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Assembly Polls 2022 BJP's Transformative Politics in Uttar Pradesh

A.K. Verma

The main thesis of this paper is that Uttar Pradesh has gone through transformative politics since the arrival of Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister (PM) of the country in 2014. This transformation can be seen in a fundamental shift in the politics of the state: from identity politics to aspirational politics, from exclusionary politics to inclusive politics, and from caste politics to class politics. Consequently, the BJP was catapulted from a mere vote-share of 12-15% in UP before 2014 to about 50% in 2019 UP Lok Sabha elections. The performance of BJP had been consistent winning all elections since 2014-LS election (2014), Assembly election (2017), LS election (2019) and Assembly election (2022). The BJP seems to have transformed politics by changing the grammar of politics in India in general, and UP in particular

The Uttar Pradesh (UP) Assembly election 2022 was significant from two angles. One, it was a historic win for the incumbent government as the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) government led by Adityanath Yogi became the first government in a quarter of a century to have been consecutively re-elected to power in UP. Two, it was also very significant as the BJP not only got a second term but also enlarged its vote-share from 39.67% in 2017 to 41.29% in 2022.

Interestingly, the main opposition Samajwadi Party's (SP) voteshare too rose from 29.1% in 2012 and 21.82% in 2017 to 32% in 2022. The SP had formed coalition with Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSPP). However, SP president Akhilesh Yadav handled election campaign without Mulayam Singh Yadav, his father, Shivpal Yadav, his uncle, who had formed a new party, a virtual revolt in family and many Yadav family members shifting to BJP including Mulayam's daughter-in-law - Aparna Yadav. In spite of an accretion of 10.18% in its vote share over 2017, the SP alliance had to be contended with the role of an opposition. The BJP alliance was ahead of the SP alliance by 7.55 percentage points - a massive difference in vote share that created history by giving the Yogi government a second consecutive term.

This paper looks into the following questions -

1. Why the BJP performed in such a spectacular manner in 2022 UP Assembly polls?
2. How Yogi government could enlarge its vote share in 2022 vis-à-vis 2017?

Both the enquiries become significant because the ruling party (BJP) allegedly faced anti-incumbency on such matters as unemployment, demand for restoration of old pension, issue of stray cattle, farmers agitation in western UP, Covid-19 related deaths, and high-handedness in dealing with the criminals and mafias in the state. In doing so, we examine the nature of electoral contestation, the electoral strategy of BJP, Yogi's governance model, the developmental claims of the ruling party, its organisational strength and campaign strategy.

The main thesis of this paper is that Uttar Pradesh has gone through transformative politics since the arrival of Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister (PM) of the country in 2014. This transformation can be seen in a fundamental shift in the politics of the state: from *identity politics to aspirational politics*, from *exclusionary politics to inclusive politics*, and, from *caste politics to class politics*. Consequently, the BJP was catapulted from a mere vote-share of 12-15% in UP before 2014 to about 50% in 2019 UP Lok Sabha

elections. The performance of BJP had been consistent winning all elections since 2014-LS election (2014), Assembly election (2017), LS election (2019) and Assembly election (2022). The BJP seems to have transformed politics by changing the *grammar of politics* in India in general, and, UP in particular (Verma:2022)

Assembly Elections 2022

UP Assembly has 403 seats of which 84 seats are reserved for the scheduled castes (SCs) and two seats are reserved for the scheduled tribes (STs). In all 4442 contestants from 286 political parties and independents participated in 2022 polls. Out of 15.12 crore electors, 60.67% voted in 1.72 lakh polling booths. A total of 356 male and 47 women were elected and 3519 contestants lost their deposits. Not a single independent could be elected. It is interesting to see that about 6.37 lakh voters pressed NOTA button (Election Commission UP Data 2022).

The BJP won absolute majority on its own, winning 255 seats out of 376 that it contested and 41.29% votes. The BJP alliance partners Apna Dal (AD) led by Anupriya Patel won 12 seats and Nishad Party of Dr Sanjay Nishad won six seats. The Janasatta Dal Loktantrik (JDL) of Raghuraj Pratap Singh alias Raja Bhaiyya was sympathetic to the BJP though he was not officially a part of the BJP alliance. Thus, the BJP alliance got 273 seats and 43.82% votes (Table-1).

Table 1: Performance of Political Parties in UP Assembly Polls 2022

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote Percentage
BJP Alliance (Seats: 273/Votes: 43.82%)			
BJP	376	255	41.29
AD	17	12	1.62
NINSHAD Party	10	6	0.91
JDL	16	2	0.21
SP Alliance (Seats: 125/Votes: 36.27%)			
SP	347	111	32.06
RLD	33	8	2.85
SBSP	19	6	1.36
INC	399	2	2.33
BSP	403	1	12.88
CPI	35	0	0.07
CPM	3	0	0.01
NCP	1	0	0.05
Other Parties	1758	0	2.56
Independents	1025	0	1.11
NOTA	-	-	0.69 (637313 Votes)
Total	4442	403	100

Source: The Election Commission of India, UP Assembly Election 2022

The nature of political contestation in UP was primarily bipolar. On one hand, the BJP led alliance; on the other, the Samajwadi Party (SP) led alliance. Akhilesh Yadav, the SP president was very confident of the victory of his alliance and, at one stage, claimed to win 400 out of 403 seats (India Today, 10 January 2022). After having unsuccessful alliances with Rahul Gandhi of Congress in 2017 UP assembly polls and Mayawati of BSP in 2019 Lok Sabha elections in UP, he experimented alliance with smaller parties in 2022 assembly polls. In a sense, the 2022 experiment of Akhilesh Yadav was, by far, the most successful as it raised not only his party seats in UP Assembly but also its vote share. The party won 111 seats and 32% votes - three percent more than the 2012 assembly elections when Akhilesh had formed majority government on his own at a meagre share of 29%. The alliance partners Rashtriya Lok Dal of Jayant Chaudhury got 8 seats and 2.85% votes, and Suheldev party of Om Prakash Rajbhar got 6 seats and 1.36% votes. Thus, the SP led alliance performed very well getting 125 seats and 36.27% votes (Table-1). However, it was way behind the BJP alliance by 7.5 percentage points and, hence, lost badly at the hustings.

UP has also another important player in Mayawati of Bahujan Samaj Party. In 2022 assembly polls, she fielded candidates for all the 403 seats, but for reasons best known to her, Mayawati kept a low profile so much so that the BSP was not seen to be in the contest at all making it bipolar between the BJP alliance and the SP alliance. The BSP got just one seat though still managed 12.88% votes. Congress finished very poorly getting just two seats and a paltry 2.33% votes (Table-1).

BJP PerformanceAnalysed

The UP-assembly elections 2022 could be broadly seen as an electoral contestation between a national party (BJP) and a state party (SP). The national party trounced the state party. However, both the BJP and the SP expanded their vote shares vis-à-vis 2017 assembly polls. The BJP registered vote accretion by 1.62 percentage points, from 39.67% in 2017 to 41.29% in 2022 while the SP recorded an accretion of a massive 10.24 percentage points – from 21.82% in 2017 to 32.06% votes in 2022. Theoretically, the SP was right in thinking of a massive win, but they did not anticipate that the ruling BJP will not only hold on to its 2017 support base but also improve upon that in spite of the price rise, unemployment, demand for restoration of old pension, stray cattle issue, anger against covid-19 and the migrant labour problems etc. There was no sign of anti-incumbency against the Yogi government. The people did not move away from the BJP, rather more and more people were drawn to them.

But why so? To answer this question - why the BJP recorded such a massive win and enlarged its support base - one has to understand the transformation in the politics of UP during past a few years.

A New Grammar of Politics

One has to look a little deeper into the dynamics of Indian politics under Modi's leadership, ably supported by the chief minister, Yogi Adityanath in UP. While other parties and political players tried to look at the UP electors from the traditional perspective of religion and caste, the BJP under Modi-Yogi leadership has brought a paradigm shift in the electoral politics of the state by changing the very *grammar of politics*.

The new *grammar of politics* in UP hinges on three major elements: there is a transformation from *identity politics* to *aspirational politics*, from *exclusionary politics* to *inclusive politics*, and, from *caste politics* to *class politics*.

Identity to Aspiration

Uttar Pradesh had been in the trap of *identity politics* for quite some time - probably since the *second democratic upsurge* (Yadav:1996) in 1989 when the Janata Dal formed government in the state under the chief ministership of Mulayam Singh Yadav on 5 December 1989 displacing the Congress government led by Narayan Dutt Tewari. Since then, the '*other backward caste*' (OBC) became prominent identity in the politics of the state. As Kanshi Ram was trying to bring the Dalits and the OBCs together under one rubric

first through the All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF), and then, the Dalit, Soshit Samaaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS-4), the *dalit-OBC identity* became the most defining element in the politics of Uttar Pradesh during 1990s and thereafter. The acceptance of ‘Mandal Commission’ recommendations by the VP Singh government further consolidated that identity.

In the 1993 UP assembly elections, Mulayam and Mayawati joined hands to displace the BJP government under Kalyan Singh. Though there was a break between Mulayam and Mayawati after the infamous *Lucknow Guest House* episode¹ in 1995 in which the goons of the SP tried to kill Mayawati, yet the state continued to be in the quagmire of *identity politics* (Hasan: 1994). However, the Dalits and the OBCs realised that in spite of the identity politics, they are not getting the benefits of development in an equitable manner and were suffering due to nepotism, corruption and criminalisation in their respective caste parties – the BSP and SP respectively. They asked to themselves that *identity* is fine, but what after that? They had enough of identity, but their aspirations for empowerment, development and upward mobility were not being attended by their respective caste parties – BSP and SP.

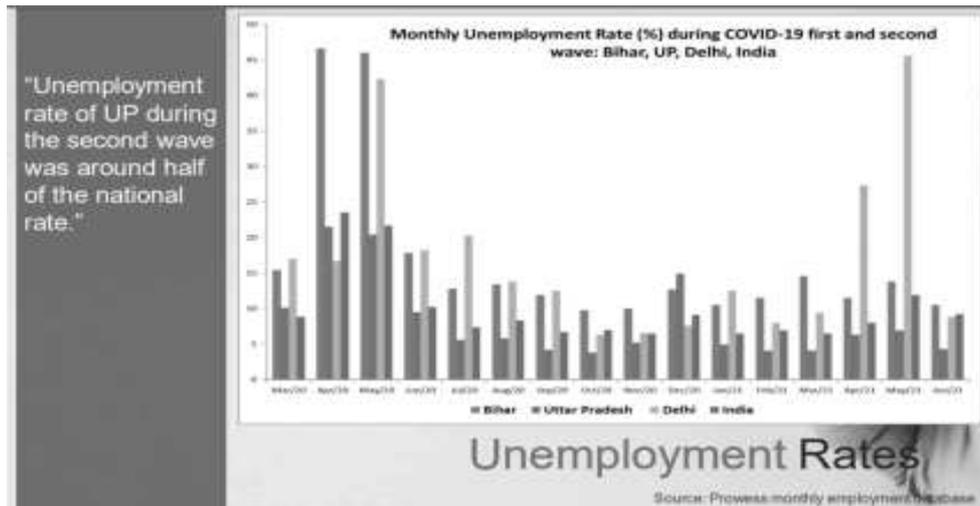
At this juncture, in 2014, the arrival of Narendra Modi as a prime ministerial candidate of the BJP gave to the backward, poor, marginalised and subalterns, who were craving for the fulfilment of their aspirations, a ray of hope. So, the goal was to fulfil the aspirations of several identity groups. It is at this point that the BJP hit their aspirational button and created a ray of hope in them that under the Modi-Yogi double engine government, not only their identities would remain intact, but additionally, their aspirations would also be fulfilled (**Verma:2014**).

To fulfil the aspirations of the poor, marginalised and the subalterns, the BJP government in UP, in sync with the Modi government at the centre, made all out efforts. And that was done within the rubric of providing law and order, development and welfare of the people. This segment of the people suffer greatly on the law-and-order front. Most of their daily problems pertain to small family, locality or community disputes and ill treatment by the ‘influential’, the police, petty bureaucratic officials, and the politically connected people. The Yogi government had been very tough on that and given stern warning to the anti-social elements and criminals to behave failing which the police had been given orders to enforce peace and maintain law-and-order at all cost.

The zero tolerance of Modi on corruption and Yogi’s focus on checking criminalisation had its trickle-down effect, though slowly and in spite of annoying politicians of all hues including the BJP. The tough stand of Yogi on law-and-order using strong arm tactics, even at the risk of earning the nick name of *buldojar baba*, has brought a welcome change in the state. Under the previous regimes, many criminals not only roamed freely but had the protection of the ruling dispensation. That had made peoples’ life miserable. That’s why the tough stand of Yogi on law-and-order front, including some police encounters killing hardcore criminals, had the blessings of the people, especially the weak, poor and the marginalised.

A good law-and-order is a fundamental pre-requisite for people to take to economic, commercial and developmental activities. In addition, the availability of cash in hand by several economically weaker persons through the *direct benefit transfer* (DBT) in their *jan-dhan-accounts* paved the way for the proliferation of small ventures and entrepreneurship in villages and towns. That was also a great relief to the *migrant labours* who had come to the state from several states like Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat and Delhi. The Covid-19 did disturb the developmental tempo, but CM Yogi’s focus on the developmental agenda did not allow the situation to worsen beyond control. Hence, the monthly unemployment rate in UP was half the national unemployment rate during the pandemic (Figure 1). Prof Manindra Aggrawal, IIT-Kanpur adopted SUTRA(Susceptible, Undetected, Tested Positive and Removed Approach) model to study the UP model of response to Covid-19 (IIT-Kanpur, **2021**)².

Figure 1: Monthly Unemployment Rate in UP Compared with National Rate



Source: IIT-Kanpur: Covid War, UP Model: Strategies, Tactics & Impact, 2021

The Yogi government also adopted an innovative scheme of patronising *one district-one product*(ODOP) that tried to identify one district in UP with the potential of one product for marketing support. That did two things; one, it highlighted a district for a particular product and encouraged many to take to local manufacturing; two, it created entrepreneurial psychology in every district and provided employment to many to indulge in manufacturing and sales of a particular product; three, it not only improved the economic condition of the entrepreneurs, but also earned some revenue for the state by way of sales locally and through exports as ‘ethnic’ goods. In 2020-21 only, the ODOP set a record sales of 1000 Crores through Flipkart only³. That was the peak covid period too. UP recorded an export growth of 28% within a year of the launch of ODOP and earned third place among all states. Encouraged by this experiment, the Yogi government has moved on to launch a “*one tehsil, one product*” (OTOP) to promote micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector (**Financial Express, 27 July 2022**). The government also signed MOU with Amazon International to market UP products **globally**⁴. The government is trying to push youth towards becoming job givers, not job-seekers. This has provided opportunities to thousands of youths in the state, that is helping the poor artisans whose product are now getting local and global markets. This has specially encouraged women entrepreneurs to do business from the comforts of their homes. That is not only providing them some relief, but also attracted outside investments in the state.

The Yogi government’s focus on law-and-order and development had a unique feature of public welfarism that not only tried to give primacy to the aspirations of the people over their identities but was *inclusive*. It not only thought of the ‘last-man’ but thought of the last-man without any consideration of his or her social or religious identity. It was for all; it was *inclusive*.

Exclusionary to Inclusive

The second important element in the *new grammar of politics* of Modi-Yogi and the BJP was the *inclusive approach* in governance, development and public welfare. For the past two decades or so, UP was in the grip of *identity politics* that bred exclusionary approach in the incumbent governments which either claimed to represent the Dalits or the OBCs. The governments led by Mayawati claimed to focus more on Dalits and that of Mulayam Singh Yadav and Akhilesh Yadav claimed to focus on OBCs. That sent a wrong signal in the society that these parties and their leaders want to favour a particular caste and not care for the whole of the society. Secondly, the SP governments led by Mulayam and Akhilesh Yadav, contrary to their claims, did not cater to all the OBCs. The OBCs in UP are composed of three sub-groups as per the Gazette of the UP Government⁵. In the first group are Yadavs only; in the second group are eight sub-castes viz.

sonar, jatkurmi, giri, gujjar, gosai, lodh, Kamboj; and in the third, there are 70 sub-castes viz. Kushwaha, kahar, Kashyap, shakya, kewat, nishad, mallah, koeri, prajapati, sahu, teli, lohar, maurya etc (Verma: 2001).

The first mistake that the SP leaders did was to focus more on the first category i.e., Yadas and neglect the second and the third category that are called the more-backwards and the most-backwards (Verma: 2001). They preferred aligning more with the Muslims than consolidating the OBCs as a caste group. That led to the charge of SP pursuing MY i.e. Muslim-Yadav combination for electoral purposes at the cost of neglecting the *more-backwards* and the *most-backwards*.

The second mistake that the SP did was to not even consolidate the Yadavs of east and west UP. It focussed more on the western UP, especially the areas around Etawah and Saifai - the residence of Mulayam and Akhilesh Yadav. So, while the SP was touted more as a Yadav dominant party, those Yadavs without *saifai connection* felt alienated and marginalised (Verma: 2004). However, given the caste orientation of our society and politics, they continued to support the SP led by a Yadav leader. Both these mistakes harmed the SP, ultimately. Hence, when the Modi and Yogi governments resorted to *inclusive politics* - that promised space and accommodation to all – many Yadavs shifted to the BJP.

Similarly, Mayawati, the BSP supremo, too followed similar caste and identity politics by focussing more on Dalits. Obviously, she too was resorting to *exclusionary politics*. However, in 2007, she was catapulted to absolute majority when she tried to form a *sandwich coalition* of the Dalits and Brahmins that was supported by all social denominations (Verma: 2007a). In doing so, she resorted to forge a semblance of *inclusive politics* through a smart and innovative mechanism of *reverse social osmosis* (Verma: 2007b). However, as her *inclusive approach* did not reflect in her governance, she lost to SP in 2012. Mayawati too committed mistakes even in her *exclusionary* approach (Verma: 2012).

Her first mistake was that she too did not focus on the entire Dalit society. As per the Gazette of the UP government, dalits are divided into two groups. In the first group, there is only one caste - Chamar/Jatav and in the second group, there are 65 sub-castes like agariya, balmiki, dom, habura, kanjar, khatik, kol, pasi etc (Verma: 2001). Mayawati made the mistake of focussing only on the first group i.e. chamar/jatav and neglected the second category with the result that while 85 % jatavs continued to vote Mayawati, the rest either did not vote or voted the BJP. Even within the chamars/jatavs, many felt excluded from government and party because Mayawati had to accommodate the ‘*others*’ like Brahmins, Muslims and a few others in government and party at the expense of the Dalits. Thus, they too saw that with Mayawati they got *identity* but their aspirations for empowerment and political advancement still remained on the back-burner (Verma: 2012).

Thus, both the caste parties - SP and BSP - demonstrated a sectional approach to politics and welfarism hinged on *identity and exclusion* that injected nepotism, corruption and inefficiency besides leveraging the criminals who ruled the roost during their tenures. That had left both the excluded among the OBCs and Dalits craving for some alternative. As soon as the Modi-Yogi duo presented them a chance to be amalgamated in governance, party offices, development and welfare of the poor and marginalised, they saw the possibility of fulfilment of their aspirations. That switchover of the OBCs and Dalits clearly got reflected in the **CSSP survey data**⁶ as well as the aggregate data of the ECI.

In the CSSP survey, the OBC division between the Yadavs vs more-backward and most-backward is clearly seen. While the Samajwadi Party had been the first choice of over 50% Yadavs, some of them had been voting BJP since 2014. And an interesting thing to notice about the Yadav voting pattern is that while they support the BJP in great numbers in LS polls in 2014 (27.2%) and 2019 (24%), their support to the BJP sharply declined in assembly polls; in 2017 (10.3%) and in 2022(18.2%) (**Table 2**). This is explained by the fact that in assembly polls, Yadavs still prefer their caste party SP led by Akhilesh Yadav to form the government, but in Lok Sabha elections, they are for Modi and the BJP as they know that the SP is a regional outfit, not going to form the national government. On the contrary, the more-backwards and most-backwards

among the OBCs had not only backed the BJP very well but their support to the BJP had been consistently rising in every successive election (2014: 52.6%, 2017: 58.3%, 2019: 80%, 2022:86.4%). That clearly shows that the BJP policy of *inclusion* for the poor, subaltern and the downtrodden had reached on the ground and that these sub-caste groups have strongly moved to the BJP (Table-2).

As regards the Dalits, they too have moved towards the BJP in spite of voting for the BSP and Mayawati earlier. And the division between the Dalit and anti-Dalit and their shift to the BJP is also clearly seen after the end of Mayawati's tenure in 2012. Once she moved to Delhi and national politics, we find that the shift of the anti-Dalits and Dalits to the BJP was only a matter of time. There are two major watersheds in Dalit shifts to the BJP. One we see in the 2017 and the other we see in the just concluded 2022 assembly polls. In the 2017 assembly polls, the anti-Dalit support to the BJP jumped from 8% to 40% registering an accretion of +32 percentage points and giving the BJP a phenomenal victory (312 seats, 39.65% votes). The Chamars/Jatavs still continued to be with the BSP.

The second change in Dalit support came in the next assembly elections in 2022. In five years of the Yogi government support to the Dalit community through his governments inclusive policies, the Dalit support to the Yogi government rose from 8.6% in 2017 to 40.9% in 2022 - a massive rise of 32.3 percentage points. And that was not just the anti-Dalits but the Dalits as a whole. Agra district which is known to be hub of Dalits especially the Jatavs, there the BJP won all nine assembly seats in 2022. Only in the first assembly election in 1952, the Congress had won all the seats of Agra; BJP created history by winning all seats after 70 years. And surprisingly, even the Muslim dominant localities too voted the BJP. The party had a massive support of women over good law-and-order, transparent allocation of Housing schemes, free ration to all during covid, kisan sammannidhi and image of a strong administration.

So, we see that in 2017, about 32% anti-Dalits moved to the BJP and in 2022, overall 32% Dalits moved to the BJP (**CSSP Data 2022**). That was not possible unless these voters felt strongly that the Yogi governance and development was truly inclusive. That was thus, the second element that changed the *grammar of politics* in UP.

