

# The UP Politics- Churning Out of Rational Legal Authority through the Carpet of Caste Politics

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## Abstract

Politics in Uttar Pradesh is marked for its caste based orientation and vote bank politics. The Mandal and Mandir or Masjids politics of Uttar Pradesh gained twist and turn towards single party rule or a situation where a single party can have mandatory role in deciding the fate of Uttar Pradesh is a matter of concern as well as interesting topic. The UP Politics- churning out of rational legal authority through the carpet of caste politics. The UP electorates with 19% of upper caste and an equal share of Muslim population (electoral population) plus 41 per cent age of OBC and 18 percentage of SC population together play a vital role in deciding the ruling party in the state. The politics in the UP is a game over caste polarisation. Caste based convergence and divergence make the political landscape of the UP as a political laboratory for the academic thinkers. Why 19 percentage of Muslim vote bank failed to muster the nature of a vote bank? Is a real question. While an equal proportion of upper caste people can decide their ruler with an unusual cohesion. Rift in Muslim vote bank, presence of powerful central government with BJP at its helm. Confusion over the fate of regional political parties in influencing the BJP government at the centre is a grave concern of various political fractions. Creation of a rational legal authority is the hallmark of genuine democracy. The UP is not an exception. Even though caste politics is a permanent feature of the UP politics, alternative possibilities are opened before the public.

**Key words:** UP Elections, India, Hindu heartland, caste system.

## Introduction

Max Weber, the sociologist cum philosopher, classified authority in to three categories;

Charismatic, traditional and legal-rational—each of which corresponds to a brand of leadership that is likely to present in present day society. The nature of authority exists in a society will be a reflection of coherence and consensus that is adjusted or accumulated over time with the help of known or unknown forces ( Maboloc 2015). The legal-rational authority is one which is clearly grounded on legal system and the procedures attached with it. The authority and competence is determined by the rational existence of the authority. The rationalisation is the process by which legal authority is fixed and engraved.

As a clear contrast to other forms of authority; charismatic and traditional forms, the legal-rational authority can ensure rationalization in its best form in democracy. Rationalisation is important feature of a successful democracy. How to rationalise is the concern of many theorists as well. Apart from electoral verdict, continues accession to power, political parties resort a number of activities to rationalise their existence ( Krishnarajan 2022). The way politicians behave, the methods they used to rationalise their role, the personal traits which are attached with their official clad. Such behaviours are usually political in the sense that they intend to move the country in a particular policy direction. In a federal system like India politics of one state may be considered as a sign for future course to where country moves on. “As Uttar Pradesh goes; so goes India” (Vaishnav and Hintson 2019).

### **Why Uttar Pradesh is Unique?**

The comment is considered as a metaphor in connection with post emergency election results in India. When Indira Gandhi and her party were devastated at the national level, it was in Kerala alone that a coalition led by the party had a landslide victory in both assembly and lok sabha elections. George Fernandez, the socialist leader described it as a “twist in the tail” (Ayyappan 2019). The Kerala very often poised herself as ‘twist in the tail’. If Kerala was designated as a ‘tail’ of the huge land mass alias India, Uttar Pradesh was designated in multiple ways; ‘multiple ways and explores five such distinct, though overlapping, constructions through its modern history: UP as a “colonial heartland”, as a “nationalist heartland”, as a “Hindu heartland”, as a “Muslim heartland”, and finally as a “postcolonial heartland” ( Kudaisya 2006). Uttar Pradesh is heartland of many but myriad forms of targets; target of nationalists, Hindus, colonial rulers, and Muslims.

The state Uttar Pradesh is a replica of India’s diversity and she had experienced unprecedented trauma of colonial rule as well as mighty kingdoms. In 2011, Uttar Pradesh accounted for 16.50 percent of India’s

population (with a population of around 3% of the global population.) The figure was 16.16 percent in 2001. Hinduism is practised by 79.73 percent of the population of Uttar Pradesh. In 70 of Uttar Pradesh's 71 districts, Hinduism is the majority religion. "The Heartland of Religion", Uttar Pradesh predominantly is a state that is saturated with spirituality in and out. It is the most fascinating state of India. Where 'Varanasi', the oldest Hindu city of India; 'Lucknow' is the princely stage of Nawabs; 'Agra' holds the 7th wonder of the world, Taj Mahal; Ayodhya and Mathura, where the Gods agreed on taking birth in the human form. Shrouded in mysticism and soaked in culture, Uttar Pradesh is an ancient state in the northern region of India. With an aura of golden past, rich heritage monuments, vibrantly colourful, vigorous, and modern face of the country, Uttar Pradesh is the indelible mark of excellence on the face of a country as magnificent as India.

