

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.

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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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Table 1

Election Results in Rajasthan, 2003 - 2014

Election	Total Seats	Congress		BJP		BSP		Ind & Others		NOTA vote (%)
		Seats won	Vote (%)	Seats won	Vote (%)	Seats won	Vote (%)	Seats won	Vote (%)	
2003 VS	200	56	35.7	120	39.2	2	4	22	21.1	-
2004 LS	25	04	41.4	21	49.0	0	3.2	0	6.4	-
2008 VS	200	96	36.8	78	34.3	6	7.6	20	21.3	-
2009 LS	25	20	47.2	4	36.6	0	3.4	1	12.8	-
2013 VS	200	21	33.7	163	46.0	3	3.4	13	15.0	1.9
2014 LS	25	0	30.7	25	55.6	0	2.4	0	10.1	1.2

Note: VS means Vidhan Sabha and LS means Lok Sabha; Source: Analysis of ECI Data by Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) Data Unit.

to that of the Congress as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) (from 3.4 percent vote share in Assembly Elections to 2.4 percent in Lok Sabha Election), the newly constituted National People's Party (NPP) (from 4.3 percent to 1.2 percent) and the National Unionist Zamindara Party (NUZP) (from 1 percent to 0.5 percent) suffered steep erosion of support as compared to the Assembly election. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which had not contested the Assembly elections, could secure only one percent of the votes. The Communist parties and Janata Dal (U) failed to impress voters even in those pockets where they have enjoyed political influence for a long time.

Notwithstanding the fact that in the State Assembly and Parliament elections held since 2003, the electoral pendulum in the state of Rajasthan has swung from one end to the other in what has essentially been a bi-polar political contest, the magnitude of the BJP victory this time raises doubts about the endurance of this bipolarity. Table 1 gives us an idea of the massive vote swing in favour of the BJP as the party won all the 25 seats and increased its vote share by 19 percentage points as compared to 2009. The major loser was the Congress which suffered a loss of more than 17 points during the same period. The only other occasion when a political party could manage to win all the 25 seats was in 1984 when the Congress achieved the target in the polls held closely after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. In this sense, the BJP victory in 2014 is truly phenomenal. The nature and magnitude of this triumph unfolds grounds to believe that from now onwards it will be very difficult for the Congress to retain its identity as the principal pole of political configuration in the state.

Still one can claim that this outcome is not surprising as most surveys gave a sense of this outcome even before the polling had taken place. What makes this verdict stunning is the enormity of the BJP victory. 18 of the 25 BJP candidates decimated their rivals by a margin of more than 2 lakh votes. In 8 constituencies the victorious BJP candidates received more than 60 percent votes. Political stalwarts from the Congress like Girija Vyas, C.P.Joshi, Sachin Pilot, Namu Narayan Meena, Mahesh Sharma, Chandresh Kumari and veteran leaders like Jaswant Singh, Buta Singh and Kirorilal Meena were unable to stop the BJP juggernaut. New BJP faces like Olympian

shooter Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore (Jaipur Rural), Ramcharan Bohra (Jaipur), Rahul Kaswan (Churu), P.P. Chaudhary (Pali), Swami Sumedhanand (Sikar), Yogi Chandnath (Alwar), GS Shekhawat (Jodhpur), CP Joshi (Chittorgarh), SS Jaunapuria (Sawai Madhopur) staged handsome victories against veteran Congress leaders. Colonel Sonaram, a Congress heavyweight for more than four decades, deserted the party just before the election to contest and triumphed over senior BJP leader Jaswant Singh who had contested as an independent.

Deviating From The National Pattern

In the last general election, the performance of Congress in Rajasthan had proven to be a big incremental factor in enabling the party to cross the 200 mark. In this election, people of Rajasthan gave thumping support to the BJP to fulfil their expectations. This was much in consonance with the overall national electoral architecture, more so in neighbouring states of western, central and northern India. And yet the mandate in Rajasthan differs from other states. While in neighbouring states like Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, the overwhelming support for BJP was a reflection of people's support for the performance of the state governments and dissatisfaction with the UPA government at the centre, in case of Rajasthan the mandate was for the BJP to deliver a strong and stable government at the centre. Ever since the 1998 Lok Sabha election, the electorate in the state have expressed their political opinion firmly in support of either the BJP or the INC. Thus the people's verdict in the 16th Lok Sabha election was more in line with this search for effective governance being delivered by a strong leader. This is what the people have been yearning for both in the state and the centre. Successive Congress debacles in both Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha elections in Rajasthan are an outcome of this discontentment with weak and ineffective governance at the centre. The state, therefore, differs from a dominant perspective of Indian politics that politics at the state level determines the nature of national scenario (Yadav and Palshikar). This state level deviation was witnessed in the pre-poll survey findings when 26 percent of the respondents observed that they give more importance to the functioning of the central government as compared to only 12 percent who