Security to Poor

The Modi-Yogi duo provided a bundle of securities to the poor, women, small kisans, workers, labours, migrants etc. The security measures actually reached the target without any hassle through the use of technology. They included four major aspects.

One, financial security that was provided to the poor people without any discrimination of any kind. It tried to put money under various schemes in the *jan-dhan accounts* of the poor through *direct benefit transfer* (DBT). The *jan-dhan account* of the poor and the marginalised was a great step towards financial inclusion and integrated the account holders not only to the banks but also allowed them to receive the money sent by the centre and state governments in their accounts without giving any bribe or cut to anyone. So far, the Yogi government had transferred Rs. 75984 crores in 173 schemes to the beneficiaries *jan-dhan accounts*⁷.

Two, the second was health security that was provided through *aayushmanbharat - pradhanmantri aarogya yojna* that was rolled out for the bottom 40% of the population. It provided Rs 5 lakh cover per year to a family of any size and age covering all pre-existing diseases. So far 6.2 crore beneficiary have been enrolled and taking advantage of the scheme in UP. Healthcare had been a nightmare for the poor because of the high cost of treatment in hospitals, especially private hospitals. The UP government has empanelled 3082 hospitals all over the state where even the poor can get the treatment by just showing the gold card issued to them. So, far 1.89 families in UP had been issued the '**gold-card**'⁸.

Three, crop-security was provided to the farmers and small kisans. We can understand that this was a very long desired step because the Indian agriculture and our crop-cycle is largely dependent on the monsoon season. Rains and droughts have a great bearing on our agriculture and crop security. Sometimes, the insects

and other crop diseases also damage the crops that can force the village farmers and their families to starvation. Hence, providing crop security to farmers was a revolutionary step. In 2019-20 Financial year for which the data is available, Rs. 1092.74 was paid as claims to the farmers through the *fasal bima yojna*. There were several schemes for the farmers earlier too, but the involvement of middlemen, corruption by disbursing authorities, collusion of bank officials and the panchayat officials etc created a lot of harassment and frustration among the farmers leading to the death or suicides of farmers. The efforts of Yogi government to properly implement various schemes meant for the good of farmers and agriculture has reached the ground and hence the rural vote share of the BJP seems to be increasing. Earlier, the rural constituencies were dominated by the SP and the BSP.

And, finally, the social security provided by the overall improvement in the law-and-order situation in the state, in addition to several other social security measures viz. providing maternity benefits to women employees, workers in unorganised sectors, construction workers, in respect of gratuity, online payment of pension to pensioners etc. brought relief to the common man **in the state**⁹.

Thus, the financial, health, crop and social security measures collectively injected a sense of overall security among the poor and the downtrodden, especially the women and the poor kisans. That made *inclusive politics* a reality of social life pushing more and more people towards the BJP. Since *inclusive approach* does not exclude any segment of the society, and was focussed more on the poor, marginalised and the subalterns, it benefitted all classes and led to *class-politics*, rather than *caste-politics*. With that, the BJP was writing a third element in the new grammar of politics in UP.

Table 2: How Castes and Communities Voted BJP in UP Since 2014

Castes	BJP Vote Share			
	2014 LS Polls	2017 Assembly Polls	2019 LS Polls	2022 Assembly Polls
1. Brahmin	71.6	78.8	84	85.7
2. Rajput	77.0	66.4	89	88.9
3. Vaishya	70.8	72.1	74	66.7
4. Jat	77.4	34.5	91	69.8
5. Yadav	27.2	10.3	24	18.2
6. Kurmi	52.6	58.3	80	86.4
7. Koiri				71.7
8. Jatav	18.2	8.6	17	40.9
9. Ashraf	9.6	8.6	8	8.3
10. Pasmanda				16

Sources – The survey data for the 2014 UP LS, 2017 UP Assembly and 2019 UP LS has been taken from the CSDS, Delhi. The survey data for the 2022 UP Assembly elections is taken from the CSSP, Kanpur.

Caste to Class

With development and inclusive politics as the first two elements, the BJP was also writing a third element in the *new grammar of politics* to transform political contestation in UP. That third element was ‘class’. Traditionally, the political contestation in UP was based on *umbrella-politics* hinged on a *rainbow coalition* during the early years which Rajni Kothari termed as the *congress system* (**Kothari:1964**). The system worked well during 1952 to 1967 and even a decade thereafter till 1989 when the *second democratic*

upsurge displaced the *umbrella-politics* with *caste-politics* driven by the neglect of the subalterns by Congress which did not provide them representation in the leadership structure of the party and their governments.

The *mandal* gave them an opportunity to desert the Congress and move on to caste-parties in many states including UP. Politics and political contestation in UP had since been dominated by the caste and identity politics that usually produced fragmented mandates as no party could get a clear majority on the basis of pursuing caste-politics. This continued till the arrival of Modi on the scene in 2013 as the BJP's anointed candidate for the prime ministership in 2014 LS polls¹⁰. So, *umbrella-politics* dominated during 1952-89 and *caste-politics* during 1989-2014.

Modi as BJP's anointed prime-ministerial candidate took a different trajectory altogether and brushed aside the prevailing framework of caste-centric political contestation. He gave a call for development centric *inclusive politics* based on *sabkasaath-sabkavikas*. That was an instant hit as people, especially the poor, downtrodden, marginalised and subalterns were vary of the *caste-politics*, corruption and criminalisation and virtually craving for development (Verma:2014). The BJP won an absolute majority in LS polls 2014 and Modi became the Prime Minister. The ruling SP government under Akhilesh Yadav was thoroughly discredited and reduced to a handful MPs of the core-Yadav family.

While the Modi government was pursuing *inclusive approach* in a transparent manner for the good of all, the Akhilesh Yadav government (2012-2017) was still in the grip of the same old-fashioned *caste-politics*. Hence, in the 2017 assembly elections in UP, the electors tried to end that anomaly and brought the BJP government which can work in sync with the Central government. The BJP won hands down crossing 300 mark in 2017. That was branded as a *double-engine* government of Modi and Yogi. While many were surprised by the appointment of Yogi as the CM of UP, his governance and development and service delivery model won the heart of the people.

The Yogi government's handling of the law-and-order, criminals, anti-social elements, law-breakers and the *Romeo-type* misguided youth was tough that brought great relief to the people though it raised the eyebrows of a few for his strong-arm tactics. The significance of his strong administration was that the poor, marginalised and the downtrodden felt that relief without any consideration of caste and religion. He would not even spare his own party people if found wrong. Women were specially feeling safe. The issue of *triple talaq* brought great psychological relief to the Muslim women. It is true that *talaq* may not be very frequent, but the fear of the same always hangs like a *sword of Damocles* on the heads of Muslim married women. That was a new culture of governance, development and service delivery which the people had not seen for decades earlier during the tenures of Mulayam, Mayawati and Akhilesh. The Yogi government was not caste-driven, it was rather moving on to 'class' – trying to benefit all falling within the ambit of a class.

The BJP targeted three major classes cutting across all caste and religion - the gender, small and marginal farmers, and, the subalterns. Starting from *ujjawala* to *betibachao*, *betipadhao*, to toilets etc., the party appeared addressing the gender constituency. Similarly, the government was equally attending to the marginal farmers putting Rupees six thousand in their *jan-dhan* accounts annually, and giving them various other reliefs that could enhance their income. The very fact that the farmers protest movement allegedly led by so called farmers from western UP has been ineffective to harm BJP in the western UP speaks volumes about the satisfaction of farmers with the Modi-Yogi initiatives to better their lives. In fact, many sugarcane mills that were closed in that part had been restarted, new ones opened and all arrears due from previous regimes had been largely paid. More, the Jats in western UP have also not come out of the 2013 riot syndrome as they still are in legal trap whereas, they allege, that Muslims were let off by Akhilesh at the askance of the then minister Azam Khan. That's the reason, that the election study conducted by our centre shows that as compared to 2017, when 34% jats voted for BJP, this time in 2022, 71% Jats voted BJP (CSSP Election Study 2022).

And, the third class - the poor subalterns they had been quite upbeat about getting free *ration* for the last two years and they confess that during Covid, the government did not allow them to be hungry and actually served cooked good food in abundance. So, the BJP as a political party under Modi-Yogi leadership has expanded its narrow upper-caste, middle class, urban traders' constituency by appropriating the wider class constituencies composed of gender, small farmers and poor. Our study shows that there had been a gender consolidation and as compared to 2017 assembly polls, 10% more women have voted BJP (CSSP UP Election Study 2022).

Modi Factor

One very significant factor is the 'Modi-voter' in addition to the committed party voter and the floating voters. In 2017 assembly polls, BJP got 41% votes in UP whereas in 2019 Lok Sabha polls the party got 50% votes. That clearly shows that the 9% additional votes were simply for Modi. In our study, we have found that 11% voters voted BJP only because of Modi (**CSSP Data 2022**). That's an X-factor that has bailed out the BJP in UP. Modi has been playing smart politics through his *man-ki-baat* where he does not talk about politics at all. That connect which Modi has developed all over the country has earned him this segment that we call 'Modi-Voters.

Conclusion

UP CM Yogi Adityanath won a massive victory in 2022 UP Assembly polls. This paper tried to enquire 'why' he and the BJP won so handsomely. It also enquires Yogi government's success in improving its support base over 2017 polls. We offer theoretical explanations that broadly argues that the party has changed the '*grammar of politics*' in UP through multiple transformations - from *identity to aspirational politics*, from *exclusionary to inclusive politics* and from *caste to class politics*. Surprisingly, the opposition parties are still in shock, not able to comprehend these transformational changes that have been taking place within the rubric of law-and-order, grassroots level percolation of development and reduction in corruption in various schemes through the application of technology and the DBT. To supplement that, the X-factor Modi with a massive 10% personal vote-share as an add-on to the BJP vote share makes all the difference.

Uttar Pradesh has seen *third democratic upsurge* (Verma: 2016) where the BJP has gone for complete overhaul of its support-base through constituency transformation. Its now not a party of just upper caste, middle-class urban traders, but has become a catch-all party of upper caste, OBCs and Dalits with a small segment of Muslims and they all come from both the urban and rural areas. This is reminiscent of the erstwhile *Congress system* (Kothari:1964) where Congress party used to get support from all social denominations and used to win handsomely in elections - both LS and assemblies. We find that the BJP too is marching towards a *BJP system*. With great effort and meticulous strategy, the BJP is trying to amalgamate all social denominations with its ideology, organisation and leadership through the mechanism of *inclusive politics* expressed in PM Modi's now famous call - *sabkasaath, sabkavikas, sabkavishvaas, sabkaprayas* (with support of all, development of all, confidence of all, efforts of all). While there may be differences over the policy decisions, their executions and timings etc, the style of politics by BJP and its top leaders Modi and Yogi needs to be emulated by the opposition parties too if they wish to be in reckoning in electoral contestation in future.

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Notes

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Goa Assembly Election 2022: An Indication Towards Multi-polar Party Politics

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In the post-statehood period Goa witnessed bi-polar party competition between Congress and BJP. Many regional political parties emerged during assembly elections but the party competition largely remained bi-polar. After the last two elections new political parties entered the electoral arena and they have become significant players in Goa's electoral politics. With every new party entering the electoral arena the combined vote share of Congress and BJP is declining, especially since 2017 assembly election. The 2022 assembly elections in a way convey that Goa's party politics is moving towards multipolarity. If the trend continues there is a possibility that the new players other than the Congress and the BJP will have a larger say in the government formation.

The electoral contest in Goa looked a multi-cornered one this time with the entry of Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the new regional outfit Revolutionary Goans party (RGP). Goa over a period has witnessed an increase in the number of political parties contesting assembly election. The electoral contest in the state is viewed by the political parties such as TMC and AAP as a way to fulfill their ambition of getting the status of national political party. With increase in the number of political parties, political mobilizations and assertions seemed to have become stronger demanding greater share in the power structure. However, surpassing all the predictions of a hung assembly the BJP was able to muster a majority. While examining some of the significant aspects of 2022 assembly election the paper points out that the 2022 assembly election is an indication of a shift from bi-polar party competition to multi-polar politics.

Bi-polar competition

Two regional parties-Maharastrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and United Goans Party (UGP) dominated the Goan politics soon after liberation¹. Their hold over state politics continued for almost two decades. In the post-statehood² period the control of regional parties weakened to a considerable extent leading to the rise of Congress. The weakening of the UGP allowed the Congress to gain over the vote bank of UGP which later merged with the Congress. Congress formed its first government in 1980. Post-statehood is also marked as the period of coalitions and defections. The extent of defections is such that between 1990 to December 1994 Goa had seen seven Chief Ministers with governments lasting for few days or few months (deSouza, 2004). Many strong candidates of the MGP joined Congress which weakened MGP while strengthened Congress support base in Goa. Congress continued to be in power for almost three decades until challenged by the BJP. By making inroads into the MGP votes, BJP established its hold over Goa's politics. After prolonged coalition governments BJP came to power with full majority (21 seats) in 2012 under the leadership of Parrikar.

Many regional outfits emerged during assembly elections but the party competition largely remained bi-polar in the post-statehood period. The entry of new political parties such as Goa Suraksha Munch (GSM), Goa Forward Party (GFP) and Aam Adami Party (AAP) in the 2017 assembly elections were seen as damaging the vote base of both Congress and BJP, but the election results proved that the new political parties had made no impact on the vote base of the existing power blocs. Since 2017 AAP is trying to expand its base to Goa. Party competition for assembly elections held on February 14, 2022 once again looked multi-cornered with the entry of Trinamool Congress (TMC) and RGP but ended up being a bi-polar competition between the Congress and the BJP. These two parties together acquired more than 50 percent of voteshare (Table 1).

Table 1: Performance of Congress and BJP in the Goa assembly since statehood

Year	Congress		BJP	
	Seat share	Votes share in percentage	Seat share	Vote share in percentage
1989	20	41	0	0.39
1994	18	37	4	9
1999	21	39	10	26
2002	16	38	17	36
2007	16	32	14	30
2012	9	31	21	35
2017	17	28	13	32
2022	11	23	20	33

Source: Compiled from <https://eci.gov.in/files/category/71-go/>

The election results confirmed the fact that, despite the presence of large number of parties the major competition for power is between the Congress and the BJP. However, it is important to take into consideration that with every new party entering electoral arena the combined vote share of Congress and BJP is declining, especially since 2017 assembly election. An examination of vote share of the parties helps us analyse this factor in a better way. In the 2012 assembly election both Congress and the BJP together polled 65 percent of the votes which has been reduced to 61 percent in 2017 and further decreased to 56 percent in 2022 assembly election. This decline of the vote share is attributed to the entry of new political parties. In 2017, the AAP, GFP and Goa Suraksha Munch and in 2022, the TMC and RGP reduced the combined vote share of Congress and BJP. In 2017 assembly election the vote share of both Congress and BJP got reduced by two percent point. In the 2022 election the vote share of Congress has drastically got reduced from 28 percent in 2017 to 23 percent while the BJP added to its vote share by one percent from 32 percent in 2017 to 33 percent in 2022. AAP which could not win any seat despite contesting from all 40 constituencies in 2017 assembly election, won two seats in 2022 assembly election. RGP a new regional party to contest 2022 election, registered a spectacular victory in 2022 by winning 9 percent vote share and one seat in the assembly. Is this an indication of the fact that the new parties are going to be the significant players in the formation of government in the coming years? Are we witnessing the beginning of a new type of party politics in Goa?

Important Highlights of the 2022 Assembly Election

Major Issues

Unemployment, mining, free water and electricity are some of the important issues raised by the political parties during their campaign. Though most of the parties supported restarting mining in Goa, mining was not the major issue in the 2022 election. Promises to women and youth prominently figured in the manifestoes of almost all major political parties. TMC promised 30 per cent reservation for women in government as well as private jobs and 50 per cent reservation in local bodies. The party promised woman from every household a direct cash transfer of Rs. 5000 per month through Griha Laxmi Scheme irrespective of economic background. Congress also promised 30 per cent reservation for women in government jobs. BJP was taking credit for effective implementation of Ladli Laxmi scheme which provides financial benefit of Rupees One lakh to the applicant at the time of marriage and Griha Adhar Scheme of Rs. 2000 to every eligible woman. AAP manifesto highlighted women's safety.

All the party manifestoes highlighted the need to create new jobs for the youth. The TMC and AAP promised reservation for Goans in the jobs. AAP made an assurance of unemployment allowance to the youth, while TMC announced Yuva Shakti scheme to be implemented if it came to power. The scheme provides collateral-free loan to youths at four percent interest rate. Congress was focusing on the issue of misgovernance of BJP, safety of women, unemployment and corruption in the government. AAP's major focus in the campaign was on the replication of Delhi model of governance with free electricity and water supply up to certain units and improvement in government health and education facilities.

Alliances

Goa being the smallest state is attracting political parties with national ambition. The 2017 assembly election saw the entry of AAP while the TMC decided to contest the 2022 assembly elections. There were also one or two new regional parties contesting assembly elections and winning few seats. The increase in political parties is resulting in division of votes. TMC riding on the victory in West Bengal elections started aggressive campaigning in Goa and projected itself as the only alternative to BJP. Its attempt to form a united alliance against BJP in Goa did not materialize. TMC is a new party to Goan voters and its failure to form alliance with the Congress was a major setback to the party but for Congress it was in its interest to keep the contest bipolar. The only alliance TMC was able to form was with the MGP. MGP has strong vote bank in some of the constituencies which proved beneficial to the TMC. Congress was reluctant to have any pre-poll alliance but later decided to form an alliance with the GFP. The only other pre-poll alliance was between the NCP and Shiva Sena.

Candidates' hold over constituencies

There is a strong hold of candidates over certain constituencies in Goa. Out of 40 constituencies in about 12 constituencies the candidates have their strong hold. For instance Rohan Khaunte (independent candidate who supported BJP after 2022 assembly election results), Atanacio Monserrate, Jennifer Monserrate, (both husband and wife were earlier in Congress, joined BJP with 10 rebel MLAs in 2019), Pratapsingh Rane (Congress), Vishwajit Rane (BJP), Milind Naik (BJP), Mauvin Godinho (BJP), Reginaldo Lourenco (independent), Vijay Sardesai (GFP), Pramod Sawant (BJP), Digambar Kamat (Congress) and Sudin Dhavlikar (MGP) are some such candidates. Pratapsingh Rane (Congress) who had won from Poriem constituency for 11 consecutive times resigned from active politics just before the 2022 assembly election. Even switching their loyalty to another party did not impact their winnability. In many constituencies candidates are getting elected more than two to three times despite hopping from one party to another. Rane's daughter-in-law Deviya Vishwajit Rane won from Poriem constituency in 2022 on BJP ticket.

Family Raj

Apart from strong candidates family raj is emerging as one of the notable features of state politics. From one family in 1967 it has increased to nine families in 2022 assembly election (Prabhudesai, 2022, pp. 329-330). Porobo (2018) examines this aspect in the context of changing economic scenario in Goa mainly after liberalization of Indian economy in the 1990s. Porobo argues that the family raj found before 1990s was mainly to have a control over the political party but after liberalization the economic interest provided momentum to the families in power to cling to positions (Porobo, 2018, p.165). What also explains the family raj is the large stakes these ministers have in the land. There is an ever increasing demand for land in Goa for tourism and real estate business. The ministry of Town and Country Planning, PWD and urban development are much sought after and bargained for in return for support to form the government. The bargaining power increases with more family members elected in the assembly. Ideology and moral grounds have taken a back seat. 'The trend of family raj coincides with the increasing trend of converting agricultural land into settlement and selling it to land sharks' (Prabhudesai, 2002, pp. 329-330). The Town and Country Planning (TCP) became an important weapon in the hands of the government for large scale conversion of land which resulted in dramatic increase in the prices of the land (Coutinho, 2022). On 30th July 2018, Goa legislative assembly by

an amendment inserted section 16B to the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Act which allowed change of zone type specified in the regional plan³. Following this large number of applications are received by the TCP department from across all the talukas for converting cultivable zones into settlement (Prabhudesai, 2022, p.333-337).

Party Hopping

Between 2017 to January 2022 large number of candidates changed their party loyalty. Congress is the biggest loser in this period with majority of its MLAs joining BJP. From 17 seats in 2017 the Congress strength has been reduced to two members before the 2022 assembly election. In the wake of assembly election 2022 many candidates have switched over their party. This is the first time that the state witnessed large number of defections just before the assembly election. The Table 2 depicts the names of those candidates who changed their party between September 2021 and January 2022.

Table 2 :Candidates switching loyalties

Name of candidate	From	Party joined
Louizinho Faleiro	Congress	TMC
Jayesh Salgaonkar	GFP	BJP
Ravi Naik	Congress	BJP
Churchill Alemao	NCP	TMC
Rohan Khaunt	Independent	BJP
Alina Saldana	BJP	AAP
Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco	Congress	TMC *
Carlos Almeida	BJP	Congress
Michael Lobo	BJP	Congress
Pravin Zantye	BJP	MGP
Joseph Sequiera	TMC	BJP

Source: Authors compilation

*Resigned later from TMC and contesting as independent candidate from Curtorim

Profile of voters

The electoral profile of Goa reveals its diversity and the same is reflected in the election results, making it essential to understand this diversity. As per the electoral roll prepared on January 5, 2022 by the Election Commission, the total number of registered voters in Goa were 1156464, of which 539420 were from North Goa and 617044 from South Goa (Government of Goa, 2022). Between 2017 and 2022 the number of voters in Goa has grown by 45000 persons with 28387 additional voters in North Goa compared to 17193 in South Goa with women voters outnumbering men voters (Times of India, January 6, 2022).

Along with an increase in the number of voters there is a corresponding increase in the voter turnout since 2002 assembly election. One of the reasons for the increase in the voter turnout is the efforts of the Election Commission of India (ECI) through its SVEEP activities initiated since 2012 assembly elections to create awareness about electoral process among the electorates and to ease the process of election to voters. An increase of 10 percent voter turnout was seen in 2012 assembly election compared to the previous assembly election in 2007 (Table 3). It is evident from Table 3 that the voter turnout for North Goa is always more compared to South Goa.