### **Glorious History**

Uttar Pradesh is known as the cultural cradle of India. Its historical journey started dates back to 4000 years. Formerly, the state was occupied by the Aryans and Dasans' they laid the foundations of their civilization in the region. During Aryan inhabitation, epics of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Brahmanas, and Puranas were written. In the 1st millennium BC, UP saw the advent of Lord Buddha and the expansion of Buddhism. Additionally, Panchalas, Videhas, Vatsas, and Kuru were formed in the early region of the UP. In Ashoka's reign, some public welfare works were taken up. During the rule of the Magadha Empire, Buddhism and Jainism developed (CEO 2022).

### **Role of opposition in UP.**

It was reported in national dailies that the opposition parties in the UP were absent from the street. The huge criticism on social media against the ruling party in the UP seemed lost weight as the main opposition parties like Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and the Congress are saying that "Strategy and preparations are required. We are doing it." (Verma 2022 )

The state administration's actions drew criticism on social media, the Opposition parties in the state have been conspicuous by their absence on the ground. Parties like the Samajwadi Party (SP), the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and the Congress have criticised the BJP-led government but have not taken to the streets to protest against either the demolitions or the government's "Agnipath" military recruitment

scheme that has triggered demonstrations in the state. The SP, which has been the main Opposition party in the state since 2017, last hit the streets in large-scale protests in March 2011.

This was a year before it came to power in the state with an absolute majority. During those protests over a decade ago, the party organised aggressive demonstrations in Lucknow against the BSP-led government that ruled the state at the time. At the time, current SP president Akhilesh Yadav attracted public attention as images of him confronting the police, and getting arrested and dragged to a police van made the news. The SP claimed that its workers had burnt more than one lakh effigies of Mayawati, then the chief minister, across the state. At least 317 SP workers were arrested from different parts of UP. Back then, the SP's frontal outfits such as the Lohia Vahini, the Mulayam Singh Yadav Youth Brigade, and the Samajwadi Chhatra Sabha were known for staging street protests (Verma 2022 ).

The opposition parties in UP show premature politics while criticising the government in power. Instead of finding basic reasons for their failure or the BSP leader targeted the way Samajwadi party “attracted” the Muslim votes so as to consolidate Hindu votes in favour of BJP. Mayawati explained the causes of the Bahujan Samaj Party's (BSP) defeat in the Uttar Pradesh elections, she accused her supporters “for deserting her and her candidates. She also blamed the Samajwadi Party (SP) for attracting the BSP's Muslim voters, which, according to her, led to a Hindu consolidation behind the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)” (Verniers 2022). To criticise Muslim voters for own defeat in election was a strategy for the SP in Uttar Pradesh. “Beyond pointing out the obvious lack of grace in defeat and keeping in mind that in a democracy, voters are free to vote for whomsoever they choose, it is worth wondering why so many voters deserted the BSP in the 2022 UP election” (Verniers 2022).

“From 2014 to 2019, the people of UP moved to the Hindutva agenda and shed off the caste divisions, which used to be decisive in the previous elections,” said Masood ul Hassan, a senior journalist in Lucknow. The entry of All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-e-Muslimeen (AIMIM) was a decisive factor in the UP polls. Barrister Asaduddin Owaisi led AIMIM has been marked for its national aspirations to claim original mentors of Muslims. But Owaisi's entry, it was pointed out that would further divide the Muslim vote. Maulana Sajjad Nomani, an influential scholar wrote an open letter to Owaisi to stop from fielding a bulk of candidates and the fielding was very often designated as unscrupulous attempt without considering the chances of win ability. This was a bit of advice for

tactical voting and fielding of candidates. The Muslim factor, though decisive in election, got fragmented over system's pressure that won't be have a cause and effect relationship in the outcome of election (Bharth 2022).

