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Interpreting the electoral verdict of 2014 Lok Sabha Elections in India: A Significant Shift in the Nature of Electoral Politics

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Introduction

The results of the 2014 Lok Sabha election (National/Parliamentary elections) in India should not be analysed or interpreted merely in terms of which party won and which party lost the election. The 2014 Lok Sabha needs to be analysed keeping in mind of an unprecedented victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The results were not surprising as there was almost a consensus amongst all political analysts and pollsters on at least one issue which party (BJP) is ahead in the electoral race of 2014 and Congress would be defeated in these elections. The only question in debate was how big or small would be the victory of the BJP, will the party be able to get majority on its own, how short would be the BJP from the majority mark and will Congress be able to win respectable number of seats, and lastly, is Congress tally going to be in two digit or in three digits. There was also some curiosity about the prospects of the newly formed Aam Adami Party (AAP).

The results surprised most political analyst and pollsters in India. The BJP not only registered a convincing victory, it managed to win majority of the seats (282 of the total 543 seat), while Congress got decimated, with its lowest ever tally of seats (44 seats) and lowest vote share (19.6 percent). This is after 30 years of electoral history in India that a political party won majority of seats in the Lok Sabha election, the previous one was in 1984 when Congress riding on the sympathy wave after the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi won 415 seats and polled 48.01 per cent votes. Not only did Congress perform badly during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the AAP also performed poorly, managing to win only four of the 432 seats the party contested and managed to get a national vote share of only 2.04 percent. More than its defeat, what came a big setback for the AAP was that of its 432 candidates, the party lost security deposit in as many as 414 Lok Sabha seats. Barring the three regional parties Mamata Banerjee led Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, Jayalalitha led AIDMK in Tamil Nadu and Biju Patniak led Biju Janata Dal in Orissa, none others could manage to make their presence felt in these elections.

But more than the electoral verdict, the 2014 Lok Sabha elections seem to be very different, in some way a landmark election in the electoral history of India at least during last two three decades. There are several factors which makes this election different from many other election held during last few decades. The enormous increase in electoral participation amongst various section of voters was one of the unique feature of the 2014 Lok Sabha election which is analysed in great details in section I of the paper. The second section

of the paper analyses the results of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections to establish the fact, that not only is BJP's victory convincing, in fact in these elections the voters voted in more decisive manner for the winner compared to the past elections. Using the findings from the National Election Study 2014 (NES 2014)) the third section of the paper analyses the dominant social cleavages in Indian elections and their voting patterns during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Comparing data from the past elections this section also analyses patterns of shifts in support base of different political parties amongst various social cleavages. In the fourth section of the paper an effort has been made to analyse the possible reasons for the shift amongst various sections of voters, dissatisfaction with the ruling UPA government due to price rise and corruption being the foremost. The leadership advantage which the BJP had over the Congress in the form of Narendra Modi being projected as the Prime Ministerial candidate by the BJP also results in this phenomenal shift in the voters from Congress to the BJP in 2014.

Section I: The Increased Turnout: Increased Electoral Participation

One of the highlight of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections in India is the very high turnout which this election witnessed. The 2014 Lok Sabha election witnessed a turnout of 66.4 percent, nearly 8 percent higher compared to the previous Lok Sabha elections held in 2009 (58 percent turnout). Not only did the turnout increased by 8 percent during the 2014 elections compared to previous elections (2009) in fact this election witnessed the highest ever turnout in the history of Lok Sabha election in India, the previous best being 64 percent during the 1984 Lok Sabha elections held under some kind of sympathy wave in favour of the Congress, which was held after the assassination of Indira Gandhi.

The increased turnout during the 2014 Lok Sabha election in India confirms the Lipton and Rokkan theory who talked about various methods of people showing their protest and anger against the ruling party. People normally use both channels of protests, at times such protests and conflict are expressed through demonstration, strike, sabotage or direct violence. Such protests and anguish against the ruling party are also channelized through voting in elections or putting pressure on legitimately elected government.