Table 3: Voter turnout in the assembly elections

Year	North Goa	South Goa	Total
2007	72	66	71
2012	84	79	82
2017	83	79	83
2022	79	78	80

Source: Data collected from office of the Chief Electoral Office, Goa

Note: All figures are in percentage form.

Gender

When one look into the demographic profile of the voters, one can observe that not only the number of women voters has seen an increase (Table 4) but there is also an increase in the voter turnout of women compared to male voters (Table 5). Among the youth, as per the electoral rolls published on January 5, 2022 there are about 1.67 percent voters in the age group of 18 to 19 years (Government of Goa, 2022).

Table 4: Gender profile of the voters

Year	Total No. of electorates	Total no. male Voters	Total no. of female Voters
2002	926438	467723	458715
2007	1010246	505609	504637
2012	1026304	511110	515194
2017	1111692	547328	564364
2022	1156464	562500	593960

Source: Data collected from the ECI website: <https://eci.gov.in/statistical-report/statistical-reports/>

Table 5: Voter turnout in assembly elections

Year	Male	Female	Total voter turnout
2002	70	68	69
2007	70	70	71
2012	79	85	82
2017	78	84	82
2022	78	81	80

Source: Data collected from ECI website: <https://eci.gov.in/statistical-report/statistical-reports/>

Note: All figures are in percentage form

Women as voters are significant to the political parties but they are reluctant to give party ticket to women unless they have strong family background in politics. Compared to the last four assembly election, the 2022 assembly election saw maximum number of women contesting election. Out of 26 women candidates, 6 contested as independents. Goa with 40 seats where stakes for winnability is so high women are not seen as winning candidates by the political parties. AAP which took pride in fielding more number of women candidates in 2017 assembly election has reduced the number of women candidates for 2022 assembly election. This decision of the AAP do not correspond in any way with winnability factor of women as compared to male candidates of AAP in 2017 assembly election. Women are seen more as vote bank by the political parties rather than as political representatives. This explains the competition among the political parties by way of promising schemes or programmes for women voters.

Table 4 and 5 also shows the significance of women as voters to political parties. The post-poll surveys conducted by the CSDS, Lokniti confirm that more number of women voted for BJP compared to Congress or any other party in the 2017 and 2022 assembly election. BJP's Ladli Laxmi scheme and Griha Adhar scheme might have been the reasons for more women supporting BJP. Despite similar promises being made by the TMC and other parties large number of women supported BJP. The party which received more number of votes from women in the election did not make attempts to increase the number of women contesting assembly election on their party ticket in the past. It fielded least number of women candidates compared to Congress and AAP in 2017 election.

Caste

As per the District Census Handbook, North Goa (2014), 69 percent of the total SC population and 37 percent of total ST population of Goa is in North Goa. The report further states, 69 percent of the total population of the SCs and 37 percent of the total population of the ST are located in North Goa, with majority of the SCs situated in the Talukas of Pernem, Bardez and Bicholim and STs in the Talukas of Ponda, Tiswadi and Sattari. It is evident from the Table 6 that, majority of the ST population is located in South Goa and the Talukas of Salcete and Quepem has bulk of the ST population followed by Sanguem and Canacona (Census 2011 South Goa, 2011).

Table 6: Caste profile

Caste	All Goa	North Goa	South Goa
SC	2	2	1
ST	10	7	14

Source: District Census Handbook, North Goa (2014) retrieved from and South Goa District Religious Census 2011 retrieved from: <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/religion/district/181-south-go.html>

Note: All figures are in percentage form

Religion

The religious profile of Goan voters reveal, 66 percent Hindus, 25 percent Christians and 8 percent Muslims while Bhuddhist, Jain and other religious population put together comprise one percent (Census, 2011) of the total population. Large number of Hindus are located in North Goa while majority of Christian population is located in South Goa (Table 7).

Table 7: Religious distribution of the population

Religion	All Goa	North Goa	South Goa
Hindus	66	76	53
Muslims	8	7	9
Christians	25	16	36

Source: District Census Handbook, North Goa (2014) retrieved from and South Goa District Religious Census 2011 retrieved from: <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/religion/district/181-south-go.html>

Note: All figures are in percentage form

Weakening of Congress

Defections weakened Congress to a considerable extent between 2017 and 2022. The Congress missed the chance to form the government in 2017 despite winning large number of seats in the assembly (17). Candidates with political aspirations from within the Congress with a hope to be inducted into the ruling cabinet and other benefits resigned from the Congress and joined BJP. Vishwajit Rane was the first person to join BJP soon after the 2017 election. A major blow to the Congress was in 2019 when 10 of its MLAs joined BJP. Rarely politicians are punished for such activities by the voters which supports the decision of their representatives to change party to further their interest.

The Congress party's strength has reduced to two in the state assembly with Ravi Naik and Reginaldo Lourenco resigning from Congress in December 2021, earlier in September 2021, Luizinho Faleiro resigned from Congress and joined TMC. Congress faced bigger challenge of reviving the party in the state. Due to continuous defections in the party, the party took a firm decision on not to allow the defected candidate to join back. Reginaldo who joined TMC in December 2021, soon in the month of January 2022 resigned from TMC and made an attempt to join back Congress. Congress was firm on its decision that its doors are shut on the defectors who left the party. Congress contested in 37 seats and on three seats GFP its alliance partner contested the election. But due to the absence of winning candidates, in both voteshare and seatshare the Congress performance was low in the 2022 assembly election

BJP's Rise Despite Anti-Incumbency

Under the leadership of Parrikar BJP increased its seat share from 4 seats in 1994 to 21 in 2012. Since 2012 BJP is in power in Goa. In 2017 election due to anti-incumbency the BJP's seatshare was reduced to 13 but it outsmarted Congress by quickly forming an alliance with MGP and GFP to form the government. Internal bickering among the alliance partners started after the death of Parrikar. The MGP came out of the alliance in 2019 (Shringare, 2022, p. 196). Before the 2022 assembly election GFP also came out of the coalition and contested the election in an alliance with Congress.

The BJP and Parrikar in Goa became so identical that many started believing that without Parrikar the BJP will not survive in Goa. Death of Parrikar in 2019 created a leadership vacuum in the party. The Party chose Pramod Sawant as the Chief Ministerial candidate but there were doubts over how long he will be able to hold the alliance partners together. The post-poll survey conducted by the CSDS, Lokniti after the 2019 Lok Sabha election reveal that for majority (58 percent) of the respondents death of Parrikar was not an important issue while voting (Shringare, 2022). The 2022 was the first assembly elections fought by the BJP without Parrikar. The BJP's win in 20 seats out of 40 once again confirmed that the death of Parrikar did not make much impact on BJP's electoral prospects in the state.

BJP which is in power since 2012 was facing anti-incumbency factor in the 2022 election. BJP did not have much to show by way of its performance under the Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. The protests at Melauli against an IIT project and the Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary brought criticism to the government. In the name of public interest and future development of Goa, government sanctioned projects for doubling of railway line and road expansion in a wildlife sanctuary which is declared by UNESCO as one of the eight biodiversity hotspots (The Guardian, 2020). The government also came under criticism for not properly managing the situation which emerged due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. The government was criticised by the opposition parties and various sections of the society over introducing Bhumiputra Adhikarini Bill in 2021. The bill 'provides for a mechanism to give ownership right to the self-occupied dweller of a small housing unit to enable him to live with dignity and self-respect' (The Indian Express, 2021). The person who lived in Goa for last 30 years be called as 'Bhumiputra' in the bill. Under the pressure of growing criticism the government decided to allow the bill to lapse. BJP government was also hit by the allegation of a 'job scam' by its MLAs.

Despite these criticisms and accusations against the government, the opposition was divided and this ensured victory for the BJP. Confident of its victory in a context of divided opposition the BJP decided to contest the 2022 assembly election alone. Continuing its strategy of social engineering, BJP gave for the first time tickets to 12 Catholic candidates. In the 2017 assembly election it fielded seven Catholic candidates and in 2012 six Catholic candidates were given party ticket all of whom emerged victorious (The Times of India, 2022). The representation to Bhandari and OBC candidate can also be seen from the candidate list declared by the party. The election results confirm that the BJP is able to retain its voteshare, in fact increased it by one percent while the Congress voteshare reduced due to division of opposition votes.

Support Base of BJP

Bahujan Samaj

There are many determining factors that influence voters while voting. Electoral analysis in the past heavily relied on religious factors while the 2022 assembly election brought to the fore the caste factor with AAP declaring its CM candidate from Bhandari community. The Bahujan samaj of Goa which rallied behind MGP under Dayanand Bandodkar⁴ moved away from it in the post-statehood period. The support base of the OBC was split between Congress, BJP and MGP. It was observed that the large number of Bahujan Samaj voters who supported BJP in 2017 have moved away from it in the 2022 assembly election which is more true in the case of Kshatriya Maratha community and Bhandari samaj.

As per the government of India data, the OBC population in Goa is around 18 percent and the central list of the OBC consisted of 17 OBC communities of Goa (Government of India, 2021, p.237-238). In the year 2014 the government of Goa decided to increase the OBC reservation from 19.5 percent to 27 percent (Government of Goa, 2014). In the same year government of Goa conducted a survey of OBCs. As per the survey report OBC consists of 27 percent of the total population in Goa (The Indian Express, 2022). While Bhandari community comprises little over than 61 percent of the OBCs in Goa of which majority of the OBC population (254276) is located in North Compared to South Goa (104238) (The Navhind Times, 2014). Among the Talukas of Goa, Pernem has highest population of OBCs (58 percent), other three being Bicholim (39 percent), Bardez (30 percent) and Ponda (38 percent) (The Navhind Times, 2014). These figures were contested by the President of Bhandari community Ashok Naik, who claims that Bhandaris comprises not only majority of OBCs but also among Hindus they are in majority. There is no denial of the fact that Bhandari community is politically significant in some of the constituencies of Goa.

Since liberation, Goa had only one CM from Bhandari Community. Announcement of CM candidate belonging to Bhandari Community by AAP in the 2022 assembly election with a hope of attracting voters from this community though created some buzz, did not yield expected results to the party. The BJP which in the past made attempts to keep Shripad Naik from Bhandari community away from state politics. In the 2022 assembly election while distributing tickets to candidates the party took precautions to provide adequate representation to Bhandari and other OBC communities.

Goa has seen three Maratha Chief Ministers-Pratapsing Rane, Laxmikant Parsekar and Pramod Sawant. While the exact population of the Maratha's in Goa is not available, it can be safely said that it has a sizeable number. The issue of building IIT campus in Melaulim village of Sattari taluka brought to the fore the power struggle between two Maratha leaders, CM Pramod Sawant and Health minister Vishwajit Rane. The BJP government decided to have IIT campus in Melauli village which falls in the Sattari taluka. The project was earlier supported by Vishwajit Rane who belongs to the constituency which falls in Sattari taluka. The Melauli villagers protested against the IIT project which intensified in January 2021. The protest was also supported by the other villages of Sattari. Most of the people affected by the project were tribals, so the 'tribal people's organisations such as GAKUVED⁵ Federation and Kul Mundkar Organisation demanded scrapping or shifting of the project' (The Navhind Times, 2021). Under the pressure from the people of Sattari Vishwajit Rane decided to withdraw his support to the project. The CM was reluctant to shift the project but under the growing pressure from the villagers and representation made by Vishwajit Rane, the Chief Minister (CM) decided to shift the project from Sattari.

Table 8: Voting pattern of the OBCs

	INC 2017	INC+ 2022	BJP 2017	BJP 2022	MGP 2017	TMC+ MGP 2022	AAP 2017	AAP 2022	RGP 2022	Oth 2017	Oth 2022
Khatriya Maratha	21	14	53	34	16	16	4	<1	5	6	31
Bhandari Samaj	18	14	54	44	14	19	4	4	9	10	10
Other OBC	16	20	39	38	16	10	4	7	11	25	14

Source: CSDS, Lokniti Post Poll Survey 2022 (The full Table showing all castes and communities voting pattern has appeared in The Hindu, March 15, 2022)

Note: all figures are percentages

N: 2066

It is evident from the CSDS, Lokniti Post Poll survey findings that, despite the announcement of CM candidate from Maratha Samaj large number of Maratha voters chose not to vote for BJP in 2022 assembly election. In the 2017 assembly election 53 per cent Maratha voters supported BJP which got reduced to 34 per cent in 2022. It is also important to observe that 31 per cent of the voters (Maratha) preferred to vote for Other parties not considered to be significant players in the electoral politics of Goa. From among the Bhandari samaj 54 per cent supported BJP in 2017 which got reduced to 44 per cent in 2022. There is not much difference in the other OBC support to the BJP between 2017 and 2022 assembly election. While the BJP has reduced its support base among the Marathas and the Bhandari samaj, it is able to increase its support among the higher caste Hindus and ST communities (The Hindu, March 15, 2022).

Religious Factors

The unique history of Goa with more than 500 years of Portuguese rule gave Goa a unique identity which is more reflected in the form of religious identity and culture. As per the 2011 Census report Goa has 66 percent Hindus, 25 percent Christians and 8 percent Muslims while Bhuddhist, Jain and other religious population put together is less than one percent (Table 7). This unique identity and the distribution of the population (especially religious distribution) in North and South Goa also reflected in the voting pattern. Large number of Hindus supported BJP while majority of the Muslims and Christians supported the Congress.

It was believed that due to the initiatives of Parrikar and the anti-incumbency factor against Congress in 2012 election many Christians supported the BJP. In 2019, BJP faced a major blow due the death of two of its important leaders, Chief Minister (CM) Parrikar and Deputy CM Francis D'Souza. Parrikar was considered to be the secular face of the BJP. To win over the Christian votes Parrikar inducted Catholic candidates in the party. 'Francis D'Souza became the BJP's best known minority-face' (The Times of India, 2019). D'Souza was appointed as Deputy CM after the 2012 assembly elections. When Parrikar was trying to woo the Christian voters, D'Souza became instrumental in convincing some Christian leaders to contest on BJP ticket (Times of India, 2019). Another important leader who helped BJP to pull Christian votes in the past was Mathany Saldana who died soon after 2012 assembly elections. With the support of Mathany Saldana one of the popular leader of Goa, Parrikar embarked on 'Mission Salcete' to attract Christian voters from South Goa. Mathany made a strong appeal to the Christian voters to vote for the BJP. Due to the efforts of Mathany Saldana and Francis D'Souza for the first time the BJP was able to make some inroads into Salcete in the 2012 assembly election, which was earlier the bastion of Congress. This trend did not last long. BJP lost Christian votes to the Congress both in North and South Goa in 2017 assembly elections. It is interesting to note that in this election more number of Christian candidates (7) got elected on BJP ticket compared to Hindu candidates (6). However, this win do not mean the Christian voters support BJP. This fact remained true in 2022 assembly election also where BJP has seen further decline in its support base

among the Christians from 18 percent in 2017 election to 13 in 2022 (The Hindu, March 15, 2022). The party has registered an increase in its support base among the Muslim communities from 10 percent in 2017 to 17 percent in 2022 (The Hindu, March 15, 2022).

Conclusion

One can observe that the new players split the vote base of both BJP and Congress. Goa has 65 percent Hindus but it is not a homogeneous group. While the BJP was able to attract large number of upper caste Hindu votes, most of the OBC voters have moved away from the BJP in the 2022 assembly election. Many Christians who supported BJP in 2017 preferred to vote for non-BJP party in 2022 election. Congress votes were also split among new parties. Congress lost large number of support base among Upper caste Hindus, OBCs, STs and Christian voters who preferred to vote for parties other than Congress and BJP.

With increasing number of significant players in electoral competition, voters in Goa have shifted away from both Congress and the BJP, but what benefitted BJP is splitting of votes among opposition parties which resulted in BJP MLAs winning some constituencies with a narrow margin of victory. It is important to note that, AAP which performed very badly in 2017 election has won two seats in the present assembly. The new regional outfit Revolutionary Goans' performance in the present assembly election was impressive in terms of vote share (around 9 per cent) and winning one seat. With every assembly election the number of political parties is increasing in Goa's electoral politics. The 2022 assembly elections in a way convey that Goa's party politics is moving towards multipolarity. If the trend continues there is a possibility that the new players other than the Congress and the BJP will have a larger say in the government formation in future.

Notes and References

Notes

1. Goa attained liberation of Portuguese rule in the year 1962 and remained Union Territory till 1987. The period after the liberation of Goa is referred to as post-liberation period.
2. On May 30th, 1987 Goa was conferred statehood and became the 25th state of Indian Union. The period after this date is referred to as post-statehood period.
3. Regional Plan is the land use plan for Goa.
4. The first Chief Minister of Goa
5. Gawda, Kunbi, Velip and Changar (GAKUVED)

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Decoding 2022 Uttarakhand Assembly Election Results

Annpurna Nautiyal

Elections in a small state like Uttarakhand with only seventy legislative assembly seats have always been a subject of passionate discussion, assumption and shocks. This was clear from the 2022 assembly elections results. Despite the prevalence of strong anti-incumbency factor against the state government in Uttarakhand, the BJP secured a comfortable win on account of the popularity of Prime Minister Modi and his government at centre. Even though the Chief ministerial face of BJP Pushkar Singh Dhama himself was defeated in his assembly constituency, Modi magic and his campaign style not only saved the party but also allowed it to secure a comfortable majority.

The Shocks

The election saw the defeat of two chief ministerial candidates projected by two national parties Pushkar Singh Dhama of BJP and Harish Rawat of Congress. The defeat was shocking not only for their own parties but also for them. What deceived them was their over confidence and working style. For the congress party, it was a kind of end of the road as many of its potential leaders failed to save their seats. If one compares this election with the previous fourth assembly election the difference is that the fifth assembly election was fought by BJP by not projecting any local face. Modi was the only face which secured a landslide victory for the BJP. All exit polls failed to predict the outcome. The 2017 election results were unusual in the history of Uttarakhand's elections as before this BJP or Congress could hardly manage to form the government as neither party ever secured majority seats. Therefore, these two national parties managed the formation of government with the support of other parties which not only increased uncertainty but also promoted the culture of dethroning of the chief minister by some disgruntled groups. Moreover, before the fourth election the margin of victory between the BJP and the Congress always remained at less than 2 per cent. This drastically changed as this time the BJP with a vote share of 46.5 per cent got a clear cut edge over the Congress whose vote share remained at 33.5 per cent.

Interestingly, in 2012 when the Congress polled 33.79 per cent votes it could capture only 32 seats. But the party formed the government with the help of PDF. In 2007 BJP formed the government with a vote share of 29.59 per cent and the Congress was left behind at 26.91 per cent. It clearly shows that upto 2012 the difference of 2 to 3 per cent allowed BJP or Congress to make the government with the help of other small parties which left scope for the political bargains with the independents or other smaller regional parties which also led to malpractices. But the fourth election just put an end to this instability factor by bringing stability with a huge margin of votes for the BJP. The voters were silent and did not give any hint about their preference, but they changed the political scenario by voting for Modi's developmental agenda highlighted through *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas and Sabka Viswas*. People believed that only Modi can deliver the results and help in the resolution of the long pending developmental issues of the remote hill areas. Modi's frequent visits to Kedarnath shrine, monitoring of its reconstruction and restoration works after the 2013 natural disaster, construction work of rail link and show of deep affection towards the Dev Bhoomi also led the people to vote for lotus, the election symbol of BJP.

Table 1: Percentage of votes secured by Political parties in the Assembly elections 2002 and 2007 and Lok Sabha elections 2004 and 2009 in Uttarakhand

Party Voted	Assembly election 2002	Lok Sabha 2004	Assembly Elections 2007	Lok Sabha Elections 2009
Congress	31.0	48.8	46.3	43.3
BJP	23.8	34.9	38.2	34.0
BSP	3.6	11.5	10.8	15.3
SP	0.3	3.3	1.9	1.8
Rest	9.8	1.5	2.7	5.5

Source: National Election Study-2009, Uttarakhand, CSDS Lokniti,

Table 2: Percentage of votes secured by political parties in the Assembly elections 2012 and 2017 & 2022 and Lok Sabha elections 2014 & 2019 in Uttarakhand

Party Voted	Assembly Elections 2012		Assembly Elections 2017		Assembly Elections 2022		Lok Sabha Elections 2014		Lok Sabha Elections 2019	
	Vote Share	Seats won	Vote Share	Seats won	Vote Share	Seats won	Vote Share	Seats won	Vote Share	Seats won
Congress	33.79	32	33.5	11	37.91	19	34.03	0	0	31.40
BJP	33.13	31	46.5	57	44.33	47	55.32	05	05	61.01
BSP	12.19	03	7.0	0	4.82	02	4.73	0		0
SP, AAP & Rest	1.41	0	0.04	0	3.10	02	5.02	0		0
Independents	12.35	03	10.0	02	-	-		0		0
UKD (P)	1.93	01	0.07	0	1.1	-		0		0

Source: data compiled from election commission website

The Sentiments

This time BJP's impressive win in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand clearly indicated that Modi's appeal had a great influence on the voters. *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas and Sabka Viswas* and *Sankalp Say Siddhi Tak* acted as a magic pill for the voters. In UP and Uttarakhand historically the governments changed every five years due to anti-incumbency factor but in 2022 the repetition of the same BJP governments in both the states was unprecedented. It indicated that there was no anti-incumbency but pro incumbency. Though in UP the appeal of Modi and Yogi both lured the voters, in Uttarakhand, Puskar Singh Dhami failed to bloom. Yogi in UP encashed on the appreciation for developmental approach, providing employment opportunities and facing the issues head on. In Uttarakhand Pushkar Singh Dhami did not get much time to prove his worth as he was inducted very late as chief minister and his time and energy was wasted more in appeasing the rebels rather than converting promises into actions. The rebel leaders also damaged the reputation of BJP, but their crossing over to Congress just before the assembly elections did not go well with the voters. The priests of Char Dhams and other various temples who always had been BJP's strongest vote bank, also exhibited their dissatisfaction towards the party because of the Devasthanam Board Act and even threatened to politically withdraw their support for the party. In view of this BJP decided to repeal the Act in December 2021 and once again brought back this vote bank to its fold.