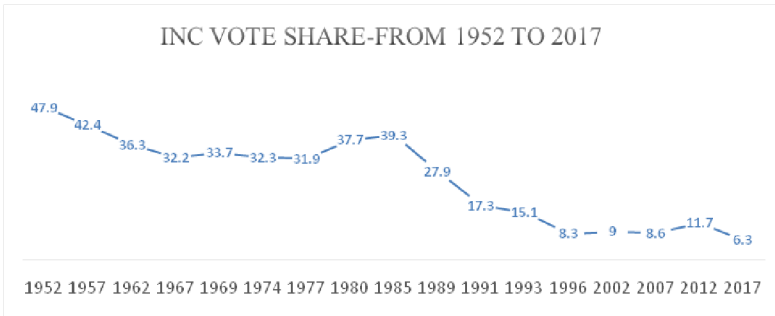
The UP politics is gradually coming out of a whirlpool created by two regional, caste-based parties the BSP and the SP. The BSP, founded by Dalit activist Kanshi Ram in 1984, is dedicated to uplifting India's historically disadvantaged communities—Scheduled Castes (SCs), also called Dalits and formerly known as untouchables; Scheduled Tribes (STs), also termed Adivasis; and the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). In particular, the party has rallied to the cause of Dalits, a Hindu community of lower castes considered so impure that it did not even figure into the formal caste hierarchy. Since 2003, the party has been run by Kanshi Ram's acolyte, Mayawati, a four-time chief minister of UP.

For more than a quarter century, the BSP has competed for political space with the SP. The SP initially formed as a splinter group of the Janata Dal—a center-left party that headed the central government between 1989 and 1991 before fracturing nearly a decade later. Like many Indian political parties, it is a dynastic party dominated by a single family. The party's founder, Mulayam Singh Yadav (the family patriarch), is a veteran OBC leader from UP who has thrice served as the state's chief minister. Between 2012 and 2017, Mulayam's son Akhilesh Yadav served as UP chief minister, and he currently serves as party president. Today, all five members of parliament from the SP are members of the Yadav family (Hintson 2019). The hereditary factor itself was a taboo for ordinary electorates. The BJP has succeeded in finding the 'pecking order' with extended support to locally influential political parties. They were unknown to public realm in comparison with SP or BSP.

In 2017, Anupriya Patel's Apana Dal (Sonelal) contested 11 seats as an ally of the BJP. The BJP set aside more seats for its ally. Another instance where the BJP has new ties with the Nishad Party as a new ally and BJP got support from the Nishad community whose traditional occupations are boatmen, fisherman and over a dozen sub-castes such as Bind, Mallah and Majihi. The BJP thus gained considerable influence in Gangetic belt (Mahapatra 2022). Parliamentary politics of the state Uttar Pradesh is a story of the saga of Bharathiya Janatha Party. The party was not there as an influential factor before 1962. In 1952 the party secured two seats and 2.5% of votes while contested from 211 seats out of 430 constituencies. While the Indian National Congress bagged

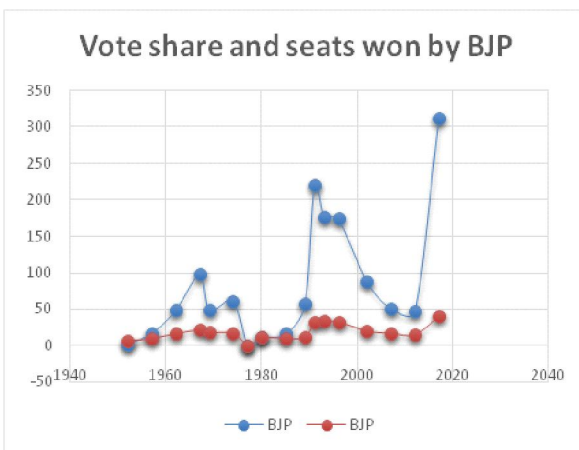
388 seats and a share of 47.9% of total valid votes polled. Subsequent elections shows a steady decline in votes share as well as number of seats for the Congress party.

### Vote Share-reflection of democratic presence



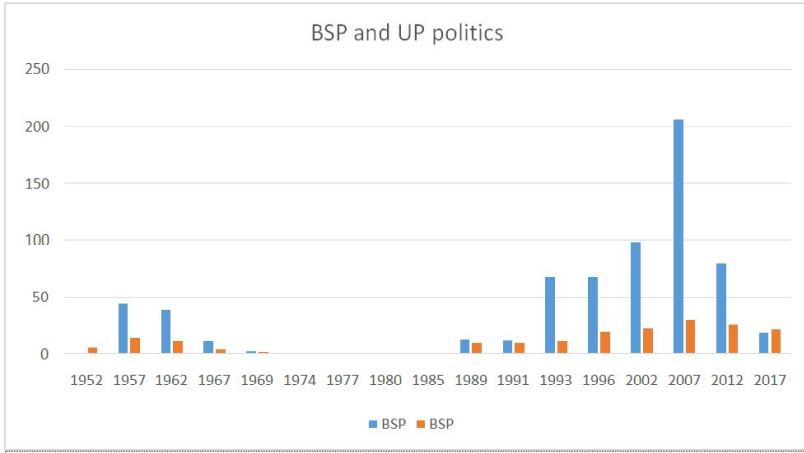
The INC claimed highest vote share in 1952 in the first election. INC bagged 47.9% and the party never returned to this position any longer. The congress party registered a constant decline in gaining vote except in 1985. The future of political party in the UP seems difficult.