While in India there are various channels available to the people like protest, demonstration, bandh/hartal, (strike) sabotage, to show unhappiness or their protest against any policies of the government issue but the number of people who participate in such protest remains limited. If people are reluctant to vent their anger against the government through participation in strike, for them voting in elections seems to be a legitimate channel for putting pressure on legitimately elected government.

The past few years India witnessed voters using both forms of protest. A couple of years before the 2014 Lok Sabha election, India witnessed large number of people especially in the urban locations (small and medium size towns along with big cities) coming out to protest against the ruling government mainly on the issue of charges of corruption against the government. Cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and several such cities

witnessed large scale demonstrations against the ruling government. While the voters used these non violent protest as an effective means to put pressure on the legitimately elected government, but the voters also used the occasion of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and few state assembly elections (election in province) to vent their anger against the policies of the ruling government by way of coming out in large numbers to largely vote against the government. Along with other factors one of the factor which contributed for a very high turnout during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and in various elections in the province few years before the Lok Sabha election was the anger of the people against the policies of the then ruling party.

The campaign undertaken by the BJP to spread the message of mis-governance of the Congress led UPA government was clearly and evidently communicated and understood by the people at large compared to the message which Congress wanted to spread amongst the voters of the achievement of the government. The voters in general were attracted by the campaign of the BJP and the twenty four hour media coverage of the campaign with Narendra Modi in the centre of the media coverage resulted in large scale mobilisation of the voters to vote which helped the BJP in achieving a resounding victory. The analysis of these results establishes a clear relationship between turnout and electoral outcome which benefited the BJP.

An increased turnout would automatically mean higher participation of voters from various groups, but the two groups amongst whom the turnout increased dramatically in Indian elections 2014 were the women and the first time young voters (between 18-22 years of age). A glimpse of the electoral participation of women in Indian elections indicate, voting has been lower amongst Indian women compared to Indian men in all the Lok Sabha elections held in the country since 1952, though the elections held in recent decades have witnessed considerable narrowing down of the gap between the men turnout and women turnout. More and more women had begun to participate in much bigger numbers in Indian election in recent decades. The Lok Sabha elections held soon after the independence of India (1947) elections witnessed women turnout lower by more than 10 percent compared to men turnout, but the 2014 elections witnessed a very high increase in women turnout. The women turnout was only marginally less (1.4 percent) compared to men turnout. But it is important to note that this did not happen suddenly, the gap between men and women turnout had narrowed down significantly (4 percent) during the 2009 Lok Sabha elections and the trend of increasing women turnout continued during the assembly elections held in various states since then. In fact, in many states (provinces) like Bihar, Orissa and Himachal Pradesh the women turnout was higher compared to the men turnout during the assembly elections held in these states in recent years. Though women failed to outnumber men in voting during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, but there was a dramatic rise in women turnout between 2009 and 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

Another section of voters which participated in voting very enthusiastically were the young voters, those aged between 18-23 years, who had the opportunity to vote for the first time during the Lok Sabha elections. They constitute large proportion of voters in India due to relatively higher growth rate of population. Many of these voters have been hugely dissatisfied with the policies of the Congress led UPA government which had failed in generating employment opportunities especially for the urban educated youth. Due to spread of education these youth add to the employable population year after year and the lack of employment opportunities result in gradual increase in the numbers of unemployed youth. This is the workforce some of which also participate in the protest, strike and demonstration to vent their anguish, but even among them large numbers choose to use the democratic method of expressing protest.