The farmers' protests in Delhi also generated unrest among the farmers of Udham Singh Nagar, Haridwar and some parts of Nainital. However, despite the protests and the issues related to it the agitation

could not become an election issue as the big leaders from both the BJP and Congress Harish Rawat and Pushkar Singh Dhami contested from the agricultural belt of Lalkuan and Khatima, respectively. The Kumbh Mela fiasco and poor management of facilities for the large number of pilgrims during the pandemic that was also criticized internationally also could not deter the people from voting in favour of the BJP due to Modi factor. The two dominant groups in Uttarakhand, elections Thakurs and Brahmins, this time voted for the BJP. The Bahujan Samaj Party, which has been a third front in the state, could not register its presence in the assembly election of 2022.

However, the magic of the double Engine government and the road map for development in the form of infrastructure like better connectivity through construction of national highways, popularizing Chardham Yatra circuit, internet connectivity and protection of human lives through providing free Corona vaccination to all eligible people was appreciated very much by the people. The vigorous vaccination drive even in the remotest and inaccessible areas in the hills was perceived as a strong point of BJP and strengthened the double engine narrative propagated by Modi government at the centre. Even during the reverse migration during Corona pandemic the distribution of free ration, work under MNREGA, and provision for providing basic facilities for migrant population made this historic win of BJP possible in Uttarakhand.

The human touch entrenched in central government programmes like construction of toilets, distribution of cooking gas, direct benefit transfer, Kanyadhan scheme, Beti Bachao Beti Padho and digitalization of payments for empowering women influenced the women voters very much. These schemes made the Modi government more popular than the Dhami government in Uttarakhand and contributed to the historical victory of BJP in the 2022 elections.

In the fourth assembly election the vote percent was 65.56 and in the fifth election it came down to 62.5 per cent. The voting percentage of women was 68.72 in the last polls, but in fifth assembly election it came down to 67.2 per cent. For men it was 61.11 per cent in 2017 and in 2022 it increased slightly to 62.6 per cent. But it was also clear that the women voted in large numbers for BJP in the hills as most of the seats went to the BJP. The win of BJP's Shaila Rani Rawat from Kedarnath was also exceptional as she won this seat despite several odds. Ritu Khanduri's win from an entirely new seat was also exemplary. In fact most of the candidates of BJP in hills and plain areas could retain their seats for the second term due to Modi. In Dehradun and Pauri district BJP won all the assembly seats.

Contrary to the exit poll predictions that it would be a tie between BJP and Congress and that the independents will have a role in government making, the voters voted for the same government. The Congress candidate Harish Rawat lost with a big margin of votes and this defeat has put an end not only to his political ambitions and career but also on the future of Congress. However, his daughter Anupama Rawat won from Haridwar seat which was remarkable. However, BJP extended its full support to Pushkar Singh Dhami despite his loss and he remained the acting chief minister until he won from Champawat seat with a huge margin of votes.

The Trend and Verdict

The voting trend in 2022 is indicative of the fact that though the BJP won the majority votes it lost almost nine seats which showed the annoyance of the voters towards the individual candidates. The failure of the BJP to maintain stability despite the huge mandate of fifty-seven seats reflected that the political culture of induction of mid-term chief ministers (three chief ministers in a span of four and half years) did not go well with the voters. No wonder, the margin of victory came down from fifty-seven seats previously to forty-eight seats. The internal strife, unrest and struggle for power in the BJP which allowed leaders like Dr. Harak Singh Rawat, Yashpal Arya and others to join Congress was also not cherished by the voters. As leaders have been changing their loyalties very frequently, the voters rejected them and their manipulative tactics. In this election BJP captured almost all the seats in Garhwal Hills and only limited seats were won by Congress. UKD associated with Uttarakhand's creation since 1970s could not open its account, the BSP

just got only one seat and independents which included rebels from BJP got 2 seats. The Yamunotri seat also went to the BJP rebel. BJP leaders like Chandan Ram Das registered win from Bageshwar for the fourth time. The rebel leaders of BJP who joined congress could not retain their seats. The verdict clearly indicates that there was no serious anti-incumbency factor and people not only liked Modi's style of governance but also voted in the name of Modi. It was also a mandate for political stability, implementing developmental promises and performance without any pressure.

Conclusion

Now, with a majority government in place, people's long cherished dream of holistic development of hill areas have again been revived. Dhama's impressive win in the by election and his very positive and active approach is being appreciated by the people. The challenge is now not only to work in a time bound manner to achieve Prime minister Modi's developmental agenda. But the big question is whether the new government would be able to change Uttarakhand's work culture by working compassionately for hill areas development? The various employment scandals involving financial corruption of crores of rupees by officials and illegal recruitment of a large number of their relatives by the ruling governments has adversely affected the reputation of the hill state. Now it has to be seen how the new government will address these issues.

Rebels Against the Raj

N. Shanmughom Pillai

'Western Fighters for India's Freedom',
Ramachandra Guha, 2022, Pp 476, Price Rs. 799,
Penguin Random House, India (Pvt), Haryana

This volume is an extra ordinary history of resistance and the fight for Indian Independence by seven selfless and heroic people who chose to struggle for a country other than their own. Hence, the Rebels against the Raj.

The book is written in three parts spanning across seventeen chapters with an Epilogue. The seven great names are Anne Besant, B G Horniman, Madeleine Slade, Samuel Stokes, Philip Spratt, Dick Keithahn, Catherine Mary Heilman (Saraladevi).

Mrs. Anne Besant arrived in India in 1893. She was an orator and a fervent republican opposed to imperialism. Even before she had an active public life. She was attracted to theosophy, a mystical movement begun by a Russian Emigree called Madame Blavatsky. She was drawn to Marxism and Bernard Shaw. In 1885 she joined the Fabian society. In 1898 he set up the Central Hindu College at Banaras. In 1904 she started a residential Hindu girls' school. She joined the Congress and worked with moderates like TB Sapru and Motilal Nehru. She stood for unity between the extreme and moderate groups in Congress.

Later she abandoned socialism for theosophy, ie. politics for spirituality. She believed that the destruction of Indian industry and high taxation were among the unhappy consequences of British Rule. In 1915 she set up the Home Rules League. She wanted India to be free within in the empire. Enraged at this the British Government wanted to deport 'this trouble maker' to Britain. Meanwhile she wrote a book, 'How India Wrought for Freedom' dedicated to the mother land. In 1915 she introduced Gandhiji at a Public Function. In a function at the Banaras Hindu University, she stopped Gandhiji from his critical speech against the Raj. In 1917 she was elected the President of Indian National Congress. She argued for vote for Indian Women. She was against Satyagraha and street protest. As per Gandhiji's account no Indian can help feeling grateful to her for her wonderful services to India'. Later she was isolated in the world of Indian politics. She died at Madras on 20th September 1933.

B.G Horniman was a British journalist. Who joined the 'Statesman' published from Calcutta. Like an Indian Patriot he was dressed in white dhoti and kurta. In 1913 he joined 'Bombay Chronicle' published from Bombay. The paper soon turned into an irritant for the Government. He was threatened with action under Defence of India Act, but he was not to be cowed down. He strongly supported Mrs. Besant and B.G Tilak. He met Gandhi in 1915. He joined the agitation against Rowlet Act. So he was arrested in April 1919 and deported to England. But in 1926 he came back to India through secrete route. He died on 16th October 1948. He was a valiant fighter whom India will never forget.

Samuel Evans Stokes was an American Pastor who came to India in January 1904. He started his social work in the Himalayan Hills focusing on medical relief and education. He studied the Upanishads and the Puranas. He identified himself with the peasants of Simla. When the war broke out in 1914 he wanted

to join the British Army, but, he was given only recruiting duties. Slowly he became radical in his politics. He was against the Begar, a system of forced labour with severe exploitation for the luxurious life of the foreign officials. In 1920 he met Gandhiji. In 1921 he published a booklet attacking the Government and in December 1921 he was arrested for his article 'The Acid Test of Loyalty'. Finally, he left politics and turned to religion and philosophy. He and his family embraced Hinduism and received the name Satyanand. He died on 4th May 1946.

Madelein Slade from Britain came to India in 1925. She was attracted to Gandhiji through Romain Rolland. Gandhiji gave her the name 'Meera'. Dressed as a Gujarati peasant woman, she was engaged in the promotion of Khadi. In 1931 she accompanied Gandhiji to England to attend the Round Table Conference. Soon Gandhiji was arrested and her job was to collect reports of arrests in various places. Then she was also arrested and sentenced to three months imprisonment and she was arrested again and shifted to Sabarmati Jail in Ahmedabad where she shared a cell with Kasturba Gandhi. In 1934 she went to England to canvass popular support for Indian freedom. After the assassination of Gandhiji she was unhappy with the lack of cohesion in the Gandhian Movement. She was instrumental in the production of Gandhi film by Richard Attenborough. She died in Austria on 20th July 1982.

Philip Spratt, an activist of the British Communist Party came to India in January 1927. He was arrested in September 1927 under section 124 A. M A Jinnah and B.R Ambedkar were his advocates. He was later acquitted. But he was involved in the Meerut conspiracy case along with 29 others. Muzaffar Ahmed, P.C.Joshi, S.A.Dange and others were in the list. Advocate Ranjith Pandit and Motilal Nehru appeared for them, but Ahmed was convicted for life and Dange, Spratt and others for 12 yrs. But in appeal, the sentence was reduced to 3 yrs and 2 yrs respectively. On release he turned a democratic socialist. He was again arrested in 1934. Later, he moved away from the Communist Party and in 1939 he wrote a book 'Gandhism – an Analysis'. Spratt joined M.N Roy's radical Democratic Party 1944. He was married to Sita, the great granddaughter of Shingaravelu Chettiyar, a communist leader from Tamil Nadu. He ended up as a rabid anti communist. He died on 3rd March 1971. His wife Sita was given family pension for freedom fighters.

Dick Keithahn, an American missionary reached Madurai in 1925. In 1929 he met Gandhi and Tagore. He died on 7th December 1984.

Catherine Mary Heilman, came to India from England in January 1932. She got an alternate name Saraladevi. In December 1943 her movements were restricted. Later she was arrested and sent to Almorah Jail. She was convinced of the importance of education for girls.

This book is the second one after the 'Foreign Friends of India's Freedom' by

P.Kodanda Rao. The book profiled 21 individuals beginning with the liberal Governor General, William Bentick and ending with Labour Prime Minister, Clement Attlee. The others included A O Hume, the founder of Indian National Congress, the scholar Max Muller and the Theologian C S Andrews. Hence the importance of this book. It helps the readers to know the memorable role played by the foreign friends who had dedicated their lives to India's freedom struggle.

Eclectic Measures to Conserve Ecosystem: A Case Study of Kerala

Saurav Kumar Rai

**R.K. Suresh Kumar, P. Suresh Kumar and P. Sukumaran Nair (eds.),
Ecosystems and Resource Choices: Lessons from the Kerala Floods,
Kalpaz Publications, Delhi, 2022, 328 pages, Rs. 1100/-**

The ‘traditional’ understanding of Marxism deems it insensitive towards environmental concerns. The fascination of communist states including Soviet Russia and People’s Republic of China regarding big construction projects substantiate this ‘traditional’ understanding. However, if we carefully read Karl Marx, he viewed humans not as something separate from the environment, as modern western ideological orthodoxy does, but dialectically interconnected. For Marx, the future communist society will resolve the conflicts among humans and between humans and nature so that people can meet their needs in harmony with one another and with the rest of nature. To quote Marx from his note on ‘Estranged Labour’ as contained in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844, “Man lives on nature - means that nature is his body, with which he must remain in continuous interchange if he is not to die. That man’s physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature.” However, the limitlessly expansive and destructive dynamic of industrialization was the model which was followed not only by the capitalist countries, but also by the communist states. This led to gross undermining of environmental concerns both by liberal as well as communist regimes.

The present volume brings this commonality of fault with special reference to the state of Kerala. The background for it was created by the ecological disaster of 2018 whereby the state of Kerala was hit by the worst flood in nearly a century due to unusually high rainfall during the monsoon season. In the wake of this disaster the C. Achutha Menon Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram organized a seminar on 25 and 26 October 2018 around the theme ‘Common Property and Citizens Rights: Issues of Reconstruction of Kerala’ to deliberate on post-flood reconstruction of Kerala. The subsequent floods of 2019 and 2021 in Kerala proved the significance of such deliberations. All these deliberations have gone into the making of the present volume.

The volume critically accounts the hitherto development trajectory of Kerala be it based on the esteemed Kerala Model of Development (KMD) with its leftward orientation or on the Neo-liberal Strategies that were unleashed in 1990s. As delineated by the veteran economist K.N. Raj, Kerala, since 1970s, embarked upon a unique model of development characterized by results showing strong human development indicators when compared to the rest of the country such as high literacy and life expectancy rates, highly improved access to healthcare, and low infant mortality and birth rates, despite having a lower per capita income. The popular assertion is that a high level of political participation and activism among ordinary people ensured improvement in human development indicators irrespective of corresponding economic growth (p. 19). However, since 1990s in India, securing higher economic growth became a dominant objective across the states. Kerala was no exception to this whereby successive governments were compelled to adopt policies which might secure higher economic growth. According to the editors of the volume, both the aforesaid models substantially ignored the dynamics of environment in their discourse resulting into massive

environmental degradation to fulfill their declared objectives. This eventually translates into frequent ecological disasters the state of Kerala is afflicted with.

Now, what may be the way forward is the theme which binds the essays contained in this volume. The editors are of the opinion that even though KMD had various limitations, we need to take cognizance of its salient features which may be adapted for future reconstruction and environmental conservation. Here the editors argue that instead of considering KMD as an alternative model or substitute to market-based development policies, there is need to appropriate the lessons and experiences involved in KMD and to link it with market principles of modern times (p. 24). Thus, decentralized planning, cooperative framework and special purposes platforms all of which used to strengthen the KMD ought to be fit into globalization measures that has widened the scope of tapping market forces consistent with local situations and local interests. To quote the editors, 'wider participation by the people in the decision-making process enable and equip them to put the local economic resources to optimum use in a sustainable manner' (p. 24). Thus, the volume argues in favour of collaboration of the two models in order to ensure ecologically sustainable growth. This open-mindedness of the editors reflect in a statement whereby they claim that accepting the historical legacy of KMD and freeing it from the assertion that it is a left contribution and monopoly are inevitable for the progressive left to make it more useful and realistic for the contemporary times (p. 26).

The essays in the volume are divided into three sections. The first section contains essays under the rubric 'Resource Base and Common Property Rights: Retaining the Legacy of KMD'. It includes essays by M.A. Oomen, B. Vivekanandan, P. Sanal Mohan, John Kurien, Udaya S. Mishra, Janki Andharia and Tanina Teresa Mathews, and N. Anil Kumar and Suma Vishnudas. As argued, these essays discuss the popular ethos of KMD which may be utilized for future reconstruction of Kerala. The second section titled 'Rebuilding Kerala: Post Flood Challenges', which happens to be the largest section, contains as many as fourteen essays which lay the blueprint for recovery and reconstruction of Kerala after the floods. It includes essays by eminent scholars like C.P. Rajendran, N. Vinod Chandra Menon, N.C. Narayanan, S. Janakarajan, V.S. Vijayan, Gayathri Balagopal, Mary George, M. Suresh Babu and many others. The last section 'Learning Lessons and Experiences' contains only two essays, one by Nimmi Kurian and the other by Shekhar Pathak.

Overall, it is a rich volume wherein most of the essays are written with certain degree of open-mindedness. In fact, such unorthodox scholarly approach is required in the broader interest of the state and its people.

Deciphering the Kerala By-Election in Thrikkakara Assembly Constituency

**Josukutty C.A.
& Subramanian N.**

This paper attempts to examine the factors and pattern of voting in the Thrikkakara Assembly constituency by-election held on 31st May 2022. In this process the paper deciphers the elements that contributed to the electoral victory of the UDF in Thrikkakara and answers certain questions surrounding it - how different sections of people especially the minorities voted in the election, whether the victory of the Congress in the constituency signals a comeback of it after a series of electoral defeats at the hands of the LDF led by the CPI(M), what is the perception of the public on the development agendas of the LDF government with particular reference to Silver Line project, was the election result an assessment of the performance of the LDF government in general, how the electorate assessed the candidates and what is the political impact of the result of the by-election on coalition front politics of Kerala. The quantitative data for the required analysis had been collected from the constituency in a pre-poll survey conducted by the Survey Research Centre (SRC) of Department of Political Science, University of Kerala¹.

Introduction

The bye-election in Thrikkakara constituency of Kerala Legislative Assembly was significant in the context of the challenges faced by the United Democratic Front (UDF) led by the Congress and the political and electoral domination of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) led by the CPI(M). The UDF, especially the Congress, has been on the defensive as they have lost two consecutive Assembly and Local body elections in Kerala. The Congress is also facing devastation in the national political scenario. The by-election was an opportunity for it to stage a comeback and to prove that the party in Kerala is not being reduced to a mirror image of its national counterpart. This is also the first major test of strength that the UDF was facing after the change of leadership with a new KPCC president and opposition leader, that went against the traditional group equations of the Congress in the State. The LDF, on the other hand, saw this as an opportunity to reassure its hegemonic position and to seek approval for the flagship policies taken forward by its government, especially the Silver Line rail project. The BJP, which has been electorally stagnant in Kerala for the past few years, has a considerable presence in the constituency and left no communal stones unturned to keep its traditional vote base intact and to explore new vote base among the Christian community. The constituency, though a traditional stronghold of the Congress, is also notable for the political presence of Twenty 20, the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) wing of Anna-Kitex group of companies. Given that it has decided not to contest the by-election, the political position taken by it, along with AAP, is significant. Given the consolidated votes they control (around 10% in the constituency), any covert or overt support by these parties would reflect on the electoral fortunes of other fronts.

Despite being inconsequential in terms of numerical strength in the Kerala Assembly, as the LDF commands a huge majority, the by-election has turned out to be a matter of pride. The contest was notable for the intense campaign by the ruling LDF led by the CPI(M), and UDF led by the Congress. The LDF was on an all out effort to increase its tally to the fancy number of 100 seats in the assembly with the tagline 'Urappanu LDF' (It's LDF, For Sure). The LDF campaign also focused on slogan like 'Urappanu Vikasanam' (development, for sure) and 'Urappanu Janakshemam' (welfare, for sure) and the strong leadership of the

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan by using catchword, 'Classic Captain'². For the Congress, which is at its bottom electorally, retaining the constituency was a political necessity in the context of the domination of Kerala politics by the CPI (M). Leaders of all three fronts, the CPI (M), the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party have camped in the constituency to lead the election campaign.

'Development' has been the central theme of the campaign for LDF. 'Nava Keralam' (New Kerala)-projects like K-rail, K-phone, Water Metro and extension of Kochi Metro-have been in the mainstream campaign themes. The LDF government viewed the by-election as an appraisal of its large-scale infrastructure push, especially the SilverLine semi-high speed rail network, which faced resistance from environmentalists, technocrats, the opposition and the people likely to be displaced by the standalone rail corridor. In line with the new development paradigm for Kerala unveiled by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the government has made no bones about its intent to undertake 'growth-oriented' high-value development projects alongside the welfare initiatives for which it won applause in the first term. The CPI(M) led alliance orchestrated its entire machinery in Thrikkakara. The campaign was led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan himself. From central committee members to every member of the party and associated class-mass organisations have been assigned specific responsibilities to execute. Even the door-to-door squads included senior leaders, ministers, MPs and MLAs. The UDF rested their hopes on the loyalty of the electorate and the sentiments towards late P.T. Thomas, the incumbent MLA. Intense campaigning against Silver Line, the semi-high speed rail project proposed by the government, has been the highlight of the UDF camp. For the Congress it was a question of survival and ensuring the unity of the party to retain the seat against the campaign onslaught by the LDF.

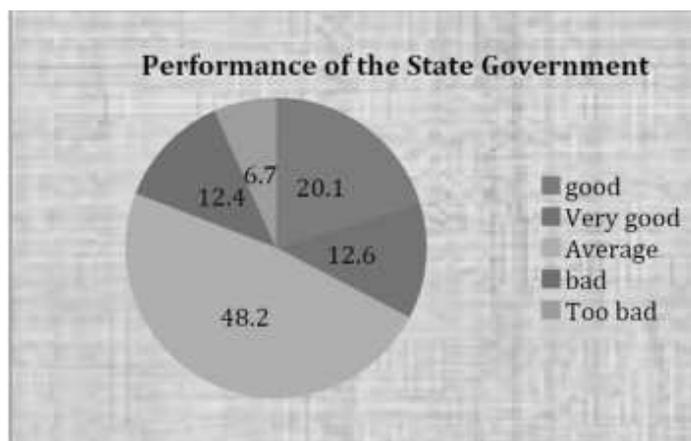
For the BJP, it was imperative to prove their relevance in the context of the tight bipolar contest between the UDF and LDF. Also the BJP was trying its best to woo the Christian community, which has a major presence in the constituency - about 40%, by pandering to some Church leaders' unyielding Islamophobic positions. P.C. George, erstwhile MLA of the Poonjar constituency, who has been booked by the police for hate speech against Muslims in a RSS sponsored programme and portrayed by the BJP as a 'hero for the Christian cause', was a star-campaigner for the BJP in Thrikkakara³.

