting Patterns in Delhi, 2009 Lok Sabha, 2013 Vidhan Sabha and 2014 Lok Sabha

	Vote for Congress (%)			Vote for BJP/BJP+			Vote for AAP (%)			Vote for BSP (%)		
	2009	2013	2014	2009	2013	2014	2009	2013	2014	2009	2013	2014
Upper Caste	48	22	10	47	40	62	NC	29	21	2	3	Neg
OBC	65	17	11	29	35	48	NC	35	39	5	7	Neg
Dalit	58	23	19	18	29	33	NC	36	41	23	7	5
Muslim	78	53	39	15	12	2	NC	12	56	4	3	2
Sikh	58	23	10	39	43	68	NC	26	16	Neg	8	Neg

Rest voted for Other parties or NOTA (in 2014); NC= Not Contested. Neg= Negligible; BJP+ refers to BJP-Shiromani Akali Dal alliance in 2013.

Source: NES 2009 and 2014, and Delhi Post Poll Study 2013; Sample size in 2009 - 1005; 2013 - 2297; 2014 - 895.

of the Congress and the BSP. Whereas the Congress's support among Dalits declined by three times as compared to the 2009 election, the BSP's Dalit support was down by nearly five times. The decline of the Congress and the BSP among Dalit voters not only benefitted the AAP but the BJP as well, with the party's vote share among Dalits going up by 14 percentage points. The most severe set-back for the Congress came among the Muslims who constitute about 12 percent of Delhi's population. The Muslims had been the only social category which had stood by the Congress in the 2013 assembly elections. But they too seem to have moved away from the party in the Lok Sabha election. The Congress's support among Muslims which had stood at 78 percent in 2009 and at 53 percent in 2013 declined further to 39 percent in 2014. The biggest gainer of the Congress decline among Muslims was AAP. The party which had failed to win the trust of Muslims in the Vidhan Sabha elections got nearly three out of five Muslim votes in the Lok Sabha polls. Having done better than the Congress in the 2013 Vidhan Sabha elections, the AAP was perhaps seen by the Muslims of Delhi as a better bet to defeat the BJP. This overwhelming shifting of Muslim votes towards AAP, even as it lost support among the upper castes, helped the party to retain its second position in Delhi politics and increase its overall vote share.

The picture becomes even clearer when we look at the voting pattern in terms of the economic class of voters (Table 4). The Congress declined further among all classes of voters as compared to the 2013 assembly elections and the biggest beneficiary of the Congress's decline was the BJP, particularly among voters belonging to the upper class. The AAP which had done fairly well among the upper class voters in the Vidhan Sabha election could not capitalize much on the Congress' further decline among this segment. Instead it was the BJP which walked away with nearly the entire chunk of upper class voters disillusioned with the Congress. Moreover, unlike the Vidhan Sabha election where the AAP had got slightly more support among the upper and middle classes than the lower class, in the Lok Sabha election the pattern had reversed with a greater proportion of lower classes voting for the AAP than the upper and middle classes.

Table 4

Class Voting Patterns in Delhi, 2013 Vidhan Sabha and 2014 Lok Sabha

Economic Class	Vote for Congress (%)		Vote for BJP/BJP+ (%)		Vote for AAP (%)	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
Upper	23	15	37	45	30	31
Middle	24	15	34	46	31	35
Lower & Poor	27	17	31	41	29	38

Rest voted for Other parties or NOTA (in 2014); BJP+ refers to BJP-Shiromani Akali Dal alliance in 2013.

Source: NES 2014 and Delhi Post Poll Study 2013; Sample size in 2013 - 2297; 2014 - 895.

Explaining the upper caste and upper class disillusionment with AAP

What explains the inability of AAP to hold on to its upper caste and upper class support? The answer to this question probably lies in its failure to live up to the heightened expectations generated by it before the Vidhan Sabha elections, and subsequently its decision to quit the government in Delhi after a 49-day stint in office. The AAP had won accolades among the middle and upper class voters for its anti-corruption plank. But this bonhomie did not last long. The foundation for the estrangement of the middle and upper classes from the party was laid during the enactment of Rail Bhawan drama where Arvind Kejriwal, who had just assumed power in Delhi, sat on a dharna (strike) himself. The urban middle class that is well ensconced in their no-trouble-shoot environment felt unsettled by the activism of the Chief Minister. In a survey conducted by CSDS in Delhi in February 2014, 55 percent of the middle and upper class respondents viewed Kejriwal's act of sitting on a dharna as inappropriate (Table 5). The sentiment among the lower class and poor respondents was exactly the opposite with most of them terming the dharna as an appropriate move. Similarly, the sentiment that the dharna was inappropriate was stronger among upper caste voters than it was among Muslims and Dalits. If the Rail Bhawan dharna put off a large section of AAP's upper class and upper caste supporters, then the

decision of the party a few weeks later to quit the government in Delhi on the issue of Jan Lokpal further distanced them from the party. When the voters of Delhi were asked during the NES 2014 Pre Poll survey if Kejriwal had done the right thing by resigning, only 35 percent of upper class respondents answered in the affirmative.

