

2014 Lok Sabha Elections: BJP all the Way in Uttar Pradesh

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There was general anticipation before the 2014 Lok Sabha election among scholars and political commentators about a good performance by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and a below par performance by the Congress, the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in Uttar Pradesh. However, nobody had envisaged the kind of victory the BJP managed in the state by decimating all three major rivals. This election will be remembered for the phoenix-like rise of the BJP and the complete annihilation of the opposition in the state. The BJP contested the 2014 election with the Apna Dal while the Congress had an alliance with Ajit Singh's Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and the Mahan Dal. The BSP and SP did not tie up with any party and contested the election alone.

Many issues were brought to the forefront in this election apart from caste, which continues to remain an important determinant in the Hindi heartland. Several prominent issues were raised by various parties - the dismal performance of the Congress at the centre, the poor performance of the SP government in UP, the riots in Muzaffarnagar and the consequent communal rhetoric by leaders from various political parties. The BJP ran two parallel campaigns in the state - while Narendra Modi focused on developmental issues and highlighted his Gujarat Model, the RSS and local leaders of the party stressed on Hindutva. Narendra Modi's belligerent campaigning in the state put both the central incumbent - the Congress and the state incumbent - the SP, on the defensive. They were unable to give a

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fitting reply to the charges of sub-par performance that he raised against them.

Though the Modi wave was evident in the state even during the campaign, not many discerned it to be as strong and effective as it turned out to be. The results showed a complete annihilation of the BSP and a near total rout of the Congress and the SP. The BJP was able to improve upon its previous best performance in 1998, when it had won 53 seats with a vote share of 36 percent. If we dig deeper into these results we would be able to unearth the finer nuances of this verdict and the subtle determining factors.

Electoral Arithmetic

The BJP's performance in 2009 had remained static at a low of 10 seats even though its vote share declined by 4.7 percentage points as compared to 2004. Due to a gradual dormancy of its mass organizational base in the state and the absence of strong state level leadership, the BJP had support even among its core constituency - the upper castes. In the 2012 Assembly election, its vote share had come down to 15 percent. 2014 was a different story altogether for the party as it got 42.3 percent of the total votes polled and swept the state by winning 71 seats on its own (*Table 1*). The SP which was placed second got 22.18 percent votes, as compared to 23.25 percent in 2009. The BSP got 19.62 percent votes, as compared to 27.41 percent in 2009. The Congress could only get 7.47 percent votes, coming down from 18.25 percent in 2009.

The aggregate result in terms of seats is reflected in every region as the BJP swept all six regions of the state (*Table 2*). But looking at vote shares, we find interesting trends in each region. Ruhelkhand for instance seems to have been a direct contest between the SP and the BJP as both the BSP and the INC performed worse than their state average in this region. Though the Congress seems to fare much better in Avadh as compared to other regions, the figure is misleading as the party's votes were concentrated in Amethi and Rae Bareilly. Eastern UP (Poorvanchal), Doab and Bundelkhand seem to be clear BJP victories. In the riot affected Western UP region,

Table 1
Lok Sabha Elections 2014 in Uttar Pradesh

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Seat Change from 2009	Vote (%)	Vote Change from 2009
UPA	78	2	-24	8.35	-13.29
Congress	67	2	-19	7.47	-10.78
RLD	8	0	-5	0.85	-2.42
Mahan Dal	3	0	0	0.03	-0.09
NDA	80	73	63	43.32	24.98
BJP	78	71	61	42.32	24.82
Apna Dal	2	2	2	1.00	0.16
SP	78	5	-18	22.18	-1.07
BSP	80	0	-20	19.62	-7.79
NOTA	80	0	0	0.73	0.73
Other Parties	972	0	-1	5.80	-3.56

Source: ECI Data compiled by Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) Data Unit.

there is an indication of communal polarization in favour of BJP as the party's vote share was around 50 percent, much higher than its average vote share of 42.3 percent. Differences in the spatial distribution of the support base of political parties make number of seats an inaccurate indicator of party performance in the state. The Congress with a vote share of 7.4 percent got two seats, while the BSP with almost one fifth of the votes couldn't even manage to win a single seat.