The by-poll in Thrikkakara Assembly Constituency was necessitated by the untimely death of senior Congress leader P.T. Thomas. He was a popular leader, known for his integrity and secular credentials. To galvanise on this popularity, the UDF fielded his wife, Uma Thomas, as its candidate. To counter this tactically, the LDF fielded an independent candidate, Dr. Jo Joseph, who is known to be close to the Church establishments, so as to penetrate the traditional Christian vote base of the Congress. The Assembly constituency was formed in 2011. The Congress held the seat since the inception of the constituency with a margin of 22,406 and 11,996 votes in the 2011 and 2016 elections respectively⁴. In 2021 Congress won the seat with 59839 votes (43.82 %) as against LDF's 45510 votes constituting 33.32%⁵. In the 2022 by-election, Uma Thomas of the Indian National Congress won the seat by defeating Jo Joseph of the CPI (M) by a margin of 25016 votes, the highest margin in the history of the constituency. Ms. Thomas bagged 53.76% of the polled votes and Mr. Joseph came a distant second with 35.28% as they secured 72,770 votes and 47,754 votes respectively⁶. The NDA candidate of the BJP, A.N. Radhakrishnan bagged 12,957 votes with a measly vote share of 9.57%.

Factors and Forces

A variety of factors such as the performance of the government especially in relation to developmental activities, position and organisational strength of different political parties, personality and merit of the contesting candidates, perception about the winnability of candidates, specific issues and needs of the constituency concerned, issues in state and national politics, communal equations of the constituency and role of opposition have figured in the voting behaviour in Thrikkakara by-election.

Figure 1



Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

The by-election took place on the eve of completion of the first year of the second Pinarayi Vijayan led LDF government. Just a year back, the front had received a historic mandate by getting consecutive victories in Assembly elections, largely banking on the goodwill of the government. Hence, what the electorate thought of the performance of the government was of importance for the bye-election. By-elections, most of the time, are also seen as an evaluation of the government and the ruling front. This is particularly true as the LDF has pitched the by-election as an appraisal of its development agenda. From figure 1 it can be inferred that the people in general are fairly satisfied with the government. Only around 19% of the respondents had a negative impression of the government and 33% had a good opinion. However, given the pro-incumbency the LDF had during the run up to assembly election last year, this is slightly lower than the approval rating it received then, as 48% rate the performance of the government as average.

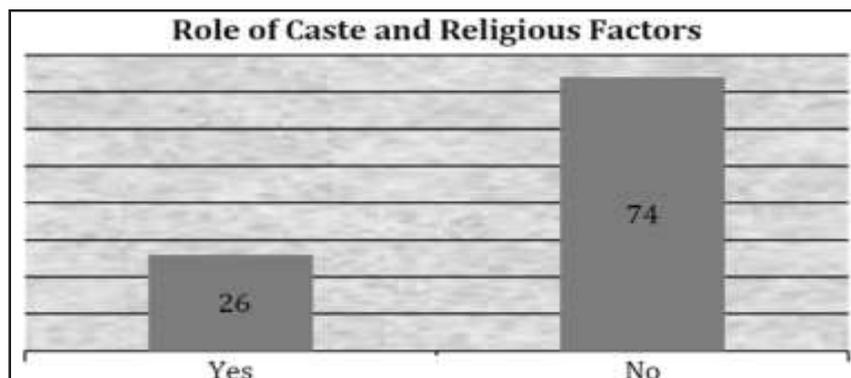
Table 1 - Most important factor in this election

	Frequency	Percent
Performance of the LDF government	123	31.7
Agreement with the UDF	86	22.2
Agreement with BJP	9	2.3
Dissatisfaction with various fronts	58	14.9
Don't Know	42	10.8
No Opinion	70	18.0
Total	388	100.0

Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

A greater share of the electorate, around 31%, think that performance of the LDF government is the most important factor in deciding their mandate. This is followed by the people's agreement with the political position of UDF, with a significant 22%. While only a miniscule 2% think that they agree with BJP, the share of the electorate that is dissatisfied with both LDF and UDF is a significant 15%. It is evident from the table that performance of the government is crucial and the electoral battle still continues to be primarily between the UDF and LDF. And, over and above the traditional undecided votes, this 15% is a significant deciding factor that could swing the election either way.

Figure 2



Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

Table 2 - Party that benefit out of it

	Frequency	Percent
LDF	29	29.8%
UDF	44	45.3%
BJP	6	6.1%
No Opinion	18	18.5%
Total	97	100%

Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

From figure 2, it is clear that only around a quarter of the electorate think that denominational factors based on Caste and Religion play a role in deciding the mandate. While this could reflect a relatively secular nature of the electorate in Kerala, there is a difficulty in arriving at this conclusion because of the possibility of respondents not revealing their denominational sentiments honestly. More importantly, Table 2 shows that a greater share of the electorate thinks that these denominational factors would benefit the UDF than LDF, with 45% and 30% respectively. Given the accusation that the LDF candidate selection of Dr. Jo Joseph as a means of community appeasement, even mocked as Church's nominee ('Sabha Sthaanarthi'), the denominational factors, paradoxically, was in favour of UDF. Partly it points to the traditionally favourable equations that the UDF have with the minority communities.

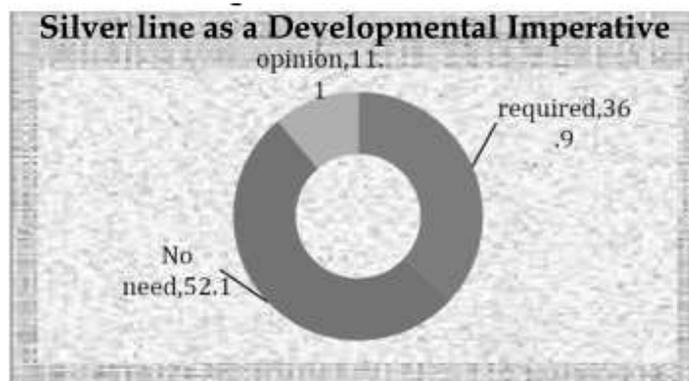
Table 3 - Development Policies of the Government

	Frequency	Percent
Good	104	26.8
Very good	43	11.1
Average	161	41.5
Bad	55	14.2
Too bad	20	6.5
Total	388	100.0

Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

Table 3 demonstrates that the people largely feel good about the development initiatives and activities of the government, with over 37% thinking that the policies pursued as good and very good. About 41% think it as average. This shows the overall concern for development by the electorate. At the same time it must be noted that it cannot be construed as support for any specific development project of the government.

Figure 3



Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

Table 4 - Opinion on Silver Line Protest

	Frequency	Percent
Protest is needed	173	44.6
The protest is politically motivated	82	21.1
Need more discussion	133	34.3
Total	388	100.0

Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

In the run up to the election, the Silver Line project has been a major issue of political debate. The ruling LDF portrayed the project, which connects the North-South of the State with a semi-high speed railway network, as a next level development imperative and taking it forward through all means. The opposition UDF and BJP, along with several civil society organisations, has categorised this project as disastrous for the State, citing ecological, financial, and technical concerns as derived from the Detailed Project Report (DPR). They have been carrying out militant protests against the project, which include scuttling of the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) survey necessary for the implementation of the project. LDF has rebutted that the protest was politically motivated and it is part of a conspiracy to sabotage the developmental activities of the State⁷. It was in this background of political battle that the by-election was held. Thrikkakara, being an urban constituency where development is a major concern, was considered a litmus test for the project by both the fronts. Hence the Survey tried to gather the opinion of the respondents on Silver Line. From figure 3, it could be seen that more than 50% of the respondents think that the project is unnecessary. Around 37% think it is good to go forward with the project. Only 21% of the people buy the LDF propagated conspiracy theory behind the protest against Silver Line and more than 44% think that the protest is legitimate. Thus, although a good share of the respondents appreciate the developmental activities of the government in general, as inferred from Table 3, the Silver Line project has been particularly unacceptable to a significant number of respondents.

Table 5 - Treatment of Minorities by Pinarayi Government

	Frequency	Percent
All minorities are treated equally	162	41.8
Appeasement of Minorities	38	9.8
All minorities are not treated equally	82	21.1
No Opinion	106	27.3
Total	388	100.0

Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

In the Thrikkakara constituency the denominational minorities together constitute more than half of the electorate, with Christians around 40% and Muslims around 15%. According to table 8, while more than 40% of the respondents think that the government is treating all minority groups fairly and equally, a significant 21% think otherwise - that is, the government is preferring one minority and discriminating the other. Another 10% think that the government is appeasing the minorities. These perceptions constitute a threat to the secular fabric of Kerala, regardless of the electoral impact of it. While the accusation of minority appeasement by secular forces is a campaign that the RSS-BJP has been carrying out ever since its inception and on a pan-Indian level, pitching one minority against the other is something that the BJP have been trying recently in Kerala, to penetrate into the Christian voters.

Table 6 - Treatment of Minorities - Religion Based Cross Tabulation

		Religion				Total
		Hindu	Muslim	Christain	No Religion	
All minorities are treated equally	Count	77	26	59	0	162
	% of Total	19.8%	6.7%	15.2%	0.0%	41.8%
Appeasement of Minorities	Count	19	5	13	1	38
	% of Total	4.9%	1.3%	3.4%	0.3%	9.8%
All minorities are not treated equally	Count	27	11	44	0	82
	% of Total	7.0%	2.8%	11.3%	0.0%	21.1%
No opinion	Count	46	14	46	0	106
	% of Total	11.9%	3.6%	11.9%	0.0%	27.3%
Total	Count	169	56	162	1	388
	% of Total	43.6%	14.4%	41.8%	0.3%	100%

Source: SRC, Trikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

Table 6 gives the religion wise cross tabulated data on the status of minorities under Pinarayi Vijayan led government. Recently, several communal forces, led by the BJP-RSS, in collaboration with certain elements of the church, have been trying to pitch Christians against Muslims by making a vilification campaign on minority scholarship, Narcotic Jihad, Hagia Sophia etc. They used P.C. George, former MLA from Poonjar who is infamous for making communal statements, as a Christian face of their election campaign. The undertone of the campaign is that Muslims are misusing the minority status to corner benefits and the Christians are left behind in a disadvantageous position. The Survey found that this campaign has buyers among 44 out of the 162 interviewed Christians. That is, more than 27% of the Christians fall for this communal campaign. This has not converted into votes for the BJP, but has huge consequences for the secular fabric of Kerala society.

Table 7 - Candidature of Uma Thomas

	Frequency	Percent
There will be a sequel to PT Thomas	104	26.8
Candidate above Congress Group politics	30	7.7
Attempt for sympathy votes	151	38.9
Suitable candidate for this constituency	69	17.8
Not a good candidate	34	8.8
Total	388	100.0

Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

The above table gives the respondents' opinion on UDF's candidate Ms. Uma Thomas. Close to 39% of the respondents think that she will receive votes out of sympathy towards the unfortunate demise of her husband. Around 27% think that her candidature has a continuity to the legacy of P.T. Thomas. Thus the sympathy votes did bring an advantage for Ms. Uma Thomas and the UDF.

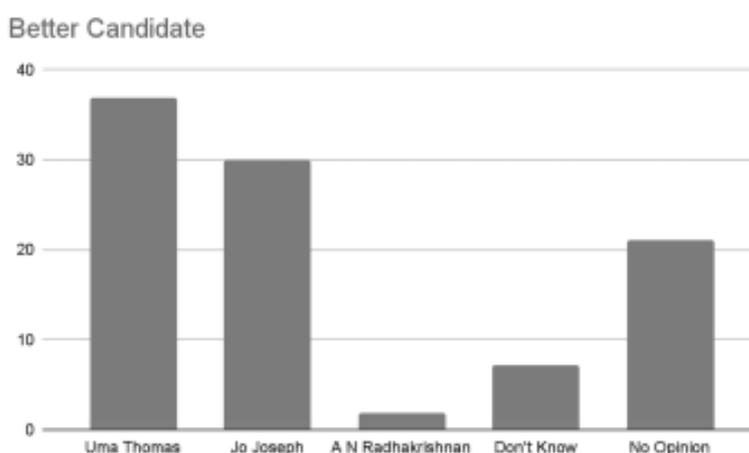
Table 8 - Dr. Jo Joseph as a Candidate

	Frequency	Percent
Suitable candidate for this constituency	120	30.9
Most suitable candidate against Uma Thomas	69	17.8
Average	151	38.9
below average	48	12.4
Total	388	100.0

Source: SRC, Trikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

The table 8 gives the voters' evaluation of the LDF candidate. A good share of the electorate, around 31%, think that he is a suitable candidate for the constituency and around 18% think that he is the most suited to contest against Ms. Uma Thomas. A greater share of the electorate, 38% think that he is only an average candidate and 12 % think that he is a below average candidate. This perceptions seemed to have worked in favour of the UDF.

Figure 4



Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

Figure 4 shows that UDF's candidate Ms. Uma Thomas has a slight edge over the LDF candidate, with a difference of around 4%. Significantly 21% have opted not to give their opinion in this regard.

Table 9 - Better candidate - Gender based cross tabulation

			Gender		Total
			Female	Male	
	LDF	Count	62	66	128
		% of Total	16.0%	17.0%	33.0%
	UDF	Count	79	64	143
		% of Total	20.4%	16.5%	36.9%

	BJP	Count	3	4	7
		% of Total	0.8%	1.0%	1.8%
	Don't know	Count	15	13	28
		% of Total	3.9%	3.4%	7.2%
	Noopinion	Count	48	34	82
		% of Total	12.4%	8.8%	21.1%
	Total	Count	207	181	388
		% of Total	53.4%	46.6%	100.0%

Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

Table 10 - Better Candidate - Religion based cross tabulation

		Religion				Total
		Hindu	Muslim	Christain	No Religion	
	LDF	Count	72	17	39	128
		% of Total	18.6%	4.4%	10.1%	0.0%
	UDF	Count	39	20	84	143
		% of Total	10.1%	5.2%	21.6%	0.0%
	BJP	Count	5	0	2	7
		% of Total	1.3%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
	Don't know	Count	13	3	12	28
		% of Total	3.4%	0.8%	3.1%	0.0%
	Noopinion	Count	40	16	25	82
		% of Total	10.3%	4.1%	6.4%	0.3%
Total	Count	169	56	162	1	388
		% of Total	43.6%	14.4%	41.8%	0.3%

Source: SRC, Trikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

Tables 9 and 10 give the gender based and religion based cross tabulation of the electorate's preference for the candidate. From Table 10, it is clear that a small percentage of the women voters, about 4%, prefer UDF's candidate Uma Thomas over LDF's Dr. Jo Joseph, while total male voters are distributed more or less equally, with 17% and 16.5% respectively. Thus women voters tend to sympathise with Uma Thomas. On the denominational front, as derived from Table 10, there is a crucial inference. It is clear that LDF's candidate, Dr. Jo Joseph, could gain the confidence of about 10% of Christains only. Uma Thomas, on the other hand, receives the support of 21% Christians. The tactical move of LDF by fielding someone close to the Church establishment for eating into the traditional Christian vote base of the UDF has not worked. Thus, in the final analysis regarding the candidate selection, the gender factor has rewarded Uma Thomas in galvanising the sympathy and solidarity votes and the denominational factors considered by the LDF have failed to break the traditional vote bank of UDF.

Table 11 - Benefit of Twenty20 and AAP votes

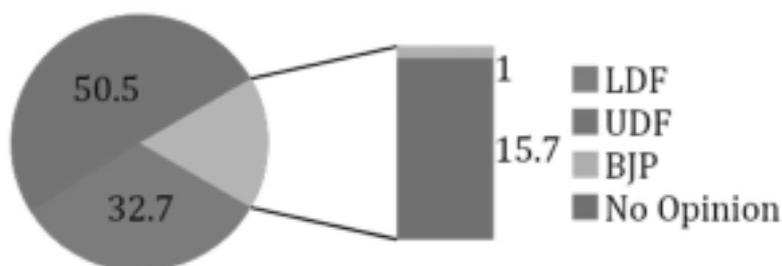
	Frequency	Percent
LDF	89	22.9
UDF	179	46.1
BJP	17	4.4
Others	103	26.5
Total	388	100.0

Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

The Twenty20 and AAP together polled a share of around 10% of the votes in the constituency during the previous elections. The Survey shows that an overwhelming number of voters think that the benefit of Twenty 20 and AAP refusing to run for the election would go for the UDF, 46% against 23%. Thus it can be said that the UDF has the benefit of a good share of the swing votes controlled by these alternative parties. Given that the constituency is traditionally favourable to UDF, this comes as an added advantage.

Figure 5

Front that would emerge victorious



Source: SRC, Thrikkakara Pre-poll Survey 2022

All the factors analysed above, such as people’s concern towards Silver Line project, advantage provided by the absence of Twenty20 from the electoral competition, votes garnered out of sympathy towards Uma Thomas, failure of the LDF tactics to break the traditional vote base of UDF, have all contributed in making a greater share of people, around 50%, think that the UDF would emerge victorious. Only 32% of the respondents think that LDF would win the election. People’s predictions during elections are often self-fulfilling prophecies. Thus the survey indicated an advantage for the UDF in this by-election.

Conclusion

The by-election in Thrikkakara took place at a crucial political juncture in Kerala politics. For the UDF, a victory in the election was necessary to prove their electoral and political relevance. A series of electoral defeats had created a turmoil within the front, and leaders and followers alike have become sceptical of its capability to take on the LDF. The predicament that the Congress faces at the national level has percolated down among the cadres in Kerala as well. It was in this background that the Congress party revamped its leadership, breaking the traditional equations of A and I groups of the party. Thus it was also a test of its new leadership and organisational revamps. For the LDF, winning another traditional stronghold of UDF was to reassure its political dominance. Also, it sought to receive approval and legitimacy for the policies of the second LDF government led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, especially, a green signal for the Silver Line project, over which intense political battle has been taking place between the fronts. The victory of the UDF in the constituency points to the following trends and patterns of voting behaviour and politics.

Given that late P. T Thomas was a popular leader and had won the constituency with record margins, the UDF had an inherent advantage in the election. With Uma Thomas as the candidate, this advantage was reinforced. Candidature of Uma Thomas was a huge plus point for the Congress and the UDF. The study shows that close to 39% of the respondents thought that she would receive sympathy votes and around 27% thought that her candidature has a continuity to the legacy of P.T. Thomas. This is again verified in the Survey, which returns the fact that a greater share of women preferred Uma as a better candidate. On the other hand, the tactical move of LDF by fielding an independent candidate of the Christian community, who is also considered to be close to the Church establishment, for eating into the traditional Christian vote base of the UDF has not worked. The Survey shows that a greater share of Christians voted for the UDF.

The electorate, by and large, has a good opinion on the performance of the government and they are appreciative of the developmental aspects of its policies. But the Silver Line project, vociferously taken forward by the government and vehemently resisted by the opposition, has only fewer approvers. A larger share of the people think that the protest against the project is legitimate and emanates from the genuine concerns of the people, over which a conspiracy has been alleged by the ruling LDF. The study and the verdict shows that the Silver Line and the controversies surrounding it have become a blemish on the otherwise good appeal of the LDF government. Thus the electoral campaign around Silver Line has helped the UDF to secure victory in Thrikkakara, but it does not indicate or represent any electoral trend for the future. LDF still remains politically hegemonic.

The study shows that more than one in four Christians in Thrikkakara think that they are being discriminated against Muslims by the government. This is a handy work of the BJP wherein they have been trying to pitch Christians against Muslims for a while now. This has not electorally rewarded the BJP with Christian votes in Thrikkakara. In fact, this has backfired as BJP's vote share has shrunk marginally. But in the long term, this is a serious concern for the secular framework of Kerala.

As pointed out earlier, regional formation led by the Industrialist Sabu Thomas, Twenty 20, has considerable influence in the constituency. It had polled 10.18% of the votes in Thrikkakara during the 2021 Assembly elections. It is to be noted that Sabu Thomas and his party Twenty20 was a bitter enemy of the LDF government as well as a detractor of late P. T. Thomas. Thus, once it is out of the competition, its vote base could have swung either way. The Survey shows that the vote share previously polled for the Twenty20 and AAP have swung towards the UDF, and it is also seen in the 10% increase in the vote share of the UDF in 2022 from the 2021 election.

Based on the analysis of voting patterns and the political context, the following takeaways stand out. One, the LDF led by the CPI (M) continues to be the dominant political front in Kerala. Though the UDF won the seat with a huge majority and increased percentage of votes, the LDF has also increased its votes from 44894 (33.32%) in 2021 to 47,754 (35.28%) in 2022. The huge majority of votes (25016 votes), and increased percentage of votes (53.76%) for UDF could be attributed to the Twenty 20 votes going more or less entirely to the UDF, over and above the other advantages it had. At the same time it must be noted that the UDF victory has proved that the Left juggernaut is stoppable in the State. Two, though the Congress has won the seat with a thumping majority, it cannot be conclusively claimed from the Thrikkakara by-election that the UDF is on a comeback trail after a series of electoral defeats. This is because the traditional vote share of the LDF remains intact in the constituency and it could be inferred that the LDF does not face an erosion of its vote base in general. Three, Kerala politics continues to be bipolar between the UDF and the LDF. The BJP led NDA is yet to emerge as a winning front. It is to be noted that the vote share of BJP has decreased from 15.70% in 2016 to 11.34% in 2021 and further to 9.57% in this bye-election⁸. Four, the Silver Line project would continue to be a thorny issue in the days to come. The electoral outcome will definitely influence the LDF government in its approach towards the project. Five, the voting preferences of various religious minorities continue to be pro-UDF as is verified in the study. There is a visible communal

distancing taking place between the Christians and Muslims which might have implications for Kerala's secular politics. But this has not converted into votes for the BJP in this election. Six, politically, an impressive victory for the UDF in Thrikkakara has confirmed the supremacy of the new Congress leadership. Finally, the most significant factor that contributed to the victory of the UDF was the edge that the candidature of Uma Thomas had had over that of Dr. Jo Joseph and the specificities of Thrikkakara as a traditional bastion of the Congress party.

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Shift from Traditional Parties : Reviewing Punjab Assembly Polls, 2022

Rajvinder Singh

The victory in the Punjab assembly election 2022 is significant for the AAP. For the first time the party registered its major victory outside its home territory of Delhi. The 2022 assembly elections saw the Punjabi voters move towards 'badlav' (change) from old parties to give a chance to a small issue-based party. Voters rejected traditional parties and their leaders. People of Punjab voted for 'badlaav' (change) in the political establishment so that none of the "extraneous" factors worked, and people have voted against the usual lines of religion, caste, deras and class. AAP's performance in Punjab is expected to give a massive boost to its ambition of becoming BJP's national alternative.

