

## The Bahujan Vote in 2014 Elections: Voting Pattern Among Dalits, Adivasis, and Backward Castes

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This paper aims to trace the voting pattern among Dalits, Adivasis and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Bahujan literary means 'majority of people' and this idea traces its history to social movements that emerged in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to some estimates, these three communities constitute approximately 70 percent of the Indian population with 8.6 percent Scheduled Tribes, 16.6 percent Scheduled Castes, and 43.7 percent OBCs.<sup>2</sup> The rise of backward castes movements gave impetus to formation of several political parties that exclusively mobilized these groups. The 1990s of Indian politics became a watershed moment that saw mobilization of Dalits, especially in northern India, by Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Kanshiram, the founder of the BSP, popularized the term bahujans by emphasizing that bahujans must acquire political power or they will have no future.<sup>3</sup> The post-Mandal politics saw a significant increase in participation of the bahujan community in electoral process was famously described as the "second democratic upsurge".<sup>4</sup> This changed the nature of Indian politics forever.

For much of the last decade, the Dalits largely supported Congress and the BSP<sup>5</sup>, Adivasis mostly supported the Congress and BJP<sup>6</sup> and the voting pattern among the OBCs was largely dependent on the nature of political competition.<sup>7</sup> In the 2014 elections the BJP succeeded in forming an unprecedented coalition of social groups. The party while retaining its upper caste support base managed to win a fairly large share of votes among Dalits, Adivasis, and OBCs<sup>8</sup>. This paper explains the voting pattern among the bahujans in the 2014 elections. Data from the National Election Study 2014 shows that there has been a significant shift in the voting preference of the bahujans. They have always voted in large numbers either for the Congress or for other regional parties. But this election brought a change in this pattern and a significant proportion of bahujans voted for the BJP.

### Dalit Voting Pattern:

In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP emerged as a major recipient of Dalit votes as its vote share among the community increased by 12 percentage points, whereas the Congress' share declined by 8 percentage points. The BSP since its inception secured a greater slice of Dalit vote share. As Figure 1 shows, the BSP consistently received around one fifth of the Dalit vote share but its vote share decreased by 6 percentage points in 2014 as compared to the 2009 general elections.

<sup>5</sup> Verma, Rahul (2009). "Dalit Voting Patterns" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44(39), 95-98

<sup>6</sup> Vaid, Divya (2009). "Electoral participation among the Adivasi Community" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44(39), 102-105

<sup>7</sup> Alam, Sanjeer (2014) 'OBC support for BJP signals the end of caste politics'. The Hindu (website), June 1, 2014; [Online] Available at <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/obc-support-for-bjp-signals-the-end-of-caste-politics/article6070387.ece>; Accessed on 17/9/2014

<sup>8</sup> Chhibber, Pradeep and Verma, Rahul 'It is Modi, not BJP that won this elections', The Hindu (website), June 1, 2014; [Online] Available <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/it-is-modi-not-bjp-that-won-this-election/article6070375.ece?rel=relatedNews>; Accessed on 19/9/2014

<sup>1</sup> Authors are associated with Lokniti, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies

<sup>2</sup> Figures for SCs and STs are from Census 2011. No full caste census has been taken in India since 1931; therefore the figures for OBCs are taken from the report prepared by Mandal Commission.

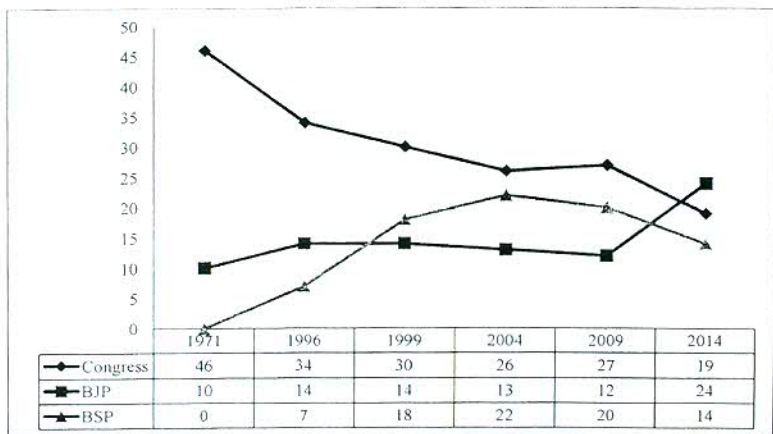
<sup>3</sup> G. P. D. (2006). "An Ideology of and for the 'Many'" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41(43/44), 4529-4530

<sup>4</sup> Yadav, Yogendra. 1999. Understanding the Second democratic Upsurge, 120-145, in Frankel, Francine R et al. *Transforming India: social and political dynamics of democracy*. New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press.

