

Migrants changed Delhi, delivered it to Kejriwal

Written by Administrator

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By Sidharth Mishra



Commenting on the resounding victory of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi assembly polls, its senior leader Yogendra Yadav made a very apt comment to this reporter. “For us these were local elections of a city assembly, the Prime Minister decided to put it on the national pedestal,” said Yadav, the psephologist-turned-politician. The AAP won 67 of the 70 seats at stake and grabbed 53% of the vote share. The unprecedented drubbing of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) can be summarized as the rejection of the politics practiced by the Narendra Modi government

after being given a resounding majority in the Lok Sabha polls. In May the people empowered a “chaiwala’s son” and in February they rejected the Prime Minister who wore a suit worth Rs 10 lakh and whose colleagues had the gumption to say promising Rs 15 lakh to every poor was just a “chunavi jumla” (poll gimmick). No wonder, the difference between BJP and the AAP in the vote share of urban poor is a staggering 41%.

The arrival of Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party marks beginning of new politics. Delhi in the past three decades has undergone a profound demographic change. The migrants arriving in the city, which is North India’s El Dorado, have given a new character to its social and cultural life. From being poor tenants in the unauthorized colonies they are now proud holders of plots but have been fighting with the successive governments for assertion of their civic rights.

Their struggle has not been limited to the recognition of their housing plots. They eke out a living fighting various forces of corruption aka government. The Congress and the BJP all these years instead of holding their hand have depended on poll malpractices, exploiting their poverty to get their mandate. When Kejriwal during the campaign said that do accept liquor and money from the Congress and the BJP but vote for me, he showed that he had his ear to the ground.

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BJP in its defence has said that its vote share has remained same as in the last assembly elections held in December 2013. What its leaders did not mention is that their vote share has come down by over 13 percent from the last Lok Sabha polls. How a party could have such a short honeymoon with voters has left political observers flummoxed. The only other such instance was in 1985, when having sent majority of the MPs from the state on Congress ticket, Ramakrishna Hegde's Janata Party government in Karnataka staged a comeback in assembly polls three months later.

The BJP vote share has dipped drastically because Narendra Modi has had little to showcase from his much-flaunted agenda of vikas (development). On the contrary, it has allowed the agenda of Hinduvta to overtake the charter of development. The BJP leadership in these months had been busy using the mandate to smother any competition that it faced within and outside the party. Such politics has been rejected by the people.

People of Delhi have given a huge mandate to Kejriwal and their expectations will be commensurate to that. Kejriwal has five years to come good on his promises. The Indian voter is notoriously fickle after all.

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