The Punjab assembly election 2022 result is historic in the sense that for the first time a third front secured a clear mandate to form the government in Punjab, where the two traditional rivals - the Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) - ruled for the last seven decades. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has swept Punjab and won 92 seats out of 117, the best-ever performance by any party in the state. AAP's victory in Punjab assembly election 2022 will be a first victory for party outside its home territory of Delhi. AAP's Punjab co-incharge Raghav Chadha posted on twitter "We urged the voters 'jhadoo chhalao', unhone toh vacuum cleaner chala diya," and now the party has become a "natural and national alternative to Congress."¹

This research paper examines the why and how AAP an "Issue based" small party won the Punjab assembly election where throughout its history identity politics played a decisive role.

A Brief History of Aam Aadmi Party and its Politics

AAP has been the newest and imperative addition in Indian political system. AAP at the time of its advent promised a new kind of politics. The Party made a strong effort to introduce a new issue "corruption" into the arena of party competition. The Party was giving the issue of corruption a new salience in electoral politics and using that as the basis for political mobilisation. The AAP does not appeal to a homogenous social groups and so does not gain from a structural cleavage that could be based on caste or religion. Instead, the party attempted to develop a political or non-structural cleavage based on the issue of corruption. AAP argues convincingly against identity politics, which are reflected in the cleavages championed by some rival parties, asserting that parties should debate government performance rather than appealing to the social backgrounds of electorate. The AAP sought to present itself as a credible alternative to older mainstream parties and their politics.²

After its formation in November 2012, its first electoral test was in the 2013 Delhi Assembly election, in which it unexpectedly emerged as the second-largest party, winning 28 of the 70 seats, leaving behind the incumbent Congress. With no party obtaining an overall majority, the AAP formed a minority government with conditional support from the Congress. The party remained in power for only 49 days. 2014 Lok Sabha election was the second election contested by the party. Contesting on 434 seats it obtained two per cent (11 million votes) of votes polled in the election and 414 of the party candidates lost their security deposits by failing to secure one-sixth of the votes in their constituencies. The AAP won only 4 seats which all came from Punjab. As a result of its performance in these elections, the AAP became a recognised state party in Punjab. Since then party has marked its electoral presence in Punjab. After its stunning victory in the 2015 Delhi Assembly elections, AAP decided it was time to expand the party base beyond the National Capital Region. Punjab was a natural choice for party because in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, it was the only state that

gave its candidates victories, sending four AAP leaders to Parliament. The decision to contest the 2017 Punjab election was well planned. The party hoped that a win in Punjab would pave the way for its quick expansion in other states. The AAP leadership promised to uproot the old 'decadent' political parties and change the entrenched system for better in Punjab. The AAP sought to present itself as a credible alternative to older mainstream parties and their politics. The party's clean politics was to be based on agenda based politics, vote for transparency and accountability in public life. But in the 2017 assembly election in Punjab, the party finished a distant second to the Congress, with 20 seats and 23.7 % vote share; lower than party's expectations but more than a hundred year old regional party i.e. Shiromani Akali Dal and its long-term ally BJP, the combine winning only 18 seats.³

Party System and Main Issues in Punjab Politics

The political set up of Punjab underwent many changes with the partition of the country in 1947 and the reorganisation of Punjab on a linguistic basis in 1966. The main beneficiary of the reorganisation of Punjab was Akali Dal. Shiromani Akali Dal played an important role in re-organisation of Punjab on Linguistic basis.⁴ In the undivided Punjab, they could never have won a majority of seats. On the other hand, it was the Jan Sangh which suffered the most and lost all hopes of improving its position in the future and its main support was among the urban Hindus which became a minority in Punjab.⁵ In reorganised Punjab, the Hindus struggled with majority-minority complex, perceiving themselves to be a majority in India and a minority in the reorganised Punjab. The Sikhs have had a minority-majority complex being a majority in Punjab and minority in India. It is a continuing source of political conflict and tension between the Sikh majority Punjab and Hindu majority India.⁶

Punjab as a state of India has been going through different phases. Like other Indian states, Punjab has also been influenced by different social movements like demand of Punjabi suba on the basis of language and after that Punjab has watched the Maoist Naxalite movement of the late 1960s and the Akali morcha (agitation) of the early 1980s and Khalistani movement. The political discourse during every elections includes the issue of the protection of Punjab's river water (sharing of river waters with Haryana by SYL canal), making Chandigarh the capital of Punjab, merging the Punjabi-speaking areas given to Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, Operation Blue Star (army action at the Golden Temple in 1984), and the anti-Sikh violence of 1984 in Delhi and other part of India. These issues played imperative role in shaping the electoral politics of Modern Punjab. As Ashutosh Kumar argues that "social distinctions based on caste, kinship, region, language, script and religion have remained important, sometimes latent factors, shaping the complex dynamics of party competition and electoral behaviour in Punjab Politics".⁷

The Sikh community became the majority community in 1966 and it enabled Akali Dal to become a serious contender for power. But the Sikhs as religious community do not act in unidimensional manner in electoral politics. Apart from the Akalis they owed allegiance to the Congress, the Communist Party of India (CPI), and Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP). After reorganisation, Punjab politics has been mostly dominated by Jat-Sikh farmers. Besides these segments the Sikhs like *Mazhabis*, *Ravidasias* and *Nirankaris* have remained suspicious of *Jatt* dominance. However, the social basis of power in Punjab has remained unchanged in favour of the landowning Jat Sikh community, which has been numerically dominant.

The Congress party had remained in power in Punjab from 1947-1967 with the help of coalition partners. But in the 1967 assembly elections, the first after the formation of Punjabi state, an Akali-led coalition that included the Communist parties and Jana Sangh came to power. This was soon brought down by defections engineered by the Congress-led central government. However, in the subsequent assembly elections in 1969, the Akali-led coalition again came back to power which was also dismissed soon by the Congress-led central government. The Congress achieved victory during the 1972 assembly elections and since then both the Congress and the SAD with the help of coalition partners formed the governments alternatively until 2017.⁸

Traditionally, Punjab has been dominated by the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Congress. There

was the presence of parties such as the Jan Sangh (later Bhartiya Janta Party), Communist Party of India (CPI), BSP and breakaway factions of Akali Dal. Both the Congress and the SAD had earlier formed alliances with the smaller parties to come to power. But in the last few decades, most of these small parties have been routed, leaving the SAD in alliance with the BJP and the Congress as the major players. After almost two decades of militant movement, Punjabi people were looking for a consensus and reconciliation to restore communal peace in the state. It forced the political parties to change their strategy. The Shiromani Akali Dal's political assertions changed from religious identity to secular Punjabi identity. After that, SAD formed alliance with BJP which was significant. As a result of this alliance, for the first time SAD changed its political position from an anti-centre stand (Anandpur Sahib Resolution 1973) to cooperative federalism from a politics of confrontation. They advocated communal peace and changed from Sikh identity to Punjabi Identity (Hindu-Sikh unity).⁹ In Moga declaration the SAD adopted the people's agenda, which was based on restoring peace, social harmony, and initiating a process of social reconstruction in the state, through its slogan of "Punjab, Punjabi, Punjabiat."¹⁰ So the electoral agenda shifted from the ethno-religious to issue of good governance. With this, as Ashutosh Kumar argued SAD and BJP entered into a 'long-term mutually beneficial electoral alliance' with the aim of taking on the Congress which has had decent support base both among the Hindus as well as the Sikhs.¹¹

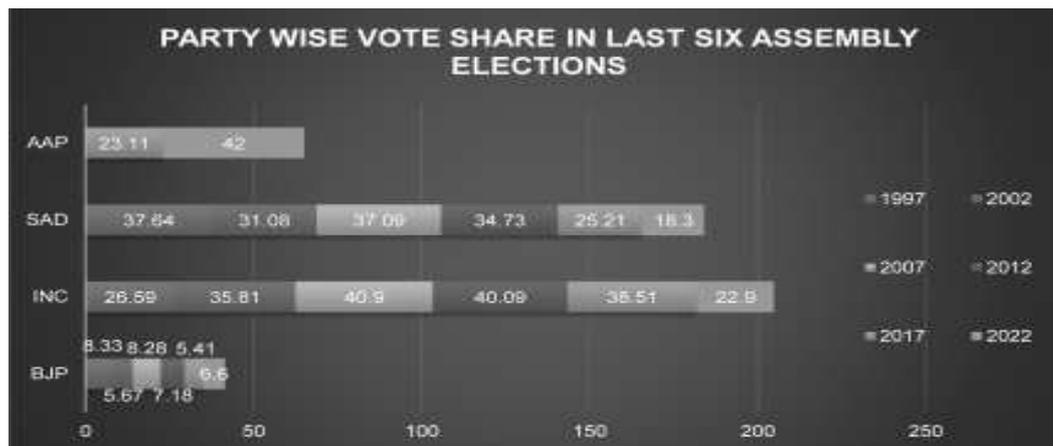
Historically, Punjab had a bipolar party system. Congress and SAD-BJP combine remained the two strong competitors placed at two opposite ends. However, there are always some minor parties which are electorally ineffective in state. Punjab has a tradition of ruling party being voted out in each election and replaced by the leading opposition party. The 2012 state assembly elections was the sole exception to this trend when the SAD-BJP combine was able to retain power in the state.¹² However, the entry of the AAP as the third electoral alternative in the 2014 parliamentary election and in the 2017 assembly elections shattered the two-party system. AAP became the opposition party in the 2017 assembly election.

Before the entrance of AAP in Punjab's electoral politics, many attempts at forming a third alternative had failed. At one stage, in 1989 Lok Sabha election, the Simranjeet Singh Mann-led Akali Dal (Mann) won nine out of thirteen seats in Punjab. However, Simranjeet Singh Mann was not able to organise his support in a sustainable manner. The Left parties like the CPI and the CPM, which had a support base in the Malwa region before the militancy period, failed to revive after 1997. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), a lower castes support-based party was founded by Kanshi Ram. He won the seat of Hoshiarpur in 1991 parliamentary elections. However, BSP could not consolidate itself in the state despite having scheduled castes constituting 31.9 percent of the state's population, highest among the states in the country. In the 1992 state assembly elections, BSP won nine constituencies with 16.32 percent of the vote share, contesting from 105 seats. Since then, however, there has been a story of constant decline for the party. The last time the BSP won a seat was in the 1997 Assembly elections.

The BSP performance in the Lok Sabha elections has been equally dismal as it has failed to secure even a single seat in the Lok Sabha elections, held since 1992 elections.¹³ The party suffered due to factionalism and apathy of the party top leadership, which remained focussed on Uttar Pradesh. However, scheduled castes are divided not only along caste lines but also on religious lines that result in 'an absence of any visible pattern in their voting behaviour' (Judge 2012). There are 39 scheduled castes and the two most numerous castes are Chamars and Churas. Chamars have either remained Hindu or have identified them as Ramdasias or Adi-dharmis.

The Punjab People's Party (PPP) established in late 2010 under the leadership of Manpreet Singh Badal, also failed to present an alternative. In 2012 assembly elections PPP became a major spoiler with five percent vote share without winning even a single seat.¹⁴ The parties like the BSP and the CPI (in alliance with the CPM) had managed to get a very few number of parliamentary or assembly seats but either in alliance with the Congress or with the SAD but never alone.

Table No. 1: Party wise vote share in last six assembly elections from 1997 to 2022



Emergence of Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab

Punjab has had a long standing two plus party system beginning with the 1997 assembly elections. Over the decades the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) has weakened organizationally as well ideologically under the leadership of Badal senior and his family. Its long term ally BJP has never been successful in broadening its social support base and also its state level leadership despite having alliance with the SAD and being part of the coalition government formed in 1997, 2007 and 2012. Congress also has not succeeded in tackling the economic decline and institutionalized corruption that has afflicted the state for the last two decades. Under the scenario, AAP had a good chance of presenting a credible alternative to the hapless Punjab electorates.

AAP entered in Punjab first time when the party won the four Lok Sabha seats in 2014 and AAP became a recognised state party in Punjab. Since then party has marked its electoral presence in Punjab. But in the 2017 assembly election, the party finished a distant second to the Congress, with 20 seats and 23.7 % vote share; lower than party's expectations. So what went wrong with the AAP in 2017 assembly elections?

During every elections, election campaign goes around the issue of the protection of Punjab's river water (sharing of river waters with Haryana by SYL canal), making Chandigarh the capital of Punjab, merging the Punjabi-speaking areas given to Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, Operation Blue Star (army action at the Golden Temple in 1984), and the anti-Sikh violence of 1984 in Delhi and other part of India. These issues always played an important role in shaping the electoral politics of modern Punjab. All the above factors shape the identity politics in Punjab and in 2017 all these factors were used by Congress and SAD leadership against the AAP in last month of campaign. The perceptions were created that AAP's Delhi-based leadership had no sensitivity towards Punjab's culture and history. The party top leadership frittered the chance by imposing the Delhi based leader on the state unit. Durgesh Pathak and Sanjay Singh, sent from Delhi, were seen as too arrogant and were detested by the Punjabi leadership. The ticket distribution also caused much heartburn. In a state which was reorganized as a result of Punjabi Suba movement that demanded a territorial homeland for the Sikhs after partition and where language and script along with religion matter much more than caste, it was blunder on the part of the Delhi based leadership to project Kejriwal, a Haryanvi, as the face of the party during the electoral campaign.¹⁵

Another main reasons why AAP could not come across as a stable option was its inability to project a CM-face. This gave the opposing parties a chance to spread numerous conspiracy theories such as AAP's intention to import a CM from outside the state. For a state known to always elect a Sikh CM, this uncertainty was too much to digest for the electorate. The Congress and Akalis told the electorate again and again about people from UP deciding AAP's candidates and thus their future. Given the strong sub-nationalistic feelings in Punjab, the tag of being an outsider began to hurt the AAP campaign. AAP suddenly appeared as the 'outsider' party to the electorate. The AAP also did not have a strong chief ministerial candidate to counter

such accusations. People did not like the dictatorial attitude of non-Punjabi leaders on the local leaders in the state. Captain Amrinder Singh started blaming AAP for using Khalistani money in its campaign and for its alleged tie up with anti-national secessionist forces. This rhetoric went down very well with the Hindu electorate, because they had suffered in the hands of Sikh extremists. Adding to the fears, just 40 days before the polls, a right-wing Hindu leader was shot dead in Ludhiana by unidentified gunmen and just 4 days before the polls, a blast ripped through a Congress political rally at Maur near Bathinda. The car blast killed five persons. And both parties blew out of proportion over Kejriwal’s meeting with hardliner Sikhs and his night’s stay at a house in Moga which was once inhabited by a former Sikh militant who had migrated abroad 20 years ago. All this came handy to the media in building up a strong narrative few days before the polling that AAP’s victory might facilitate the return of old ‘black days of Sikh militancy in Punjab. The reports of AAP’s links with hardliners also surfaced just a few days before the election, costing the party very dearly. AAP lost the 2017 assembly elections at the last moment.¹⁶

In the 2022 Punjab assembly elections the party came up with a different strategy. AAP’s campaigning this time centred around the issues of corruption free Punjab, employment for youth, end to the drug menace and mafia, justice in sacrilege cases, better health and education facilities, free power supply up to 300 units, Rs.1000 per month allowance for women above 18 years of age and improvement in agriculture, industry and trade. AAP’s campaigning focused this time on the basic issues the electorate were facing.

In the 2022 election campaign the Congress and SAD used the same strategies based on identity based politics to fight the AAP. Former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, the Congress CM candidate referred to Arvind Kejriwal as a ‘black Englishman’. In the election campaign he said in Punjabi “*Will not let the ‘Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi de bhaiye’, who have come here to rule, enter the state*”. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) said that AAP was insulting Punjabis by asserting that they were not fit to govern themselves and wanted to foster outsiders on them, which would never be tolerated. Two days before the polling, there was a clear attempt to polarise the decisive Hindu vote bank when former AAP leader Kumar Vishwas gave media interviews accusing AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal of supporting separatists during the 2017 polls.

All the Pre-poll opinion polls showed that AAP was ahead of their rival parties. The ground reports also showed that “*es baar hawa aap waliala di hai*”. This time AAP with its new slogan ‘*Ik Mauka AAP Nu*’ (one chance to AAP) successfully countered the identity discourse. Promises of quality health and educational services on the lines of Delhi, overrode the politics of caste, regionalism, identity and Deras to fetch the AAP a huge majority of 92 seats in the 117-member House.

Table No.2: Vote share and seats won by parties in 2017 and 2022 state assembly elections

Parties	Seats Won			Vote share In		
	2017	2022	Change	2017	2022	Change
AAP	20	92	+72	23.1%	42%	+18.9%
SAD	15	03	-12	25.1%	18.3%	-6.8%
Congress	77	18	-59	38.5%	22.9%	-15.6%
BJP	03	02	-01	5.4%	6.6%	+1.2%
Other	00	02	+02	7.8%	10.2%	+2.4%
Total	117	117		100	100	

Source: Election Commission of India

Factors Behind the AAP's Victory in 2022 Assembly Election

Anti-Incumbency against traditional parties: In Punjab like in other states the Congress party face factionalism within the party. Captain Amrinder Singh, who got the Jat Sikh Votes and Hindu Votes for Congress in 2017, resigned after being humiliated by the party before four months of the election. Navjot Sidhu had to fight for the CM post with Charanjit Singh Channi a Dalit CM who was appointed by the Congress party just before elections to gain the Dalit votes. It was hard for Navjot Sidhu to digest Channi's growing popularity. In his government that lasted for 111 days, Channi announced populist programme with a tagline "*Ghar Ghar Vich Challi Gall, Channi karda Masle Hall.*" Clear split between top leadership of Congress came out openly during the election campaign. Voters were also very disappointed with Congress's last five year governance performance.

The SAD-BJP coalition ruled in Punjab for for 10 years (2007 to 2017). The strong anti-incumbency resentment against the Akali-BJP alliance continued in 2022 also. In 2017 SAD-BJP coalition was under the lens of the opposition parties and the general public for poor performance on various fronts, including on law and order (sacrilege issue), political vendetta, corruption, suicides of farmers and farm labourers, the monopoly of the ruling family in transport, liquor, mining, media, and alleged patronage to drug smuggling.¹⁷ Congress won the 2017 assembly elections with the promise to perform, but failed miserably.

The above political context made AAP the obvious alternative for voters who were looking for a change and shift in the state's politics thus making this a multi-party contest. This time, people across Punjab voted for a *badlav* (change). The message that reverberated across the state was that the voters have seen the two big parties rule for 70 years, but they haven't delivered results. So it is time to give a chance to another party. The AAP slogan "*Is baar na khaawaange dhokha, Bhagwant Maan te Kejriwal nu dewaange mauka* (We won't get fooled this time, will give a chance to Bhagwant Mann and Kejriwal)" resonated across the state as people were fed up with old parties.

AAP's populist policies: Arvind Kejriwal and Bhagwant Manna's promised rooting out corruption from state, impressed the youngsters. The promise to give priority to education and employment also attracted them. AAP also promised depositing a sum of Rs. 1,000 per month into the accounts of women in the state to woo them as a separate vote bank. AAP leadership gives another guarantee of free power supply up to 300 units to every household which attracted the voters. Arvind Kejriwal and Bhagwant Mann targeted their campaign for different sections of voters with different guarantees. The farmers were assured of electricity for every household and agricultural reforms.

AAP's Delhi Model to Punjab: One of the biggest reasons behind AAP's thumping victory is the curiosity of the people of Punjab around the Delhi model of governance. AAP imports its Delhi model of governance to Punjab and tells the voters how they can change the - quality government education, health, power and water at cheap rates. In Punjab the consumers paid high rates for power. Since health and education are mostly privatised in the state the users were naturally attracted to the Delhi model.

Bhagwant Mann's Popularity: In 2017 assembly elections the Aam Aadmi Party contested the assembly elections without declaring its CM face. It gave chance to the opponent party to play identity politics giving the impression that there will be "outsiders rule over Punjab." But in 2022 the party announced, a Jat sikh, Bhagwant Mann as the chief ministerial candidate which helped the party to get rid of the outsider tag. Bhagwant Mann the popular comedian had already carved a place in the hearts of many Punjabis with his political and social satire.

Conclusion: The major reason for AAP's victory in Punjab is the anger and dissatisfaction against traditional parties. People of Punjab were unhappy with the performance of traditional parties. The second major reason was the impact of the farmers' movement. The year-long movement of which Punjab was the epicentre made voters more politically independent and aware. This pushed the Punjabi voters towards

the *badlav* (change) from old parties to give a chance to AAP. The voters rejected both traditional parties and their leaders. The people of Punjab wanted to see ‘badlaav’ (change) in the political establishment so that none of the “extraneous” factors worked, and people have voted against the usual lines of religion, caste, deras and class. In this election the voters were by and large silent, they clearly seemed to have voted for a party that has promised them good education, healthcare and governance. AAP’s astounding win in Punjab gives the party a much needed fillip to satisfy its national ambitions. It cements the party’s position as the principal opposition party to BJP in national politics.

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Uttar Pradesh Assembly Election 2022 – A Case of Lost Opportunity for Samajwadi Party

Sanjay Kumar &
Dharmendra Pratap Srivastava

How opportunities are lost? So near yet so far. Uttar Pradesh assembly election 2022 is a testimony of this saying. Samajwadi Party could have altered the election result, had it worked on the basis of political lessons and opportunities, because there were certainly genuine reasons for its comeback. For the last 33 years, no party has returned to power except the present one under the leadership of Yogi Adityanath. But, despite all late efforts and people's support, SP couldn't. So, what are the concrete reasons behind this fall out? And to whom should this loss be attributed to Modi, Yogi or Akhilesh himself? Has BJP become so invincible that it cannot be challenged by any other party? Or are there some default mismanagements in the organizational structure and leadership pattern of opposition parties? Reasons may be both or manifold. Let's have a look at the concrete reasons for this people's mandate.