We now look at this verdict and view it from different angles using survey data from the National Election Study 2014 conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. Looking at how voters with different levels of education voted, we find that support for the BJP increases as we move from non-literate voters to higher categories, reaching 51 percent

Table 2
Uttar Pradesh Region Wise Results Lok Sabha Elections 2014

	Total Seats	INC+		BJP+		BSP		SP		Others	
		Seats Won	Vote %	Seats Won	Vote %	Seats Won	Vote %	Seats Won	Vote %	Seats Won	Vote %
Ruhelkhand	10	0	4.3	9	42.6	0	17.7	1	31.4	0	4.0
Avadh	13	2	17.8	11	39.6	0	21.3	0	15.5	0	5.7
East	30	0	6.0	29	41.2	0	20.6	1	22.0	0	10.2
West	9	0	9.8	9	50.2	0	18.5	0	17.8	0	3.7
Doab	14	0	6.9	11	46.1	0	18.0	3	25.2	0	3.8
Bundelkhand	4	0	6.6	4	45.0	0	20.6	0	22.1	0	5.6
Total	80	2	8.4	73	43.3	0	19.6	5	22.2	0	6.5

Source: ECI Data compiled by CSDS Data Unit

Table 3
Party Voted by level of Education

	INC+	BJP+	BSP	SP
Non Literate	6	34	29	25
Upto Primary	11	39	22	24
Upto Matric	10	45	18	22
College and above	8	51	13	19

Note: All figures are in percent; Sample Size - 2569

Source: National Election Study 2014 conducted by CSDS

among those who have studied up to college level and above. It shows that the resonance of the appeal of the BJP was more pronounced among the relatively higher educated sections. It is interesting to note though that the gains that the BJP made in each of these categories as compared to 2012 Vidhan Sabha were almost similar at around 25 percent. The pattern is completely opposite for the BSP and the SP who mainly draw votes among the less educated sections (See Table 3).

Similarly, if we examine electoral preferences of voters residing in rural and urban areas, we see that the BJP dominated in all seats. Still one cannot conclude that there was no rural urban divide as the party's vote share in semi urban and urban seats was much higher than its vote share in rural seats. While the SP and the Congress had almost the same vote share in rural and semi urban seats, there was a major difference for the BSP (See Table 4).

Table 5 shows how the BJP has managed to build a massive social coalition with all social groups except the Muslims. The party was also able to make a dent among core constituencies of the SP and BSP. Among Dalits, a divergence seems to be emerging in the voting preferences of Jatav and Non Jatav Dalits. The BJP's vote share increased among both and it made heavy inroads among Non Jatav Dalits. It got more votes than BSP among Non Jatav Dalits. Interestingly, despite BJP's gains, the BSP was able to hold on to its Jatav vote as it increased marginally as compared to 2012. Similarly, the BJP was also able to expand support among the

Table 4

Party Voted by Locality

	Total Seats	INC+		BJP+		BSP		SP		Others	
		Seats Won	Vote %	Seats Won	Vote %	Seats Won	Vote %	Seats Won	Vote %	Seats Won	Vote %
Rural	60	2	7.7	54	41.2	0	20.8	4	23.2	0	7.0
Semi Urban	17	0	8.7	16	48.1	0	16.6	1	21.2	0	5.4
Urban	3	0	19.6	3	55.1	0	13.6	0	7.4	0	4.3

Note: All figures are in percent; Vote share of Others includes none of the above or NOTA votes.

Source: ECI Data compiled by CSDS Data Unit

Yadavs by getting a vote share of almost 27 percent, an increase of around 18 percentage points as compared to 2012. The BJP also secured majority of the votes among other OBC groups (61 percent) and the Kurmis and Koeris (53 percent). The most substantial gains for the BJP in absolute terms were among the Jats as more than three fourth of the voters from the community supported the party. Its vote share increased by a massive 70 percentage points or 11 times from 7 percent in 2012 to 77 percent in 2014. The community which was hitherto considered to be a 'secure' support base of the Ajit Singh led RLD seems to have deserted him and shifted en masse to the BJP in a big way. The primary reason for this seems to be the communal violence in and around Muzaffarnagar in Western UP where the Jats are concentrated. There seems to have been an unprecedented upper caste consolidation in the state. As compared to 2012, the BJP's vote share increased massively among the upper castes as it managed to get more than 70 percent votes among all upper caste groups.