Table 5
Opinion of Delhi Voters on Arvind Kejriwal's Rail Bhawan Dharna

	Kejriwal's act of sitting on Dharna was...	
	Appropriate (%)	Inappropriate (%)
Economic Class		
Upper Class	40	55
Middle Class	38	55
Lower Class	56	40
Poor	48	41
Caste/community		
Upper caste	40	53
OBC	42	51
Muslim	45	44
Dalit	46	50

Source: Tracker Survey February 2014 conducted by CSDS; Sample size - 796

Kejriwal's Resignation Helped Narendra Modi Take the Lead

Indeed the dharna and the resignation proved to be very costly for the AAP. Evidence from various CSDS surveys conducted in the months preceding the Lok Sabha elections shows that Arvind Kejriwal's popularity which was greater than that of Narendra Modi in Delhi in the first half of January 2014, fell drastically by the fourth week of February, that is, soon after Kejriwal decided to resign from the chief minister-ship of Delhi (Table 6). By the time the elections came in April, Narendra Modi was well ahead of Arvind Kejriwal in terms of choice for Prime Minister. Clearly, up until February 2014, AAP seemed well on its way of emerging as the leading party in Delhi in the Lok Sabha elections and it can therefore be argued that had Kejriwal

not quit, AAP would have done much better in Delhi and perhaps in the rest of the country. By resigning from government, Arvind Kejriwal gave his opponents a chance to label him as a deserter. It also gave the BJP an opportunity to allege that Kejriwal was power hungry and more interested in capturing power at the Centre than keeping his promises to the voters of Delhi.

Table 6
Delhi's Choice of Prime Minister

	People's Choice for PM		
	Narendra Modi (%)	Arvind Kejriwal (%)	Rahul Gandhi (%)
Third week of Apr 2014	39	23	11
Fourth week of Mar 2014	38	20	8
Fourth week of Feb 2014	37	26	15
Third week of Jan 2014	32	34	10

Source: Series of surveys conducted by Lokniti, CSDS in the run up to/soon after the 2014 Lok Sabha election; Sample size in Jan 2014 - 951; Feb 2014 - 796, Mar 2014 - Apr 2014 - 895.

AAP's Decision to Attack Both Congress and BJP Equally May Have Also Backfired

Another possible reason for the BJP's victory in the Lok Sabha elections is the massive level of dissatisfaction that prevailed among the voters over the Congress-led UPA government's performance and the failure of AAP to capitalize on this anti-Congress sentiment. When respondents in Delhi were asked during the NES Pre Poll survey in March 2014 whether they were satisfied with the performance of the UPA government or not, only 38 percent said they were and 58 percent said they were not. Despite this strong anti-Congress sentiment, the AAP decided to target the BJP strongly in the month preceding the Lok Sabha polls. Soon after quitting as chief minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal made Narendra Modi his primary target, first by visiting Gujarat and questioning his developmental claims and then by announcing his candidature against Modi from the Varanasi Lok Sabha

seat, giving the impression that Modi and not the Congress was his main enemy. At a time when people were angry with the Congress and its government at the Centre, the AAP's decision to go after the BJP as vehemently as it went after the Congress may have confused those who had only recently voted for AAP in the assembly elections on the basis of the party's anti-Congress plank.

Conclusion

In conclusion one can say that there was a strong anti-Congress sentiment in Delhi before the Lok Sabha polls which the BJP was able to effectively capitalize on, partly because of its own efforts and the Modi factor but largely because of the mistakes made by the Aam Admi Party. The AAP's Lok Sabha election strategy faltered on too many counts creating doubts in the minds of voters about the party's anti-corruption plank and its seriousness to address the issues of Delhi. In the process the voters got polarized as a majority of the upper caste, OBC, upper and the middle class gravitated towards the BJP and minorities towards the AAP hence paving a way for the BJP to win decisively.

References

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Rajasthan: Moving From Bipolar Contestation to Single Party Domination

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The resounding triumph of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2013 State Assembly elections and the 2014 Parliamentary elections has opened up the possibility of the largest state of the Indian Union embarking on the road being traversed by neighbouring Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The party secured a historic mandate in the Assembly elections held in December 2013 by winning more than 80 percent of the 200 constituencies, pocketing more than 46 percent of the votes which was a surge of nearly 11 percent over its performance in the previous Assembly election.

The Verdict

The phenomenal performance of the BJP in Assembly elections was further consolidated in the Lok Sabha elections held in April-May 2014 where the BJP won all the 25 constituencies, amassing support of more than 55 percent of the electorate. The emphatic nature of the BJP win in 2014 is further established by the fact that the party lead in as many as 184 Assembly constituencies.

The Indian National Congress (INC/Congress), which so far had been the principal pole of political competition in the state, suffered a humiliating defeat in both the elections. The party put up its worst performance in the Assembly elections by winning a little above one-tenth of the seats, barely avoiding the ignominy of being denied the status of the principal opposition party. However, the worst was yet to come. In the Lok Sabha elections, the party could not open its account in the state managing only 30.7 percent of the votes, which was a further decline of 3 percentage points over its Assembly performance. The fate of other political parties was not dissimilar

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