Electoral Politics in India has become a highly competitive profit seeking enterprise. It unfurls venom, hatred, prejudice, violence and deceit; politics is becoming more and more lucrative to deceitful politicians in general. The Uttar Pradesh assembly election 2022 had all these ingredients and substances to the satisfaction of wily leaders. Yet the competitiveness of politics does have the last say. And ultimately, the voters arithmetic becomes the prime concern for every party. Political Parties want to win election at any cost. In other words, a kind of new politics has emerged where there is no place for ideological firmness and openness. This is a politics which is taking shape on a pan-India basis, where capturing power is the sole guiding principle. Amid this kind of political culture, simultaneous assembly elections in five states namely Punjab, Goa, Manipur, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh will have a substantial impact on the future politics of India. But UP, being the largest state by numbers, always draws special attention. UP has the exceptional status as the classical site of politics driven by the rise and dominance of primordial identities since the late 1980s wherein the discourses of Hindutva, Mandal and Dalit are centered.¹ In fact, BJP has transformed the nature of politics in ways to which the opposition seems to have no answer. The first is a commitment to a generative conception of politics.... the BJP has a deep social base, especially amongst women and lower caste.² It's also noteworthy that cross party defections have aggravated during the last five years and that too in favour of BJP. As per Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) report, 443 MLAs and MPs had quit their parties and re-contested on their host party's ticket between 2016 to 2021.³ The debate between pro and anti-incumbency has perhaps also lost its sheen and utility.

Theoretical Underpinnings - After the second democratic upsurge in 1989, only the SP and BSP were able to form governments in Uttar Pradesh before 2014 except for some intermittent BJP governments on four different occasions.⁴ To some extent, the result of assembly election 2022 has been historic. No body anticipated a clear-cut majority for the incumbent party. And that too happened without any dent in the support base of BJP. But it doesn't necessarily mean a heart-breaking loss for Samajwadi Party either. But, no doubt, the Congress support base has been completely wiped out. It has been routed to the extent beyond imagination and its revival seems very bleak. BSP didn't fight it out openly or rather was fighting for its own defeat; reason nobody knows better than Mayawati herself. But for Samajwadi Party, they missed the golden opportunity for regaining power after a gap of five years. The whole political scenario and circumstances were favourable for its possible victory. Even most of the surveys were predicting for a very close fight between the two parties. The issues of Corona, Kisan agitation, unemployment were very much

there to haunt BJP and assisting the opposition causes. Moreover, people were fast losing faith in the government's governability to weed out despair and hopelessness. The period from April to November 2021 was the most crucial one when BJP was fast losing the ground and SP was marching ahead with full speed, but it failed to break the social coalitions that enabled BJP to retain power. But after that both parties started their journey in the opposite direction. During the next three to four months, BJP snatched the victory from the jaws of SP. So, what went wrong for the SP? Was the party over-confident of victory and failed to do the basics in the ground? Or is it that it failed to co-opt political engineering formula with social engineering? Is it true that Akhilesh's political strategy failed? The following table will illustrate the voter's preference for parties in the 2022 election.

Table-1 (Performance of Parties in 2022 U.P. assembly election)

Party/ Votes	Con- gress	BJP	SP	BSP	Apna Dal(So- nelal)	Nishad Party	SBSP	RLD	Other Small parties	Total voters turnout
Number of votes got	2151234	38051721	29543934	11873137	1493181	840584	1252925	2630168	4390882	9 crore 21 lakh 63 thousand
% of Votes got	2.33%	41.29%	32.06%	12.88%	1.62%	0.91%	.136%	2.85%	4.7%	100%
% of Vote on the seats fought	2.36%	44.15%	37.25%	12.88%	40.76%	36.48%	29.77%	33.88%	4.7%	————
Victory on seats	2 (-5)	255 (- 57)	111 (+64)	1 (-18)	12 (+3)	6 (+5)	6 (+2)	8 (+7)	2 (-1)	403

Source – Election commission of India

As per data, certain features emerge before us. They are :-

1. **Vote difference** between BJP and SP is 9.23% overall and 6.90% on the seats contested. It got 85 lakhs more votes than SP. It means SP strike rate is better than BJP. But the won seat difference is 144 which is a huge gap between the two parties.

2. Despite an **increase in the vote share** by 1.62%, BJP lost 57 seats. On the other, SP was able to add 64 seats with an increase in its vote share by 10.24%. Therefore, **the loss of BJP is the gain of SP** in terms of seats. Till date, this has been the best performance of Samajwadi Party. Still it was defeated by a huge number of 144 seats. This is definitely the biggest enigma in the *first-past-the-post-system*. No party could be sure enough of getting seats merely on the basis of vote share. Ultimately, constituency matters most. Therefore, the nurturing of core constituencies becomes the most important function of political parties in electoral politics.

3. BJP with its pre-poll alliance partners **Apna Dal (S)** and **Nishad Party**, has been able to capture a hefty 43.82 per cent of votes, while SP together with **RLD** (Rashtriya Lokdal) and **SBSP** (Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party) could get only 36.27 per cent of votes. That means a difference of 7.55 per cent between the two competitors.

4. Congress **vote bank** has been totally wiped out. BSP is the biggest loser by an erosion of 9.35% in its vote share. Therefore, **the loss of BSP is the gain of BJP** in vote terms. Had the situation reversed, SP would form the government. In other words, if BSP didn't lose the numbers and remained more or less static, SP could easily be victorious.

5. In a **bipolar contest**, difference of 10 percentage of votes is more than enough to capture power. But in a triangular contest 30 percent of total votes is enough to get majority which has happened in the

past elections of 2007 and 2012 when BSP and SP made their respective governments by getting majority seats.

6. **Performance** of BJP allies Apna Dal (S) and Nishad Party were better than the SP allies of SBSP and RLD. And their individual and cumulative performances are better than the Congress and BSP for the first time.

7. **Statistically**, the victory of BJP looks so spontaneous. Their enthusiasm has not fizzled out. But, as usual, politics is more governed by perception than by aspiration. And the perception of the voters keeps on refreshing and refining with the passage of time and political behaviour of parties.

After a gap of 26 years, BJP could muster majority in 2017. But would it repeat the performance in 2022 was the question. The SP failed to realize that the voters of Uttar Pradesh are fast breaking the caste barriers and congregating on economic and class issues, which BJP cleverly used to their advantage. Opposition may call it polarization politics. But the fact is that the character of Uttar Pradesh politics is fast changing its colour and vigour. It has been a long process. So, what could be the concrete reasons behind the BJP victory and the defeat of SP. Altogether, there are four solid reasons behind this mandate which initially seemed to be favouring the opposition parties but finally went in favour of BJP. Being the principal in-charge of the **Post - poll survey of UP election by CSSP, Kanpur**, the contributors of this article have summed up following reasons for the victory of BJP and the loss of SP.

Concrete Reasons

1. Organizational structures of BJP and SP – From *Panna Pramukh* to *Desh Pramukh*, BJP is knitted well into a single string. The message conveyed from the top reaches exactly to the bottom. Workers loyalty to the party programmes is of highest level. The media cell of the party is far ahead of other parties in its poll campaign during elections. Organization in party works at two level - firstly at the government level and secondly yet more importantly at the *Sangathan* level. Today this is the only party which has more say at the organizational level than at the government level. The role of *Sunil Bansal* in four Uttar Pradesh elections (two each for Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha) has been phenomenal. He was appointed as *sah-Prabhari* of U.P along with Amit Shah just before the 2014 Lok Sabha election. After the superlative victory, he was elevated to the position of *Sangathan Mahamantri* of U.P. Three more elections took place under his stewardship and all were won with comfortable ease. Even at the lower level election of *Nagar Nigam* in 2017, BJP was able to capture 16 out of 18 seats. Besides, co-opted sister organizations like *ABVP*, *Vishwa Hindu Parishad*, *Swadeshi Jagran Manch*, *Bhartiya Kisan Sangh*, *Bhartiya Majdoor Sangh*, *Vidya Bharti*, *Muslim Rashtriya Manch*, *Bajrang Dal* etc. are also carrying a single agenda called 'Hindutva Nation' based on Indian cultural and civilizational traits. Their cadres are regularly trained and galvanized in a disciplined manner. All these signify the inevitability of a robust organizational structure which BJP has all the backing since its birth.

On the other, opposition parties have just name sake organizational structure. They are still being led on old patterns. There is no concrete planning and its execution. Samajwadi Party has, to some extent, dedicated party workers, but without any long-term vision. Their recruitment and training are irregular in nature. Instead of any well-thoughtout cadre programme, SP is more governed on 'individual writ large' policy. Decision making process does not carry the rationale of 'from top to bottom or from bottom to top'. The organization is being run on dynastic approach. Therefore, the democratic character of the party has suffered the most. With the growing democratic consciousness, this issue keeps on ringing in the voter's mind.

2. Yogi vs. Akhilesh model of governance - Since 2017, a unique model of governance has surfaced in Uttar Pradesh, which is popularly called as Yogi model. In this model, the government tries to focus peoples mind on anti-social elements, partially based on Hindutva identity and partially based on social identity. This governance model seemed to be a game changer for Yogi. In fact, 'good governance' was not talked

about widely during election campaign, but voters had made up their minds for this particular issue. *Bulldozer culture* has emerged in day to day administration. The infamous Vikas Dubey encounter gathered wide public attention. Even a large chunk of brahmin voters opposed this act of the government and vowed not to vote for BJP in the coming 2022 election. Contrary to that, they not only supported but supported in large numbers. Almost 85 percent of brahmins voted for BJP. On this particular issue, Akhilesh could have capitalized and polarized brahmin voters in his favour. But his strategy was confusing by organizing *Parshuram Puja*, the natural domain of BJP. Had he been able to convince the brahmin voters, which is almost 8 per cent of the state population, the final tally of seats would have been reversed. But, instead of wooing and amalgamating upper castes on issues apart from religion, he forged alliance with smaller parties simply on caste basis, which is fast losing its appeal; and thus, was unable to anticipate people’s mood in general. Previously too, he forged alliance with Congress in 2017 assembly election and with BSP in 2019 Lok Sabha election. All these alliance patterns were ill-fated because of its ideological mismatching and understanding. There was no cadre congruence at all. The very infamous 1995 *guest house episode* involving Mayawati and the SP workers remained a nightmarish experience not only for Mayawati but for all dalits of the state. They could never think out any kind of political understanding with SP. So, mere forging alliance simply on the calculation of caste votes didn’t yield the desired result. Unless and until cadres are given space for their outlook and aspirations, no pre-poll alliance would succeed. And this was certainly not a natural alliance between the two parties. Political understanding needs social understanding. Therefore, the alliance between the two in 2019 proved to be a fiasco.

Same thing happened in the alliance with the Congress also. The birth of SP is attributed to anti-Congressism. Mulayam Singh Yadav rode to political success due to his anti-Congress and anti-BJP stand. He never did any pre-poll alliance with the Congress. But in a desperate attempt to regain power, his son Akhilesh forged an alliance with Rahul Gandhi. This was an alliance between two young leaders and not between their cadres. This was completely an immature strategy due to his being the incumbent Chief Minister. There was no need of such an alliance. Seat sharing would eventually mean a final loss of seats, which did happen terribly. It was reduced to a pathetic 47 seats. Moreover, Akhilesh was touted as the legacy carrier of his father’s lawlessness during his regime. From there on, people, at large, are supporting Yogi model. This is illustrated by the following table. Respondents were asked, ‘Are you satisfied with the Yogi Adityanath government for the last five years?’

Table – 2 (Satisfaction with Yogi Adityanath Government)

Are you satisfied with the Yogi Adityanath government of BJP for the last five years?	Frequency	Percent
No	647	37.6
Yes	1004	58.3
Can’t say / Don’t remember	71	4.1
Total	1722	100.0

Source – U.P Post poll survey 2022 by CSSP, Kanpur

3. Leadership of Modi – *Whether we like it or not, this vote reiterates trust, in most states, the leadership of Modi. Again, it is an academic debate whether the vote is for Modi or Yogi. The point of a successful leader is that they create the conditions where there is no division in the party, and in the final analysis, an ability to work together. But this is not just a command and control performance; mere from the top can at best produce a sullen compliance. It is an organizational culture that always has its eyes on bigger prize. The opposition, in contrast, can scream all its wants that there is an existential crisis of democracy.*

But its conduct, its internal battles convey no minimal ability to work together in a crisis, there is no ground to stand on.⁵ Question was asked about Modi's popularity and its being a deciding factor in the election.

Table – 3 (Modi factor in vote-casting)

Q. while voting which factor inspired you most?	Frequency	Percent
Party	320	18.6
Chief Minister Candidate	196	11.4
Local Candidate	109	6.3
PM Modi	163	9.5
Yogi Adityanath	332	19.3
Akhilesh Yadav	352	20.5
Priyanka Gandhi	4	0.2
Mayawati	96	5.6
Caste &Community Leader	1	0.1
Any Other	24	1.4
No Opinion	79	4.6
Not Applicable	45	2.6
Total	1722	100.0

Source -CSSP Kanpur Post poll survey, 2022

During election period, popularity of PM Modi was fluctuating and receding after Lakhimpur-Kheri incident on 3rd of October, 2021. On this eventful day, three cars rammed into a crowd of protesting farmers at Tikunia, near the village of Union home minister of State, Ajay Mishra (Teni). Eight people died in the incident. As per eyewitnesses, it is believed that two of the cars belonged to the minister and his son Ashish Mishra was sitting in one of them. This incident ignited the ongoing 'Kisan Andolan' and the whole election scenario seemed to be tilting towards opposition victory. The demand for the minister's removal from the ministry also helped the opposition. But to everyone's dismay he remained intact in the name of Brahmin's vote which ultimately proved to be right for BJP. That time the popularity graph of Modi was declining fast and, in a bid, to obfuscate opposition attacks, PM Modi, ultimately, had to announce the withdrawal of the controversial three 'Kisan Bill' on 19th of November. The timing of the withdrawal was very calculative. Interestingly enough, Samajwadi party along with other parties could not capitalize the momentum, which once was heavily tilted in its favour. Thereafter, Modi wave once again started sweeping the entire electoral field. Nearing poll time Modi was once again near his high popularity graph. As per our survey, almost 9.5 per cent more voters opted BJP due to Modi factor. And here also lies the actual difference between the two contesting parties. Though people slightly preferred Akhilesh more than Yogi. But due to Modi-Yogi duo, this factor became the crucial one in the minds of the voters and ultimately proving a winning formula for BJP.

4. Class mandate instead of Caste mandate – Politics of Uttar Pradesh has shifted from caste to class over the last eight years. This has been a gradual shift. During 1980s 'the emergence of the triad of Mandal, Kamandal and Dalit politics brought along different segments of the society as its social support base. While BJP at its core had the support of the upper castes along with non-dominant OBCs, BSP support base hailed from dominant Dalits along with a section of the Muslims, and the same in the case of SP was

constituted by Yadavs and Muslim⁶ Till 2014, caste used to be the dominant factor in the final outcome. Even electorates were politically compelled to think necessarily in the caste perspective of election. But the changing strategy of BJP initially went unnoticed by the opposition parties. But the fact is that class politics shows the maturity of electorates, while caste politics is governed on narrow lines. Uttar Pradesh has traditionally been a bastion of caste politics. Therefore, the rise of caste leaders after Mandal has been phenomenal. Parties were formed on caste lines. Still today, alignment of some of the strong, small and marginal parties are purely on caste line. Apna Dal for Kurmis, SBSP for Rajbhar and Nishad Party for Mallah are basically caste parties. Except Mayawati victory in 2007, every election after 1989 has been based on caste equations. From there on the downfall of Congress also started to the present level of non-existence due to its support base shifting to BSP. That's why 2007 verdict is regarded as a product of inclusive politics based on social engineering. Her *Sandwich Coalition*⁷ of Brahmin-Dalit alliance through *Reverse Social Osmosis*⁸ is characterized as an example of class-voting. Following table goes deeply into the social preference for BJP.

Table – 4 (Voting by different caste groups in 2022 election)

Party / Caste Voting	BJP+	SP+	BSP	Congress	Other
1. Rajput (4%)	89	9	1	1	
2. Brahmin (8%)	85	10	5		
3. Vaishya (4%)	66	27	7		
4. Other Upper Castes (3%)	79	14			7
5. Jat / Gurjar (2%)	70	23	7		
6. Yadav / Ahir (11%)	18	80	1		1
7. Kurmi (6%)	86	10	2		2
8. Koiri / Maurya(6%)	72	20	6		2
9. Rajbhar (4%)	36	63			1
10. Nishad (3%)	43	14			43
11. Other OBCs (9%)	70	22	4	3	1
12. Jatav (11%)	41	21	38		
13. Pasi / Dhobi (6%)	63	29	6	1	1
14. Other SCs (2.7%)	77	11	11	1	
15. Ashraf Muslim (2.2%)	8	80	2	2	8
16. Pasmada Muslim (17%)	16	82		1	1
17. STs (0.6%)	14	71	1		14
18. Others (0.5%)	45	43	10		2
Total – 100 %					

Source – CSSP Kanpur Post-poll Survey, 2022. All data in percentage term. SC, ST and Muslim population as per 2011 data. Other castes data based on secondary sources

Table – 5 (Voting by caste groups during last three elections in U.P)

Party / Year / Castes	BJP+			SP+			BSP		
	2022	2019	2017	2022	2019	2017	2022	2019	2017
1. Brahmin	85.7	84	78.8	9.5	6	9.7	4.8		4.1
2. Rajput	88.9	89	66.4	8.7	6	16.4	0.8		9.6
3. Vaishya	66.7	74	72.1	26.7	4	16.3	6.7		3.5
4. Jat	69.8	91	34.5	23.3	7	16.1	7.0		2.3
5. Yadav	18.2	24	10.3	80.4	62	75.9	.7		5.6
6. Kurmi	86.4	80	58.3	10.4	14	19.4	1.6		15.3
7. Koiri	71.7	80	58.3	20.2	14	19.4	6.1		15.3
8. Jatav	40.9	17	8.6	21	75	3.9	38.1		85.8
9. Ashraf	8.3	8	8.6	80	74	60.2	9.9		20.1
10. Pasmanda	16	8	8.6	82.4	74	60.2	7.7		20.1

Sources – 1. CSSP Kanpur Post-poll data 2022.

2. In 2019 BSP was a part of Mahagathbandhan with SP

3. CSDS Delhi data of 2017 & 2019

As per the 4th and 5th table almost 85 percent of upper castes, 75 percent of OBCs except Yadav, Rajbhar and 60 percent of SCs voted for BJP. To some extent more Jat-Gurjar vote, upper caste vote and OBCs vote were cast in favour of SP than the 2019 Lok Sabha election. But 2022 election is a bigger and extended example of inclusive politics which is based across the whole section of the society. The only difference is that 2022 represents a very wide array of identities, while 2007 was forged on two caste identities. 2012 was also connected on caste lines through the MY (Muslim and Yadav) formula, thereby giving SP an absolute majority by getting only 29.13% of votes only. This means that even below one third of the electorates were able to dictate the political terms of the state. So why should have Akhilesh thought in an inclusive manner since caste equation was paying him rich dividends? From his point of view, being inclusive could be a futile exercise. That's why he always remained emphatic about caste equations and its credibility; and was unable to understand the limitation and fragility of *exclusive politics*. In a way, 2022 is more a class and inclusive mandate. Conclusively, a bigger *Rainbow Identity* has emerged on the political scene of Uttar Pradesh. The 2007 model could not last long due to its inner weaknesses. But 2022 model is going to sustain for a very longer period of time. It does not necessarily mean always a BJP victory, but the party which offers more class-oriented alternatives will always be in an advantageous position.

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Quest for Peace, Stability and Development : Ballot and Verdict in Manipur

Takhelchangbam Phillip Sharma

In the twelfth state assembly election of Manipur held in February-March 2022, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged victorious, becoming the single largest party, winning 32 out of 60 assembly seats. The success of the BJP in Manipur is significant as it marked the consolidation of the BJP in a region plagued by ethnic conflicts, secessionism and insurgency. This paper seeks to investigate the various factors that led to its success, for instance, the larger question of the BJP's ideology or the electoral strategies they had employed to fight the election. The BJP presented its most flexible outlook in the electoral contest of Manipur by keeping aside the hard-core ideology of Hindu nationalism, which is quintessential for mobilising electorates in mainstream India. Instead, it focused on the question of development and maintaining law and order. As Manipur's economy is highly dependent on the central government, there has been a marriage of the political situation and the economic condition, which benefited the BJP in the election.

Introduction

In a democracy, elections are like festivals. A powerful sense of euphoria develops during the election as people hope to elect their best representative (Yadav, 2010, p. 351). To begin with, democracy and the idea of election in India were a gift from the British colonisers. Even after the British left India, the legacy of the concept of democratic governance continues to pass down as India became one of the largest democracies in the world despite having so many differences in society. Democracy represents the modern feature of Indian political life (Kaviraj, 2010, p. 32). Keeping aside the question of upholding the democratic rights and liberties of the citizens, what keeps the democratic ethos of India alive is holding periodic elections at the national, state and local levels (Kumar, 2022, p. 2). Although there were ups and downs in the democratic journey of India, the Indian democracy has never seen a total collapse of the system, unlike its counterparts in Asia and Africa. The federal structure of India has also contributed to a larger extent to preserving the democracy in India. Constitutionalism provides the backbone of the federal structure, but it is not sufficient to execute democratic ideas into practice. It is here that the importance of state assembly elections comes into play. By holding periodic elections, the concept of federal units is made more robust and their significance in the larger national politics re-emphasised. With the increasing electoral competition, state-level politics is seen as the real arena for political choice and partisanship (Yadav and Palshikar, 2009).