give greater weightage to the state government. Voters in the state have given greater salience to strong and popular national leaders than those based in the state. This has been the story from Nehru to Narendra Modi with Indira Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Rajiv Gandhi taking the honours in between.

The 'Honeymoon' Period

Two questions which need to be answered here are what caused this historical victory of the BJP and from where did the BJP get this decisive mandate. A simple answer to the first question can be that in all the Lok Sabha elections held in Rajasthan after 1998, the party which had won in the Vidhan Sabha elections held a few months earlier managed to win the Lok Sabha elections. The political dividends of the 'honeymoon period' are there to be reaped for the party in power in the state. The Congress did this in 1998 as well as in 2009 and the BJP paid back by winning in 2004 and now in 2014. We can thus say that the BJP carried on from its Assembly triumph and consolidated it further in the Lok Sabha elections.

Election Preparedness

To this simplistic answer one may also add the conventional 'party' explanation that after the staggering defeat in Assembly elections, the state Congress was in total disarray and the cosmetic change of leadership by projecting young Sachin Pilot was too little too late. The tug of war between senior state leadership had a demoralizing effect on the party worker and was too evident in the tussle over distribution of party nomination. The Congress campaign in the state was a non-starter and apart from former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, no other Congress leader made any concerted efforts to stem the BJP tide. Senior leaders like Girija Vyas, CP Joshi and Namonarayan Meena mostly campaigned in their respective constituencies. This was in stark contrast to the well-oiled and motivated BJP campaign machinery ably supported by the Sangh Parivar. The heavy increase turnout could be an outcome of this active mobilization but greater empirical evidence would be required to establish this relationship. Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje led from the front to achieve 'Mission 25'. She started her second

term in the office on a very positive note. Even though her government hardly got any time to fulfil electoral promises due to the electoral code of conduct being put into effect from early March, there was overwhelming support for her and the party. This was seen in the post poll survey conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in which more than two-third of the respondents considered her government to be better than the previous Congress government.

Strong Anti-incumbency

Another major reason for the tremendous BJP victory in Rajasthan was deep-seated dissatisfaction and discontentment with the Congress led UPA government at the centre and also against the local Member of Parliament. According to a pre poll survey conducted by CSDS, dissatisfaction with the central government in Rajasthan (49 percent) was marginally higher than the national average (46 percent). In the post poll survey, a significant number of voters identified price rise, corruption, unemployment, inadequate supply of drinking water, women security as the issues which determined their voting decision. Table 2 gives a clear indication that a significant proportion of voters, who identified these issues as the most important determinant, preferred BJP as their political choice. Most people felt that the BJP had raised the issue they considered to be most important while voting.

Table 2
Most Important Issue in Voting and Who Raised It

Issues	All	BJP raised it	Congress raised it
Price Rise	26	54	28
Unemployment	17	68	25
Corruption	14	55	26
Drinking water	8	47	33
Women security	6	59	34
Lack of development	6	42	16

Note: All figures are in percentages.

Source: National Election Study (NES)-Post Poll Survey conducted by CSDS, Sample Size-1118

Not only this, the primacy given to BJP is also established by Table 3 which explicitly shows that for better administration and leadership, to promote national security and development as well as to ensure communal harmony, the respondents considered BJP far better than the Congress. More than one third of the BJP voters (38 percent) had decided whom to vote for even before the start of the campaign and this confidence in the party got further consolidated as the campaigning progressed.

Table 3
Which Political Party is Better For...

Issues	BJP	Congress
Administration	55	30
Protecting religious sentiments	54	30
National security	56	27
Better leadership	55	28

Note: All figures are in percentages.