The BJP managed to win a large number of constituencies reserved for Dalits. There are 84 Parliamentary Constituencies which are reserved for schedule castes. Out of these 84 constituencies, the BJP won 40 seats which was 28 more than the 2009 Lok Sabha election. BJP's allies won 9 seats reserved constituencies. All together, the BJP and its allies won more than half of the SC reserved seats. The BSP failed to secure even a single seat in these reserved constituencies. An important aspect which can explain the BJP's outperformance among Dalit voters is the pre-election alliance with Dalit parties and leaders in various states; for instance, Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) in Bihar, Republican Party of India (Athvale) in Maharashtra and the induction of Udit Raj, a Dalit leader in Delhi. This strategic move of the BJP actually gave it an advantage among Dalit voters.

Figure 1

Schedule Caste (SC) Voting Pattern: 1971-2014



Note: All figures are in percentage. Data is weighted by actual vote share of the parties in these Lok Sabha Elections. In 1971 the Jan Sangh's vote share has mentioned in BJP's row. The BSP was not there in 1971. Rest voted for other parties.

Source: National Election Studies conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies

Table 1  
State wise SC Voting Pattern: NES 2014

State	Dominant SC group	Congress	BJP	Regional party
Chhattisgarh	All SCs	37(+6)	BSP 16 (-10)Others 5 (+3)	
Himachal Pradesh	All SCs	31 (-7)	Other parties 7 (-1)	
Madhya Pradesh	Jatav	39 (+16)	BSP 13 (-13)Other parties 2 (-1)	
	Other SCs	45 (-5)	BSP 3(-2)Other parties 1 (-16)	
Rajasthan	Jatav	47 (+27)	BSP 6 (+5)Other parties 4 (-1)	
	Other SCs	46(+26)	BSP 0 (0)Other parties 11 (+11)	
Uttarakhand	All SCs	42 (+21)	BSP 17 (-10)Other parties 9 (0)	
Bihar	Jatav	22(+14)	JD(U)19 (+2)RJD 9 (-3)Other parties 43 (-15)	
	Pasi	40 (+31)	JD(U) 8 (-10)RJD=8 (-21)Other parties 41 (+2)	
	Other SCs	27 (+11)	JD(U) 35 (+19)RJD 7 (-1)Other parties 29 (-23)	
Haryana	Jatav	18 (+14)	BSP 21 (-47)Other Parties=17 (+17)	
	Other SCs	21 (+12)	BSP 3 (-13)Other Parties 39 (+26)	
Jharkhand	All SCs	39 (+21)	JMM 0 (-11)JVM 23 (+14)Other parties 31 (-12)	
Maharashtra	Mahar	17 (+7)	BSP 10 (-25 )Other parties 38(+4)	
	All SCs	23 (+16)	BSP 3 (-10)Other parties 53 (-8)	
Orissa	Pano	22 (+7)	BID 33 (- 8)Other parties 0 (-7)	
	Kewat	18 (+6)	BJD 56 (+ 19)Other Parties 0 (-5)	
	Other SCs	15 (+4)	BJD 31 (-3)Other Parties 6 (+6)	