In spite of a series of incidents of communal violence in UP in the last two years and the apparent annoyance of the Muslims *vis-à-vis* SP, the party was able to increase support among the Muslims (58 percent). Deeper research is required to understand why the BSP failed to consolidate Muslim support in the state. The party's efforts of countering the SP government in the state by criticizing it for its handling of the Muzaffarnagar riots and giving tickets to as many as 19 Muslim candidates were expected to reap good electoral benefits. In fact, support for the party among Muslims did not change much as compared to 2012. The cross caste Hindu consolidation seems to have rendered the consolidation of Muslim votes in favour of the SP completely ineffective.

Contrary to media projection, the BSP was able to hold on to its core constituency – the Jatav voters. In fact the party seems to have made gains as compared to the 2012 Vidhan Sabha elections. Still one mustn't forget that this is quite less than the kind of support, the party has consistently enjoyed among the community since 1999. The gains that the BSP had made with its social engineering Sarvajan party seem to have faded as the party's vote share among upper castes has reduced to 4 percentage points as compared to 16 percent in 2012.

The Congress seems to have slipped among all communities. The Muslim vote of the Congress went even lower than the 2012 Assembly election – from 18 percent to 11 percent. Interestingly, support among the community is almost equal to the BJP which had a 10 percent vote share among Muslims. The only other community among whom the Congress has a double digit vote share is the Kurmis and Koeris but even this is almost half of what it had managed in 2009. Absence of a core constituency in a state that sends 80 members to the Lok Sabha is a major worrying point for the Congress and something that needs to be rectified if it hopes for a national revival (See Table 5).

Table 6 shows how the BJP's vote share continues to increase as we move above in income categories. While the party marginally trails the BSP among the poor voters – 31 percent as compared to the BSP's 33

Table 5

Party Voted by Caste/Community in the 2014 Lok Sabha Election in Uttar Pradesh

Caste/Community	INC+	BJP+	BSP	SP
Brahmin	11	72	5	5
Rajput	7	77	5	8
Vaishya*	13	71	4	10
Jat*	13	77	6	4
Other Upper castes*	3	79	2	8
Yadav	8	27	3	53
Kurmi Koeri	16	53	4	17
Other OBC	8	61	11	13
Jatav	2	18	68	4
Other SC	4	45	30	11
Muslim	11	10	18	58
Others	10	51	20	17

Note: All figures are in percent; *Figures should be read with caution due to low sample size; Sample Size - 2569

Source: National Election Study 2014 conducted by CSDS

percent, it managed to have a solid lead among all other sections. It is interesting to note though higher than other parties, the BJP's vote share among the middle class (41 percent) was lower than its vote share among the lower class (46 percent). The BJP did make higher gains among the upper sections as its vote share among the rich increased by 34 percentage points as compared to 2012 while the increase among the poor voters was lower at 19 percentage points. An exact opposite trend can be seen in the performance of the BSP as it got 12 percent votes among the rich and one third of the votes among the poor. There seems to be no class pattern in support for the SP; this could probably be attributed to high support among most sections of Muslims.

Table 6
Party Voted by Economic Class

	INC+	BJP+	BSP	SP
Poor	6	31	33	25
Lower	8	46	19	22
Middle	10	41	19	23
Rich	9	51	12	20

Note: All figures are in percent; Sample Size - 2569

Source: National Election Study 2014 conducted by CSDS

There is an age based pattern in support for the BJP as the party had a vote share of more than 50 percent among first time voters. Among elder voters (56 and above), support for the party drops to 41 percent. The only other party which has some difference based on age category is the BSP which gets almost the same percentage of votes among all sections except the first time voters. Support for the BSP is slightly lower among first time voters at around 16 percent as compared to its average vote share of 19.6 percent (See Table 7).