Source: NES-Post Poll Survey conducted by CSDS, Sample Size-1118

The Modi Factor

The factors mentioned above may well explain the victory of any political party in a given situation. These are in a way routine reasons which determine electoral outcomes. But there is something more which accounts for the sweeping BJP victory in Rajasthan as in so many other parts of the country. This is the Modi factor which provided a great momentum to the electoral prospects of the BJP. Rajasthan is an immediate neighbour of Gujarat, where Narendra Modi has been the Chief Minister for more than a decade. His powerful leadership and 'stories' of development of Gujarat have led people in the state to contrast weak Congress leadership with Modi's strong administration and supposedly zero-corruption governance. What has further helped in creating a halo around Modi's persona is the presence of a number of Rajasthanis in different parts of Gujarat who visit their home towns and villages on a regular basis and narrate the 'success story' of Gujarat. This is the reason why nearly two third of the respondents from Rajasthan regarded Gujarat as the best developed state of India.

The ‘Modi wave’ in Rajasthan is further substantiated by the fact that 42 percent of the respondents felt that the overwhelming BJP victory in the Assembly election was due to the campaigning done by Narendra Modi. Only 7 percent attributed the BJP victory to the leadership of Vasundhara Raje. Interestingly, about one third of the respondents opined that during voting they gave more importance to the prime ministerial candidate as compared to local candidate or state level leadership and of these nearly two third voted for the BJP. In a similar fashion, 43 percent of the BJP voters stressed that if Narendra Modi had not been the BJP’s prime ministerial candidate, they would have voted for some other party. This was much greater than the national average of 27 percent.

Social Basis of Voting

Having explained the reasons which led to the emphatic BJP triumph in Rajasthan, we now seek to answer the second question as to from where did the BJP get its support. Is there any substance in the claim that the mandate reflected a great unification of the Indian electorate and the party got support cutting across regions, social communities, economic classes, age groups and the gender divide?

Table 4
Rajasthan - Vote by Education, Class and Media Exposure in 2014 Lok Sabha Election

	Congress	BJP
Vote by Education		
Non Literate	34	52
Upto Primary	31	52
Upto Matric	31	53
College and above	22	62
Vote by Economic Class		
Poor	42	50
Lower	39	47
Middle	25	57
Rich	26	63

Vote by Media Exposure		
Very Low	33	51
Low	35	50
Moderate	25	62
High	27	56

Note: All figures are in percentages.

Source: NES-Post Poll Survey conducted by CSDS, Sample Size-1118

A close look at the post poll survey data helps us in answering this question. Table 4 shows emerging patterns along some of the social cleavages. The BJP enjoys greater support among the first time voters, middle and rich classes and those who are more educated. Interestingly, the party has done well among voters who have greater exposure to media. The Congress has more takers among the poor, less educated with limited media exposure and those in the middle age category. As people receive more education and move up the economic ladder, the possibility of voting for BJP increases. Successive election surveys in the state of Rajasthan have shown this trend. But, it must be noted that the BJP performed better than the Congress among all categories.

Proportionately, the BJP continued to receive more support from the urban areas as compared to rural areas. Still, it cannot be denied that the BJP has expanded to the rural areas as well, as the gap between the BJP and Congress was more than 20 percentage points even in rural areas. This expansion of BJP into the rural belt is the biggest success story considering the fact that nearly three-fourth of the state’s population still resides in the rural areas. An interesting pattern in the state is that the average turnout in the 7 urban and semi urban seats was greater than turnout in the rural constituencies (Table 5)

The BJP has traditionally done exceedingly well among upper castes like Brahmins, Rajputs and the trading communities. In the 2014 elections, it was being feared that the Rajputs and the Brahmins will desert the party because tickets were not given to important leaders from these communities. Table 6 disproves this. But the real success story on the social platform is

Table 5

Rajasthan - Vote by Locality in 2014 Lok Sabha Election

Locality	Total Seats	Turnout (%)	Congress		BJP		BSP		Others	
			Won	Vote (%)	Won	Vote (%)	Won	Vote (%)	Won	Vote (%)
Rural	18	62.3	0	30.7	18	53.4	0	1.5	0	14.4
Semi Urban	6	66.1	0	30.3	6	57.2	0	5.1	0	7.4
Urban	1	66.4	0	25.0	1	66.6	0	0.4	0	8