Punjab	All SCs	42 (-8)	8 (-1)	SAD 19 (-3)BSP 4 (-13)AAP 21(+21)Other parties 6 (+4)
Delhi	Jatav	14 (-29)	32 (+19)	BSP 16 (-24)AAP 38 (+38)Other parties 0 (-3)
	Other SCs	21 (-47)	32 (+10)	BSP 0 (-10)AAP 43 (+43)Other parties 2
Uttar Pradesh	Jatav	2 (-2)	17 (+12)	BSP 69 (-16)SP 4 (-1)Other parties 5 (+4)
	Pasi	3 (-17)	31 (+21)	BSP 38 (-30)SP 16 (+14)Other parties 13 (+13)
	Other SCs	7 (-10)	47 (+35)	BSP 27 (-27)SP 10 (-7)Other parties 10 (+10)
West Bengal	Rajbanshis	8 (-1)	27 (+20)	AITC 34 (+14)Left 29 (-28)Other parties 2 (-5)
	Namashudras	6 (+2)	22 (+12)	AITC 42 (+24)Left 31 (-13)Other Parties 0(-24)
	Other SCs	8 (+4)	17 (+9)	AITC 42 (+21)Left 29 (-35)Other parties 3 (0)
Andhra Pradesh	Madiga	12 (-29)	7 (+6)	TDP 20 (-33)Other Parties 61 (+56)
	Mala	7 (-40)	3 (+2)	TDP 23 (-1)Other Parties 67 (+39)
	Other SCs	14 (-29)	8 (+6)	TDP 18 (-13)Other parties 60 (+36)
Karnataka	Madiga	32 (-30)	68 (+43)	JDS 0 (-10)Other parties 0 (-3)
	Adi Karnataka	55 (+3)	25 (+3)	JDS 8 (-2)Other parties 12 (-4)
	Bhovi	40(-3)	50(+7)	JDS 10 (+2)Other parties 0 (-6)
	Other SCs	20 (-18)	42 (+2)	JDS 29 (+20)Other parties 10 (-3)
Kerala	All SCs	15 (-5)	5 (+2)	LDF 76(+2)Other parties 1 (-2)
Tamil Nadu	All SCs	3 (-15)	3 (+1)	AIADMK 41(+19)DMK 29 (+6)Other Parties 14 (-11)

Note: All figures are in percentage. Data is weighted by actual vote share of the parties. The numbers have been rounded off to the nearest whole number hence, may not add up to 100. Rest opted for NOTA option.

Source: NES 2014 Post Poll Survey conducted by CSDS

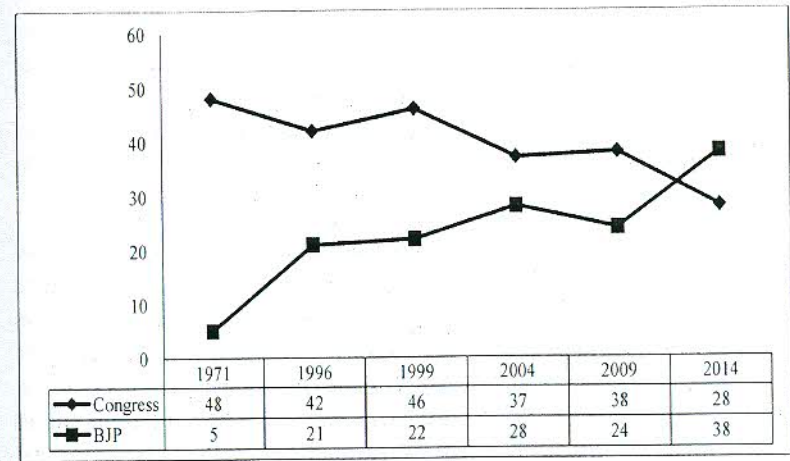
The BJP's vote share among Dalits has improved substantially, with an exception of few states like Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. The sufferer of this vote shift is primarily the BSP which lost support base amongst its core group *Jatavs* as well as amongst other Dalits. A new entrant, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won a large chunk of the Dalit votes in Punjab and Delhi. The Congress also managed to improve its Dalit vote share in few states such as Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Maharashtra. In states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, the regional parties secured a major chunk of the Dalit votes.

**Voting Pattern of the Adivasis**

The Adivasis have largely supported the Congress party in the past and this pattern continued even with the emergence of state parties in various parts

Figure 2

Schedule Tribe Voting Pattern: 1971-2014



Note: All figures are in percentage. Data is weighted by actual vote share of the parties in these Lok Sabha Elections. In 1971 the Jan Sangh's vote share has been mentioned in BJP's row. Rest voted for other parties.

Source: National Election Studies conducted by CSDS

of India during 1990s. In the 2009 Lok Sabha election, the Congress had secured a vote share of 38 percent among the Adivasis (Figure 2). Until the recent Lok Sabha election, the BJP had never really managed to do well among the STs and the Congress used to manage to do well among them. The 2014 Lok Sabha election was a standout election for the party. The BJP did exceedingly well in comparison to the Congress as far Adivasi votes were concerned. In the 2014 election, the BJP's vote share among tribals saw an increase of 14 percentage points as compared to the previous Lok Sabha elections, whereas the Congress saw a decline of 10 percentage points. The vote share of left also declined by 2 percent and the BSP on the other hand saw a rise of 2 percent in its vote share. The gap between the BJP and the Congress which was 15 percentage points in favour of the latter in 2009 changed to 5 points in favour of the former.