Indian have had regular elections both for electing the national government and for electing the government in different provinces. These young voters amongst whom unemployment have remained a constant problem always had an opportunity available to them to show their protest through democratic means by voting in or out a government, but they had never voted in as big number as one would have expected, but the 2014 Lok Sabha election marks a departure in this trend. Findings of the survey data has indicated that turnout amongst the young voters (18-25 years) have remained lower by nearly 4-5 percent compared to the average turnout in all the Lok Sabha elections held in India since 1996. The 2014 Lok Sabha is remarkable in respect of youth voting as in this election the turnout amongst the young voter was nearly two percent higher compared to the average turnout. Anguish against the ruling government led by Congress and personal appeal of the BJP leader Narendra Modi resulted in mobilising large number of young voters to vote in these elections.

The urban (big cities) turnout still remained lower compared to the turnout in villages or in small and medium towns, but the gap between the urban and the rural turnout narrowed down in this election compared to past few elections. Clearly the urban constituencies which were sites of more articulated anger resulting in protest and strikes witnessed relatively higher increase in voter's turnout.

Going by the pattern of voter's turnout and electoral outcome during elections held in India in early decades, there is a pattern of higher turnout resulting in defeat of the ruling party in successive election. The relation of higher turnout an indicator of an anti incumbency vote remained very strong for many decades as large number of government were voted out of power when voters turned out in large number to vote. But the pattern seems to have changed during last decade or so. The elections in various provinces (state assembly elections) held during last decade or little more than that indicated, governments getting re-elected in-spice of higher turnout and vice-versa. Most of the assembly elections witnessed higher turnout compared to the previous elections in the state, but in-spice of

that many governments got re-elected. Analysis of the turnout and electoral verdict indicate a strong relationship between turnout and electoral verdict, higher the turnout, greater were the electoral gains for the BJP and its allies. The BJP along with its allies swept the elections in constituencies which witnessed 15 percent or more increase in turnout compared to the 2009 Lok Sabha elections. Of the 70 such Lok Sabha seats where turnout increased by more than 15 percent, BJP and its allies managed to win 67 of those seats.

The results from the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and its correlation with the figures for turnout in different constituencies clearly indicate, the Indian voters punished the Congress led UPA government for its mis-governance. Large numbers of voters felt that they did not benefit from the Congress led UPA government which supports Rochester model which talks about how the voters reward the incumbents from whom they have benefitted and punish the ones from whom they have not. It also talks about how campaign serves as an effective tool for mobilising voters for or against a party. The campaign undertaken by BJP before the 2014 Lok Sabha elections in India actually become a criteria for evaluation by the voters and thus it was purposive in order to win the elections with such majority.

Table 1: Figures for turnout in Indian Elections

Year	Voter Turnout(in %)
1952	61
1957	62
1962	55
1967	61
1971	55
1977	61
1980	57
1984	64
1989	62
1991	57
1996	58
1998	62
1999	60
2004	58
2009	58
2014	66

(All figures in percent)

Table 2: Gap between men and women turnout (1952-2014)

Year	Male	Female	Gender gap
1962	63	47	16
1967	67	56	11
1971	61	49	12
1977	66	55	11
1980	62	51	11
1984	68	59	9
1989	66	57	9
1991	62	51	11
1996	62	53	9
1998	66	58	8
1999	64	56	8
2004	62	53	9
2009	60	56	4
2014	67	66	1

(All figures in percent)

Table 3: Turnout amongst young voters

Year of Lok Sabha Election	Turnout among Youth Voters	Average turnout
1996	54	58
1998	60	62
1999	57	60
2004	55	58
2009	54	58
2014	68	66

(All figures in percent)

Table 4: Turnout in rural and urban constituencies

	Turnout in 2014	Turnout in 2009	Difference in turnout
All Constituencies	66	58	8
Urban Constituencies	61	52	9
Semi -Urban Constituencies	69	61	8
Rural Constituencies	67	59	8

(All figures in percent)

Table 5: Turnout and Election Results

Turnout increase in 2014 compared to 2009 Lok Sabha elections	Number of Seats	Seats won by BJP led NDA
15% points and above	70	67
10-14.99% points	145	125
0.1-9.99% points	267	123
No change/decline in turnout	61	21