Elections is a method of rationalising citizens by giving them a chance to register their opinion. The parties with high vote share should have an influential role despite of the number of seats it can bag in election. For example in 1991, the BJP secured 33.3 percentage of total valid votes and bagged 177 seats in UP Assembly. In 2017 the party bagged

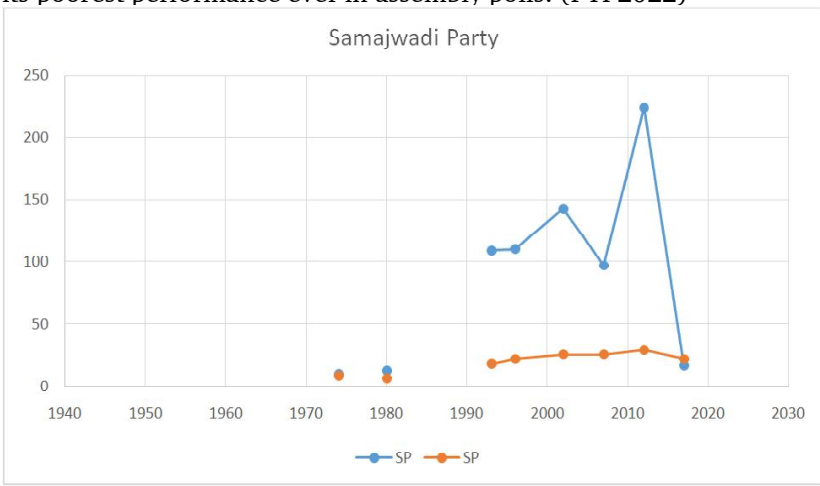


39.7 % of vote share but made victory in 312 seats. A twist of nearly 6.4% of vote share made an amazing tilt towards a ruling fraction with unparalleled weight in electoral politics. Many have pointed out role of regional

or local political parties in making the success a possible one for BJP.



As far as BSP and SP is concerned, they don't have a long history of election contestation and presence in UP politics in comparison with the BJP and the INC. When the BSP formed a government in Uttar Pradesh in 2007, it had bagged 206 seats and a vote share of 30.43 per cent. The BSP achieved a better strike rate than the SP when it formed an alliance with the SP in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. BSP won 10 seats in Lok Sabha while SP won five. After being an influential player in Uttar Pradesh politics for three decades, Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party has been relegated to the margins with the party set to witness its poorest performance ever in assembly polls. (PTI 2022)



The reasons for failure of SP in UP construed as “The vote percentage in the state and the region are indication enough that barring Muslims, no caste or community group voted for the SP en bloc”. The BJP won the Yadav-land and the victory was a vociferous outcome of Modi factor and attack on dynastic politics represented by the SP (Times 2022). The BJP has an edge over other political parties in the UP. Its unchallenged leadership, personality factor of its leaders and the caste fault line worked in favour of BJP. The Yogi government has gone hard on the state mafia. Most of the mafia leaders were caught and sent to jail. The law and order was revamped considerably. The state under SP or BSP was under the grip of these mafia lords and “BJP has been able to deliver welfarist schemes to the vulnerable sections. Add to this the payments made to the sugarcane farmers, the construction of new roads and expressways, the record procurement of food grains at the MSP, and the Yogi government seems to have an edge over others” (Shekhar 2022). Cadre character of RSS, **alienation of Deobandi school** from Owaisi’s power packed politics etc. played decisive role for the victory of the BJP in Uttar Pradesh.

## Conclusion

The UP electorates with 19% of upper caste and an equal share of Muslim population (electoral population) plus 41 per cent age of OBC and 18 percentage of SC population together play a vital role in deciding the ruling party in the state. The political party which can influence the politics of numbers can be victorious. In 2012 Assembly election The Samajwadi Party (SP) managed to win despite securing just 29 percent of the vote, with support from its core Yadav and Muslim voters. While in the 2014 General election, the state has a different story to share with. Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) swept the state with strong support from its core upper-caste constituency and gains among the OBCs. The swing voters play a decisive role in UP politics. Caste lines and its narrow fault lines too were given importance in politics. People in UP likely to be triggered by a party’s national stature and inclusive ideology, at the time of election.

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