To ensure political representation for schedule tribes who have historically been a marginalized group in Indian politics, the constitution has reserved 47 seats in the Lok Sabha. Madhya Pradesh has a significant number of tribal population due to which it has six Lok Sabha constituencies reserved for them which is the highest in India, followed by Jharkhand and Orissa which has 5 seats reserved for the STs. The Congress won only 5 reserved seats and lost 15 reserved seats from the 2009 Lok Sabha elections. On the other hand, BJP secured 27 seats in 2014 compared to its tally of 14 seats in the 2009 elections.

As the Post poll data shows, in 2014 elections there was a shift of tribal vote from the Congress to the BJP, we tried to look at the voting pattern among the dominant Adivasi groups in various states of India. Seven states having 10 percent or more tribal population have been taken for this analysis. These include Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan. At the state level, we can extract different stories from different states. the BJP performed better than the Congress everywhere except for the state of Chhattisgarh and Odisha. In Odisha, the majority of the tribal vote went to the Biju Janta Dal (BJD). The best performance of the BJP was in Assam where its vote share increased by 32 percentage points among the Bodo community and 18 percentage points

Table 2  
State Wise ST Voting Pattern: Lok Sabha Election 2014

State	Dominant ST group	Congress	BJP	Regional Party
Assam	Bodo	8 (-29)	39 (+32)	AGP 0 (-3) Other parties 53(0)
	Other STs	29 (-3)	32 (+18)	AGP 8 (-10) Other parties 31 (-5)
Chhattisgarh	Gond/Rajgond	37 (-1)	51 (+8)	Other Parties 11 (-8)
	Other STs	56 (+3)	33 (-3)	Other parties 11(0)
Gujarat	Bhil	22 (-46)	56 (+30)	Other parties 22 (+16)
	Other STs	54 (+7)	37 (-7)	Other parties 9 (0)
Jharkhand	Oraon	20 (+4)	40 (+26)	JMM 17 (+17) JVM 6 (+6)
		0 (-5)	33 (+19)	Other parties 17 (-53)
	Santhal	0 (-5)	33 (+19)	JMM 0 (-39) JVM 0 (-27) Other parties 67 (+51)
Munda		15 (-3)	48 (-11)	JMM 0 (-5) JVM 7 (+7)
				Other parties 30 (+12)

Other STs	7 (-13)	47 (-26)	JMM 7 (+2) JVM 30 (+27) Other parties 10 (-41)
Madhya Pradesh			
Gond/Rajgond	43 (+4)	54 (+7)	Other parties 3 (-11)
Other STs	40 (-16)	50 (+14)	Other parties 10 (+2)
Orissa			
All STs	32 (-15)	18 (-7)	BJD 44 (+18) Other parties 7 (+5)
Rajasthan			
Mina	25 (-14)	33(+22)	Other parties 17 (-33)
Bhil	24 (-69)	76 (+69)	Other parties 0 (0)
Other STs	60 (+8)	20 (-28)	Other Parties 20 (+20)

Note: All figures are in percentage. Data is weighted by actual vote share of the parties. The numbers have been rounded off to the nearest whole number hence, may not add up to 100. Rest opted for NOTA option.

Source: NES 2014 Post Poll Survey conducted by CSDS

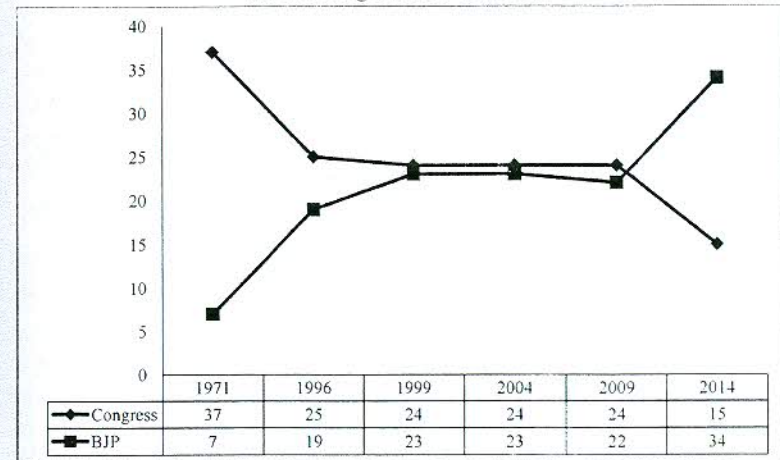
among other tribes. In Gujarat the Congress lost its support among the Bhil community which benefitted the BJP as its vote share increased by 30 percentage points amongst the tribe. Similarly, in Rajasthan, the BJP's vote share has increased amongst two main tribal communities i.e. Mina and Bhil.