Table 7
Party Voted by Age Group

	INC+	BJP+	BSP	SP
18-22 years	8	51	16	22
23- 35 years	8	44	21	22
36 - 55 years	9	42	19	22
56 and above	8	41	20	22

Note: All figures are in percent; Sample Size - 2569

Source: National Election Study 2014 conducted by CSDS

National Issues and Leadership

If we look at factors which affected the outcome of this election, we find that one major reason responsible for the massive victory of the BJP was the disillusionment of voters with the UPA government at the centre and the SP government in the state. Dissatisfaction with the central government at 47 percent was almost as much as the national average (46 percent) while dissatisfaction with the state government (47 percent) was much higher than the national average of (36 percent).

Another reason could be the unprecedented rise of Narendra Modi, ably assisted by the media which elevated his popularity. This seems to be the big story of the 2014 election in Uttar Pradesh. Modi was glorified to such an extent that all other parties and their leaders looked small in his comparison. A popular perception was built that he was the only viable alternative to the Congress leadership. If we look at the rise of Modi we see that here was a leader who was the chief minister of a small state with no experience in national politics, having never ever contested a Lok Sabha election earlier. Within a very short span of time, he was able to create a 'saviour' like image in the public eye. The BJP, led by Modi focused on the Gujarat model of growth and development. The individual centric campaign of the BJP was successful in the state as Modi had phenomenal ratings in the state. Narendra Modi's personal rating was higher than the national average in UP – 42 percent as compared to 36 percent nationally. His

attack on the 'first family' of both the SP and the Congress put them on the back-foot and his aggressive campaigning did not let them recover. Voters saw him as decisive and capable of leading the country in the 21st century. While 37 percent of the voters felt that Modi could get things done, less than 9 percent people opted for Manmohan Singh, Rahul Gandhi or Sonia Gandhi. The response was similar when respondents were asked to name a leader who according cares more for people and a leader who is trustworthy.

We can also discern by looking at the results that the electorate was fed up with emotive issues and were eager to back a party and leader who appeared to be ready and willing to take up developmental issues. They had enough of the indecisiveness of UPA. One third of the voters felt that the BJP had raised issues and problems which were important for people in the country. Only 7 percent felt so about the Congress. Almost four in every ten voters felt that the Modi was more capable of controlling corruption (39 percent) and price rise (42 percent). The combined rating of Manmohan Singh, Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi on these parameters was less than 10 percent. The BJP was able to convert the high popularity of Narendra Modi in the state into votes for its candidates.

In UP, a major factor which worked to the advantage of the BJP was the communal polarization, consequent to riots in Muzaffarnagar. The communal rhetoric employed by many BJP leaders like Sangeet Som who have been accused of inciting the riots seems to have led to some local level consolidation of votes of the majority community in favour of the party. This is amply reflected in the gains which it registered across caste categories among Hindus and the counter polarization of Muslim votes in favour of the SP. In fact, this time the BJP played the Hindutva card very deftly, while Modi was constantly talking about development and his lower caste background, state BJP leaders and the RSS, were carefully playing the Hindutva card. Alongside the Hindutva discourse, the BJP had a well thought over road-map for development, and it was successful in connecting with voters across all divides. But for the Muslims, the BJP had something to offer to all sections. Therefore, the Muslim vote became dispensable in comparison to this grand collective.

Conclusion

The election result indicated that governance which was a positive factor for the Congress in the 2009 Lok Sabha election, turned out to be a negative factor for it this time, owing to its dismal performance on this count. After ruling for two consecutive terms the UPA was adversely affected by an anti-incumbency sentiment. Poor governance, rampant corruption in the government and anti-incumbency formed a deadly concoction which reduced the Congress to this position. Chances of survival of the party in at least UP are strongly connected to its ability to discover a core constituency. The BJP was able to sell a dream to the electorate which lapped it. This unprecedented rise of the BJP has aroused a lot of expectations among the electorate and here lies the real test. It was obviously difficult to get such a mandate but it would be even more difficult to live up to the expectations that accompany it. What remains to be seen is whether the BJP would be able to hold onto this grand social coalition as inter caste tensions would pose a major threat to its stability. For the regional parties – the SP and the BSP, the challenge is very clear. They need to not only consolidate support among their core constituencies but also reinvent their ideology to attract voters outside their core domain.

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