The downfall of the congress system marked the period of re-emphasising the federal units and the rise of regional parties and their assertions in the larger politics became a reality (Kothari, 1974). But the re-emergence of the BJP in the post-2014 polity and their subsequent dominance in the 2019 Lok Sabha election has again remodelled the electoral scenario of India. The resurgence of Hindu nationalism championed by the BJP and the right-wing forces in the post-2014 polity has considerably impacted the democracy in India as it tends to move towards populism and authoritarianism (Gudavarthy, 2019, p. 11). There is no specific answer to make sense of the new political developments. The first step to commence an inquiry into it is to highlight the fundamental question of whether the rise of the BJP in Manipur is the beginning of a new political era or something else. Or is it a part of the larger manifestation of the growing right-wing politics in the frontier region, which has been long unhindered by Hindutva politics? In the recently concluded 12th state assembly election, the BJP emerged as the largest party, winning 32 out of 60 seats. It is significant as

it marks the consolidation of the BJP in Manipur (Hausing, 2022). In the history of elections in Manipur, this is the second time a political party could secure an absolute majority and form a government of its own, the first being the Congress party winning 42 seats in the 10th state assembly election. The remarkable feat that BJP had shown in the election is a matter of surprise as there were many conflicting issues in the policies of the BJP before the election. For instance, the months-long protest against the three farm laws had jeopardised the BJP's position in electoral politics, but on the contrary, BJP emerged victorious in states, including Uttar Pradesh, where a considerable sentiment of hostility toward the three farm regulations was seen.

BJP's policies and programmes do not make much difference in Manipur because its economy is highly dependent on central government support and funding (Sahni & George, 2001). Elections in Manipur are fought to bring more funds and development from the central government. The ideologies and vision of political parties play a minimum role in deciding the electoral outcome or the people's choice of candidates. On the other hand, the BJP election strategy in Manipur shows a remarkable divergence from the election strategy employed in mainstream India (Sharma, 2022). Whereas in mainstream India, there is a heavy reliance on its ideology based on Hindu nationalism, the BJP took a soft stance on the question of Hindutva in Manipur despite the mammoth Hindu population in the state. How we make sense of this dual policy of the BJP is a big question to answer.

Post-2014 Politics in Manipur

After the disintegration of the congress system in India, the political situation has not been the same as it marked the end of one-party dominance. The rise of regional parties in the pockets of the Indian union signified a new paradigm in the Indian political scenario in the aftermath of Nehruvian politics. In the late 1990s, with the emergence of BJP at the centre, there was a slight triggering of BJP politics in Manipur. But soon after the downfall of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the presence of the BJP as a political force in Manipur was quite bleak. In the assembly elections of 2012, the congress party showed its dominance. By winning 42 out of 60, the Indian National Congress became the first party to secure an absolute majority in Manipur's assembly election. But after the BJP came to power at the centre in 2014, the political tide in Manipur witnessed a drastic change. In the assembly election held in 2017, BJP had bagged 21 seats out of 60 and led the coalition government formed with the support of the Naga Peoples Front (NPF), National Peoples Party (NPP), Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) and an independent candidate. Despite the Congress party being the largest party securing 28 seats, it had to sit in the opposition.

With the re-emergence of the BJP since the 2014 Lok Sabha election and the intensification of the so-called "Modi-Wave", there took place a change in the entire political situation across the country. Populist politics began to dominate the Indian electoral democracy. Popular slogans like "Sab Ke Sath, Sab Ka Vikas" and the idea of "bringing development" started attracting the masses.

Before the 12th assembly election of Manipur, the Assam assembly elections were held in 2021. In Assam, the BJP-led NDA coalition was able to retain power. The case of Assam is crucial as it is one of the Northeastern states and serves as a clear reflecting point of the ongoing political situation of the Northeast region. Seeing the BJP's success in Assam, there was speculation of a possible domino effect of a similar political trend in Manipur. In analyzing Northeast India's politics, Rajni Kothari rightly pointed out the political relationship and dependency on mainstream politics. He argues that if congress is in power, there will be a congress government in Northeast states or a BJP government in power, then there will be a BJP government in Northeast states and so on (Kothari, 1974). This analysis of Rajni Kothari is a classic blueprint as we have seen this pattern many times in Northeast India. But the analysis is incomplete as it does not provide a nuanced understanding of the rather larger and more complex politics. And also, it prevents us from emphasising various other factors crucial in the emergence of the BJP as a potent political force in Manipur.

The Decline of the Congress Party

After BJP came to power in 2014, the Congress party's predominance ended in many states. The decline was even more profound in the case of small states like Manipur. In 2017 the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government led by Indian National Congress tried its best to win people's trust in Manipur, but they failed. The party could not secure adequate seats to form the government and thus ended the 15-year dominance of the United Progressive Alliance. The empirical data shows a rapid decline in the vote share received by INC in 2017 compared to 2012. The percentage vote of INC in 2017 was 35.1% with 582,056 votes, BJP received 601,539 votes which is 36.3%, NPF received 118,850 votes which was 7.2% and so on. The Congress Party which was dominant in Manipur till 2017, rapidly declined, securing only 28 seats out of 60. Mention may be made that in 2012 the party had secured 42 out of 60 seats.

Table 1: Comparison of 2017 and 2012 Manipur State Assembly election result.

Party	2017 seats	2012 seats	Change +/-
Indian National Congress	28	42	-14
BJP	21	0	+21
TMC	1	7	-6
IND	1	0	+1
Others	9	11	-2

Source : Election Commission of India

From 2004 to 2017, the political scene in Manipur was dominated by Indian National Congress. The then congress Chief Minister Okram Ibobi served for three consecutive terms. After the 11th assembly election, the INC could not form a government; N Biren Singh of the BJP was sworn in as the Chief Minister on 15th March 2017. Political analysts have pointed out several reasons behind the downfall of the INC in Manipur. Some important reasons include corruption, incompetency, failure to maintain law and order, the Modi wave, people's want for change as they were in government for three consecutive terms and so on. The then congress-led government was also criticised for representing only the majority voice from various ethnic organisations.

There were other reasons also for the decline. As elections are not merely about statistics and numbers, there are also certain qualitative aspects of the political situation that helps in shaping the contemporary political discourse. A crucial factor is the rapid increase of the middle class population and the then Congress government's failure to address their aspirations. Studies have highlighted the role of middle class in electoral democracy. For instance, the rise of the BJP in 2014 or the rise of the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi is quite an example of middle class functionality in electoral democracy (Chakrabarty, 2016). Manipur also witnessed the growth of a robust middle class in tune with the changing world order. The role of middle class in Indian politics has been re-emphasised in the post-liberalisation era (Fernandes, 2006). But one perplexing situation in the case of Manipur is that the middle class aspires to have a global lifestyle, and paradoxically, they want local dominance in resource sharing. With the advancement of globalisation and liberalisation, Manipuris felt threatened in their place of existence (Phanjoubam, 2015). At the same time, the middle class wants more capital and a liberalising lifestyle while being protected by state legislation. In toto, it resulted in a strong demand for the Inner Line Permit system (ILPS), ST status for Meiteis, etc., which the then Congress government had failed to bring about.

Figure 2: Performance of different political parties in the 2017 and 2022 Manipur assembly elections

Party	2017 seats	2017 voteshare in %	2022 seats	2022 vote share in %	Change in seat	Percentage of representation in 2022
Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	21	36.3	32	31.83	+11	53.3
Indian National Congress (INC)	28	35.1	5	16.83	-23	8.3
National Peoples Party (NPP)	4	5.1	7	17.3	+3	11.6
Naga Peoples Front (NPF)	4	7.2	5	8.09	+1	8.3
All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)	1	1.4	Nil	Nil	-1	Nil
Independent	1	5.1	3	5.08	+2	5
Lok Janashakti Party (LJP)	1	2.5	Nil	Nil	-1	Nil
Janata Dal United (JDU)	Nil	Nil	6	10.77	+6	10
Kuki People's Alliance (KPA)	N/A	N/A	2	0.06	+2	3.3

Source: Election Commission of India

The Changing Political Context

Taking stock of the conflicting history and the narratives that Northeast India has, the politics of Northeast India is very different from mainstream politics. Manipur is also not an exception. The imposition of the Armed Forces Special Power Act, 1958 sums up the conflict situation in Manipur. Manipur's diverse social composition commands a complex political structure (Haokip, 2020). The state's law and order is highly dependent on the coherence and coordination of all the communities (Oinam, 2003). Samir Kumar Das (2007) pointed out two types of peace in Northeast India; formal peace and informal peace. The peace obtained by signing formal agreements between organisations and governments is formal peace, and the peace brought by cooperation between communities is informal peace. In Manipur, both forms of peace are equally important. The ethnic composition of Manipur includes Meiteis, Tangkhul, Rongmei, Naga, Poumai, Kom, Maring, Anal, Pangals, Kuki, Paite, Mar, Vaiphei, Tarao, Chothe, Thangal and so on (Ahmed et al., 2009). Often, these ethnic communities lock horns for so many reasons that affect the society's political stability. Mention may be made of the infamous Naga-Kuki conflict in 1993, the Meitei-Pangal conflict in 1993 and the Kuki-Paite conflict in 1997.

Further, each ethnic community is on the bargaining state with the Indian union (Das, 2007). They are fighting a war with the Indian union on various demands ranging from secession to having more autonomy (Singh, 2005). Some of the insurgent groups have already been on the negotiating table with the state. Major Kuki-based armed groups are under the Suspension of Operation (SOO) agreement with the Central government. The Naga-based insurgent group NSCN-IM and the NSCN-K have signed a ceasefire agreement with the Central government and are still in the bargaining position for an amicable Naga political solution. The Central government recently denied the NSCN-IM demand to have a separate flag within the sub-continent, creating a fuss in the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur. On the other hand, the Meitei-based insurgent organisations refused to negotiate with the Central government and are still fighting a protracted war. These brief observations present enough evidence to scale the conflict situation and the impending peace in Manipur.

Invoking Sanjib Baruah's (2005) idea of 'durable disorder' in this context, the political order in Manipur exhibits a character of disorder where the real order lies in the way how the aspirations of the ethnic communities are addressed and accommodated by the political masters in the state as well as the centre.

This is where the state's role comes into play and election becomes one of the major rallying points as it decides the political players who form the government. The party that handles the political situation more smoothly is considered good and posits a high chance of coming to power.

BJP's Ascent

As law and order situation have improved a lot since 2017, the BJP is able to present a good image of itself in the state. The BJP-led government appears to be more successful than the preceding governments in maintaining peace in the state. And also, BJP is swift in resolving the deadlocks in the case of tussle between state and pressure groups. This is purely reflective of the general public's opinion, and there is no question of showing any partiality or soft side to any government or sympathising with any political party. For instance, in 2016, during the Congress government's period, United Naga Council (UNC) called an economic blockade in Manipur that lasted for more than three months¹. It all started on 1st November 2016, when the UNC imposed an economic blockade on the national highways and cut the state's basic supplies. There were several efforts from the government's side to resolve the embargo, but it all ended in vain. In March 2017, after the tenure of the Congress government, the BJP government took charge with N Biren Singh as the chief minister. The embargo was resolved in five days as soon as the CM was sworn in. It also implies that having a parallel government at the state and the national level means a smooth and peaceful life in the state.

However, there is still the need to look at other aspects of governance to take note of the present political situation. It is crucial to see how the government is doing in the matter of conflict resolution. How successful is the government in bringing development? How is the government performing in the case of maintaining law and order situation? How did the government address popular issues like ILPS, Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 and so on? Last but not the least, how is the government addressing the pandemic situation in Manipur?

Regarding conflict resolution, the present BJP government's performance was impressive. Since 2017 Manipur had not witnessed a major conflict, unlike before, when long spell of bandhs and blockades had become a routine. The presence of a friendly government at the centre may have helped the state government. For instance, the central government has resorted to certain strategic changes in dealing with the conflict situation in the Northeast. The BJP president Amit Shah, in September 2018, said that the government had changed its conflict resolution technique in Northeast India. He added that the government is keen on bringing more development instead of resorting to the coercive method. Whether the actual development is reaching well to the remote areas or not is debatable. But it is to be accepted that the state government led by BJP has done considerable homework.

The policy changes like "Go to Village"² and "Go to Hills"³ add more rigour in rebuilding the trust between the hill and valley. Earlier the hill-based groups and civil society organisations had blamed preceding governments for exercising partiality in governance as development activities are mostly prioritised in the valley where the Meitei population is dominant. On the contrary, the N Biren Singh government's linkages with civil societies and ethnic organisations greatly helped build a good relationship between people and the state. As evident from the significant reduction in the number of bandhs, blockades and general strikes and encounters during the BJP government since 2017, undoubtedly, we can infer the improved law-and-order situation of Manipur. According to the Union Home Ministry data, insurgency-related activities in Northeast India in 2021 have reduced by 80 % compared to 2014⁴. Manipur has witnessed a constant declining record of insurgency-related cases, from 233 in 2016 to 167 in 2017 and 127 in 2018, according to the MHA security situation report⁵. From lowering the insurgency-related incidents to bringing developments, the present BJP government has put up a record in maintaining peace in the state.

On the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the Rani Gaidinliu Museum, Union Home Minister

Amit Shah also said, “Before coming to power in Manipur, we had promised to end bandh, hartal and blockade. We have ended all the three and significantly improved law and order situation in Manipur”.

On the other hand, development has become the buzzword for the BJP, even though it is shrouded in controversy. For example, if you go to Imphal-Myanmar Road or Imphal-Nagaland road, you will see a good improvement in the road condition. But again, if you go to the Henglep region, you will find extreme evidence to the contrary. But thanks to Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) for allocating funds for building roads, road conditions and connectivity in the villages and hills are relatively improved. But the analysis bears a big problem when deconstructing the idea of ‘development’ itself. One question that struck first is whether development is limited to just building roads? What is the government’s dedication to improving various other sectors like education, poverty alleviation and so on? It largely remains intangible in the whole idea of development propaganda. Also, what about the gross unemployment issue in the state? The truth is that popular politics eyewash to hide the harsh reality while the government still maintains the status quo.

Further, a political mileage achieved by the BJP government, unlike the government before, is in the matter of handling issues like the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 and the demand for the Inner Line Permit System (ILP) movement in Manipur. The ILP movement was for quite a long time a significant concern for the Manipur people and had struggled for decades until 2019. In the wake of ILP struggles in Manipur, numerous lives have been lost. The ILP movement is an indigenous people’s movement to have a separate law to protect the indigenous communities from contemporary threats and demographic invasion. ILP laws were already in place in Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

Moreover, the Citizenship Amendment Bill saga added more benefits than losses for BJP in the state. There was a violent protest against CAB in Manipur. But the passage of the ILP Bill in Manipur on 11th December 2019 appeased the people. Clause 4 of article 3 in CAA,2019 says, “Nothing in this section shall apply to the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura as included in the sixth schedule to the constitution and the area covered under “the inner line” notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873”. The passage of the ILP in Manipur was a great success for the BJP government as people increasingly started to trust the government as ILP demand was a popular sentiment in Manipur. Moreover, the government also conveniently handled inter-ethnic issues regarding land and resources. For instance, there were tensions between Meiteis and Kukis regarding the issue of Mount Koubru, or for that matter, the land issue for constructing the National sports University and so on, but unlike before, when resolving such problems was something very hard to achieve, these matters were resolved speedily without creating much political disturbance.

However, the pandemic situation raised eyebrows about the claims of the government. Like in many other states, Manipur faced its worst medical crisis during the peak of Covid 19. With an average positive rate of 600 high in May 2021 and a mortality rate of 6 %, the people of Manipur braved the fight against the COVID 19-second wave.

The government took many initiatives from the start of the pandemic to control it. At the same time, the elected representatives and the potential candidates took the opportunity to advertise their presence and social work. It is natural that the party or individual in power had an advantage over the others as it was easy for them to mobilise the resources and services of the state, which in the long term helped in their electoral performance.

The N Biren Singh led BJP government was on the verge of collapse in 2020 due to internal squabbles. The whole crisis erupted in Manipur on 17th June 2020 after the four-member National People’s Party (NPP), the sole Trinamool Congress MLA, and an Independent MLA wanted to withdraw their support. The trouble worsened with three BJP MLA quitting the party and joining the congress. The nine-day-long political crisis ended with the intervention of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP national President JP Nadda, Meghalaya Chief Minister and NPP national President Conrad K. Sangma and Assam Minister and North East Democratic

Alliance (NEDA) convenor Himanta Biswa Sarma. The settlement resulted in the reshuffling of cabinet posts, and the NPP agreed to continue to support the government. The short span of the crisis benefitted the BJP in the long run as it exposed the weakness of the other political parties of the state, especially the Indian National Congress. BJP quickly filled the political void created by the decline of the Congress party by aligning with the regional political parties. The influence of regional political parties like Manipur People's Party (MPP), People Democratic Alliance (PDA) and Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) became less significant in the post-cease fire (2001) politics in Manipur. As Manipur exhibits a high degree of ethnic politics and regional parties being primarily based on ethnic roots, they failed to capture the aspirations of the diverse masses. And also, as the state is reeling in a condition of under development and dependency (Singh, 2018, p. 433), the system is generated in such a way to make people feel that the solution to redeem the woes of existence is to choose the party in power at the centre.

On the other hand, the erosion of the political competition within the political sphere had induced the mass exodus of political heavyweights from their original place to BJP. Earlier in 2017, when Th. Shyamkumar defected from the Congress party to BJP after winning the election, it sparked a major controversy in the political sphere. Today this practice has become the new normal. For instance, the former president of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC), Govindas Konthoujam⁶, twelve key members of Naga Peoples Front (NPF)⁷, lone Lok Janashakti Party (LJP) MLA Karam Shyam⁸, former Congress MLA from Sagolband constituency RK Imo⁹, Congress MLA from Saikul Constituency, Yamthang Haokip¹⁰, Congress MLA from Wangkhei constituency, Okram Henry¹¹ also joined the BJP, and the list goes on. The defection of politicians towards the BJP camp has some deep underlying meaning. Firstly, it reflects the general mood and aspirations of the people as they have gradually endorsed BJP. Secondly, BJP has undoubtedly become the most potent political force in the state.

Duality in BJP's Politics

It is intriguing to see how a party of deep ideological leanings has infiltrated a region infamous for its deep ethnic strife and cultural articulation. Unlike the case of BJP's mainstream politics, which took a hard stance on Hindutva ideology and Hindu nationalists' ideas, it is perplexing to know how they navigate their strong ideological commitment to the sub-ideologies of the natives and regional parties. With the use of the wise word "double engine government", BJP is able to build up a larger narrative of economic development. And also, on the cultural front, BJP has strategically compromised some of its core foundations in the Northeast theatre. For instance, BJP took the Hindutva ideology as the core of its politics at the national level, promoting Hindu culture and tradition, decreeing cow slaughter, and, most importantly, broadcasting a sense of hyper-nationalism. Yet, BJP practises a different strategy in Northeast India to blend with the Northeast tradition. The BJP presents its flexible outlook in the political theatre of Manipur as they do not antagonise communities (Bijukumar, 2019, p. 177). BJP's apparent consideration of Manipur's diversity and unique history and culture resulted in special treatment in its policy practices. In the mainstream, BJP's popular slogan includes 'Bharat Mata ki Jai', but in Manipur, BJP has preferred using 'BJP Na Yaiphare', which means "Victory to BJP or BJP is great" or 'PM Modi jina Yaiphare' which translates as "Prime Minister Modi is great" to capture the interests of locals. These slogans perhaps sidelined the idea of BJP's Bharat while it rather attempts to emphasise the local narratives. In 2017, prior to the assembly election of Meghalaya, the then BJP general secretary Ram Madhav announced that there would be no policy to impose a ban on beef consumption in Northeast India, acknowledging that beef is widely consumed in the region. Also, by signing the 'Framework Agreement' with the largest insurgency group, NSCN (IM), in 2015, BJP showed its apparent acceptance of counter-narratives in the whole nationalist question. In 2022, just before the election, Amit Shah assured that Kuki's issue would be resolved in no time if BJP came to power¹². The government of India had also released a fund of 16.6 crore as stipend money for the insurgents under suspension of operation (SOO) with the Indian Union. In response, the militant outfit Kuki National Organisation (KNO), in a statement, announced support and ordered the Kuki people to vote for BJP¹³. The whole set-up indirectly benefitted the electoral performance of the BJP in the Kuki-dominated region.

On the other hand, BJP attains excellent success in capturing the popular sentiment of the Northeast masses on issues of migrants. By interpreting the issue of migrants in Northeast India as a case of Bangladeshi influx, BJP has politicised the issue of migrants and sympathised with the masses. From NRC in Assam to the extension of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system in Manipur, BJP showcased its apparent concern for counter-culture and ethnicity. The success in bringing ILP Act 2019 to Manipur was a major bargaining power for BJP in the 2022 assembly election. In 2015, the then Congress government in Manipur had drastically failed in drawing up the issue, which necessarily resulted in brewing up of tensions between hills and plains.

Conclusion

The politics of Manipur is highly complex, where ideologies and principles hardly matter. It is more about maintaining peace and bringing more capital and funds to the state. Even for political players, commitment towards a particular political party is not serious. Instead, it is mainly driven by the cost-benefit equation. BJP's flexibility on the cow issue in Northeast India shows how adaptable the party is in Northeast politics. There is also not much difference between a congressman and a BJP person in Manipur because there is no serious ideological commitment except for very few people. There are innumerable instances where politicians shift their camps. One major example is the present Chief Minister N Biren Singh who was earlier a Manipur People's Party member, who shifted to become congressman and then later jumped to the BJP camp. On the other hand, Manipur is a dependent economy with very minimum infrastructural development. The transport and communication system is very bad compared to the mainstream states. In addition to this, economic activities are carried out mostly with central government assistance. Manipur falls under the special category states, and also the central government injects funds from time to time in the form of economic packages. So, maintaining a cordial relationship between the state and central government becomes an obligation. This conviction made it difficult to explore alternative politics in Manipur. Whenever there is an economic crisis, it transcends the political realm and thus results in a political crisis. In total, it led to what Jurgen Habermas called the "legitimation crisis", thus causing the collapse of the political system. As Manipur's economy is highly dependent on the central government, there has been a marriage of the political situation and the economic condition, which led to benefit the BJP in the election. For alternative politics to come, very precisely, Manipur has to be a self-sustained state at first, and for this, there is a need for major structural adjustment programmes.

Notes and References

Notes

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