Source: Analysis of ECI Data by CSDS Data Unit

Table 6
Rajasthan - Vote by Community in 2004, 2009,
and 2014 Lok Sabha Elections

Social groups	2004		2009		2014	
	Congress	BJP	Congress	BJP	Congress	BJP
Brahmins	25	61	26	74	25	68
Rajputs	14	81	36	55	13	66
Jats	52	48	41	59	25	50
OBC	37	54	37	42	27	61
Dalits	52	27	66	21	42	47
Tribals	47	38	55	17	28	57
Muslims	86	12	82	13	55	38

Note: All figures are in percentages.

Source: NES-Post Poll Survey conducted by CSDS in 2004, 2009 and 2014

the tremendous surge in support which the party received from among the OBCs, Dalits, Adivasis and more significantly among the Muslims. Compared to earlier elections, the BJP struck a severe blow to the Congress by broadening its support base among these social segments. This also suggests that contrary to many other parts of the country where voter volatility has stabilized, in Rajasthan it continues to remain high even though the state has no influential political party which draws on identity as its support base. The BSP, even after so many years, is yet to make its presence felt in the state and no better has been the experience of Social Justice Front and other splinter groups. Both BJP and the Congress have tended to be catch-all political parties. The 2014 mandate has repaired the skewed nature of BJP support in the sense that its dependence on the forward castes has come down significantly in these elections. It appears to be aping the Congress of yesteryears by forging a rainbow coalition. The phenomenal BJP

² Of the 25 BJP Lok Sabha members, there are 7 Jats, 4 Rajputs, 2 Brahmin, 2 Vaishya, 3 OBC, 4 SC (reserved seats) and 3 ST (reserved seats). Thus the dominant peasant Jat community and the forward castes find disproportionate representation in the state at the expense of more backward communities and the Muslims.

victory is thus an outcome of the party's forward march among the intermediate, backward and the deprived socio-religious groups in rural Rajasthan. However, this social engineering is yet to find its place in the social profile of the elected representatives, an overwhelming number of those continue to come from the forward castes and the dominant peasant Jat community.²

Conclusion

Does this mandate mean that the Congress in Rajasthan is going to meet the same fate that the party is confronted with in neighbouring Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh and a distant Chhattisgarh? Probably not as the social base of the party, even after its worst ever defeat, continues to be balanced among the major social groups. Table 7 indicates that as compared to the BJP there is a greater stability in the social profile of Congress voters. This gives the party the potential of bouncing back. The party can also derive some relief from this fact that despite miserable performance in the 2013 Assembly and 2014 General elections, electoral contest in the state continues to be dominated by the two national players.

Table 7

Rajasthan - Social Profile of Congress, BJP Voters in 2004, 2009, and 2014 Lok Sabha Elections

Social Groups	2004		2009		2014	
	Congress	BJP	Congress	BJP	Congress	BJP
Upper Castes	9	32	12	31	10	24
Jats	14	11	9	15	12	13
OBC	25	33	21	32	18	22
Dalits	18	8	29	12	22	13
Tribals	15	10	15	6	13	15
Muslim	17	2	13	2	20	8
Others	2	3	1	2	5	5

Note: All figures are in percentages.

Source: NES-Post Poll Survey conducted by CSDS in 2004, 2009 and 2014

The Congress in the state can also draw comfort from the post poll survey data which has clearly established people's appreciation of the extensive welfare network spread by the Ashok Gehlot government. That the party could not reap political dividends from this is more because of the pervasive anti-incumbency against the central government and the Modi factor.

And yet it is the BJP which is in a commanding position in the state at present. The party has shattered all previous electoral records by achieving phenomenal support. It has spread out to new social groups and consolidated its traditional support base. Its social acceptability has increased manifold and so has its regional reach. For the Congress what is more threatening is the fact that educational and economic mobility among the people of the state has strengthened the BJP. The rising middle class and the growing young population are both firm supporters of the party. With the party holding political power both at the state and the central level, there is golden opportunity for it to change the nature of political competition in the state by squeezing the Congress out of the contest and paving the way for one party domination like in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Much will depend upon how the two governments perform. If the two governments do not fulfil the 'revolution of rising expectations' the Newtonian law still holds true.

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