Table 2 shows that in all states except Jharkhand there is a greater increase in BJP's vote among the dominant tribal group compared to other tribal groups.

### Voting Pattern of Other Backward Castes

A historical context helps us in understanding that OBCs in the past elections had either voted for the Congress or for regional parties headed by OBC leaders. As we can extract from figure 3, in 1971, 37 percent of

Figure 3  
OBCs Voting Pattern: 1971-2014

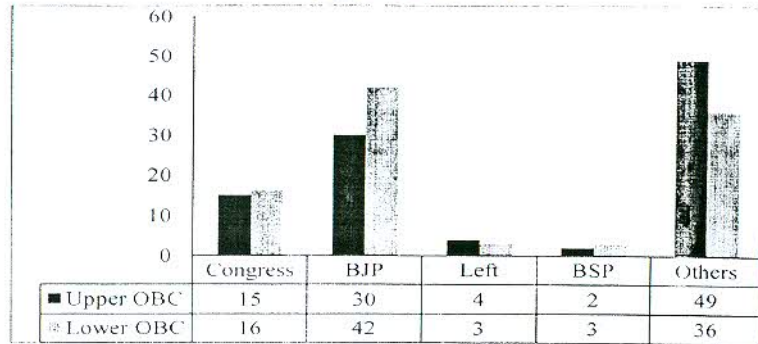


Note: All figures are in percentage. Data is weighted by actual vote share of the parties in these Lok Sabha Elections. In 1971 the Jan Sangh's vote share has been mentioned in BJP's row. Rest voted for other parties.

Source: National Election Studies conducted by CSDS

Figure 4

## Segregation of OBC vote



Note: All figures are in percentage

Source: National Election Studies conducted by CSDS

the lower caste voters voted for the Congress whereas 48 percent of them voted for the other regional parties or candidates. However the Congress was the major recipient of the OBC vote till the last election. But the gap between the Congress and the BJP vote share was narrow with a little edge of two percentage points for the Congress. The 2014 Lok Sabha election showed a reversal of the trend and the gap increased to 19 percentage points in favour of the BJP. In comparison to its own performance of 2009, the BJP received 12 percentage points more votes among the OBC voters.

Nonetheless, regional players also secured a large pie of OBC votes, but when we segregate OBCs into upper and lower OBCs we clearly see that it was the lower OBC who largely voted for the BJP. As Figure 4 indicates, 30 percent of upper OBCs voted for the BJP and 49 percent of them voted for regional parties. A different picture emerges when we look at the voting preferences of the lower OBCs. Among lower OBC's, the BJP and the regional parties got a vote share of 42 and 36 percent respectively.

### The BJP's Performance in Mandal States

Analyzing the states where OBC politics is well played out, also tell us that

Table 3  
The BJP's Performance in Mandal States

State	Dominant OBC castes	Congress	BJP	Regional Party
Bihar	1. Yadav	21(+16)	14(+10)	JD(U) 6 (-4) RJD 44 (-10) Other parties 14 (-13)
	2. Kurmi-Koeri	3 (-1)	15 (-4)	JD(U) 30 (-15) RJD 12 (+7) Other Parties 33 (+6)
	3. Other OBC	5 (-8)	43 (+28)	JD(U) 21 (-10) RJD 8 (-28) Other Parties 24 (+19)
Rajasthan	1. Gujjar2.		27 (+5)	58 (+32) Other parties 15 (-37)
	3. Mali/Sanni 4.		25 (-2)	54 (+29) Other parties 21 (-27)
	5. Other OBC6.		27 (-12)	61 (+9) Other parties 12 (+3)
Uttar Pradesh	1. Yadav	8 (-4)	26 (+20)	SP 55 (-20) BSP 3 (-1) Other Parties 9 (+6)
	2. Koeri-Kurmi	15 (-4)	52 (+36)	SP 18 (+3) BSP 5 (-10) Other parties 11 (-24)
	3. Other OBC	8 (-6)	9 (+32)	SP 14 (-16) BSP 11 (-7) Other parties 9 (-2)
Madhya Pradesh	1. Yadav2.		16 (-31)	70 (+37) Other Parties 14 (-6)
	3. Other OBC	20 (-11)	66 (+18)	Other Parties 14 (-7)

Note: All figures are in percentage. Data is weighted by actual vote share of the parties. The numbers have been rounded off to the nearest whole number hence, may not add up to 100. Rest opted for NO/11 option.

Source: NES 2014 Post Poll Survey conducted by CSDS

BJP did eat into the Congress vote share to some extent. It was the shift of the OBC vote from regional parties which helped the party make major inroads in state such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. In Bihar, the BJP made substantial inroads among the OBCs. The election saw BJP increase its vote share among the Yadavs by 10 percentage points. Yadavs have been traditional RJD supporters in the state. The real gain for the BJP in Bihar came from Non Kurmi Koeri and Non Yadav OBCs among whom the party saw a 28 percentage point rise in its vote share as compared to the last election. This gain largely came from the RJD and the JDU. This development seems interesting as the 2014 election saw a breakup of the BJP JDU alliance and the formation of new alliances in the form of BJP-LJP and RJD-Congress. Another multi polar contest-Uttar Pradesh saw massive shift of OBC voters towards the BJP. In UP the party did take away a sizable chunk of the Yadav vote from the Samajwadi Party (SP) and a good share of the Kurmi Koeri vote from the BSP and smaller regional parties. As far as the other OBC groups in the state are concerned, the BJP took away a heavy chunk from the SP, BSP and the Congress.

In bi-Polar states of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan where there is a direct contest between the BJP and the Congress, the former made considerable gains largely at the expense of smaller regional players. Amongst the OBC communities of Rajasthan, the BJP seems to be the biggest gainer as the party managed to get more than half of the total OBC votes in the state. Again, this remarkable jump comes at the expense of small regional players in some of the areas and at the expense of the Congress in large parts of the state. Madhya Pradesh seems the only state where the BJP seems gained directly at the expense of the Congress. Yadavs in MP overwhelmingly supported the BJP with 70 percent of them (a 37 percentage point jump from the previous elections) voting for the party. The Congress on the other hand lost 31 percent of the OBC votes in Madhya Pradesh as compared to the from 2009 election.

<sup>9</sup> Palshikar, Suhas (2014) A new phase of the polity. *The Hindu*, May 22

## Conclusion

The 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election has been described as an extraordinary election with plebiscitary characteristic.<sup>9</sup> The BJP became the first non-Congress party to win a clear majority and many have suggested that this was primarily due to Narendra Modi's anointment as the BJP's PM candidate<sup>10</sup>. The BJP in 2014 managed to create a grand coalition of social groups -, the upper castes, OBCs, Adivasis and Dalits. The bahujans – who have been core supporters of the Congress and the regional parties shifted towards the BJP in this election.

What can explain this shift? Leadership was one of prime factors which pulled voters from all groups as Modi was rated the highest on the various leadership qualities. When people were asked whether they would have voted for another party, had Modi not been the PM candidate, slightly more than a quarter of the BJP voters said they would have voted for some other party. This clearly shows the Modi factor in these elections. This mood was more evident among OBC BJP voters as compared to SCs and STs and a possible reasoning for this could be that Modi himself is an OBC. The BJP this time also made an attempt to garner the Dalit votes which they had never done before as they considered this community as part of majority Hindu.<sup>11</sup> It is because of this reason that they tried to consolidate Dalit votes and purposefully made some important coalitions in Maharashtra and Bihar.

Apart from strong leadership, various factors like dissatisfaction with the previous government, price rise and corruption also added up in this shift. Modi led BJP was considered to be better placed to deal with the issue of price rise, corruption, development of the country as well as of the marginal section of the society.

<sup>10</sup> Sandeep Shastri (2014) The leadership factor in the 2014 polls. *The Hindu*, May 28

<sup>11</sup> Palshikar, Suhas (2014) Babasaheb and BJP. *The Indian Express*, April 27

## Delhi 2014: AAP Mistakes Enabled BJP's Clean Sweep

Biswajit Mohanty<sup>1</sup>

### 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 (%)
<b>Economic Class</b>		
Upper Class	40	55
Middle Class	38	55
Lower Class	56	40
Poor	48	41
<b>Caste/community</b>		
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