(All figures in percent)

Section II: A more decisive victory than it seems: Elections results

From the analysis in the previous section it is clear that the BJP performed much better in constituencies which registered higher turnout compared to constituencies which registered comparatively lower turnout, but that hardly suggest that BJP's victory was lopsided. In fact BJP victory is more convincing than what looks like from the number of seat it won, while on the other hand the Congress defeat is much worse than it is reflected from the number of seats which the party managed to win. The BJP polled 31.3 percent votes and won 282 of the 543 seats. Compared to the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, the vote share of BJP increased by 12.3 percent and its tally of seats increased by 116 seats. In the electoral history of India, it is after 30 years that a single party managed to get a majority on its own in the Lok Sabha. The last time when a single party won a majority of seats in the Lok Sabha elections was during the 1984 Lok Sabha elections when Congress riding on the post Indira Gandhi assassination wave managed to win 415 seats and polled 48.01 percent votes. The 2014 Lok Sabha elections was also significant with regard to change in the vote share of any single party between two Lok Sabha elections in India. The BJP's vote increased by 12.3 percent, it was in 1977 Lok Sabha elections that the Congress vote share went down by little more than 9 percent, which was repeated in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

More than that, the BJP increased its vote share in all the states except for **Punjab**. The party which was seen largely as urban based party expanded its support base in the rural constituencies. The vote share of BJP increased both in rural as well as in urban constituencies.

The victory of the BJP was more decisive than one may be inclined to believe. The 2014 Lok Sabha witnessed not only greater participation of the voters, it also witnessed increased participation of the political actors. Compared to the 363 political parties contesting the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, the 2014 Lok Sabha elections witnessed largest number of political parties contesting the 2014 Lok Sabha elections (464 parties). Larger number of political parties in the electoral fray could have resulted in greater fragmentation of votes, votes may have got divided amongst various parties which in turn may have resulted in victory and defeat being decided by smaller margins compared to the past. Not only the BJP candidates, but all winners irrespective of their party, registered more convincing victories in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections compared to what we have seen in the recent past especially during the post **Mandal era**. The average gap between the winner and the runner-up have been 15.2 percent in 2014 which during last few Lok Sabha elections was at an average of about 10 percent. The victory margin of BJP winner was much bigger compared to winner of many other parties except for All India Anna Dramuk Party (AIDMK) Trinmool Congress (TMC)..

The Congress defeat is much worse than what could be imagined from the number of seats the party won. The average victory margin of a Congress candidate was 8 percent, much lower compared to the average victory margin of the BJP candidate which was at 18 percent. Of the total 44 seats won by the Congress, its candidates won by over 1 lakh votes only in 13 Lok Sabha constituencies. In 15 constituencies, its candidate won only marginally by less than **twenty thousand votes**. The tally of seats for the Congress could have gone down to 10-12 in case party had managed to get 2 or 3 percent less votes that it managed to poll in recent elections.

Table 6: Table of Elections Results 2014

Parties	Contested	Seats won	Vote(%)	Vote change over from 2009 (in %)
Congress allies	75	14	3.70	-9.81
Congress	464	44	19.3	-9.25
BJP Allies	114	54	7.2	-0.3
BJP	428	282	31.1	+12.25
Others	6806	132	26.2	+2.46

(All figures in percent)

Table 7: Increase in vote share of BJP in Rural/Urban constituencies

	BJP's Vote share (%)		Increase in vote share
	2009	2014	
Rural	18	30	12
Semi Urban	19	30	11
Urban	25	39	14

(All figures in percent)

Table 8: BJP's expansion in different regions of India

Regions	Total Seats	BJP		BJP Allies	
		Vote%	Seats	Vote%	Seat
Hindi Speaking states	225	43.7	190	2.2	11
Western India	78	38.5	53	15.4	19
Rest of India	240	17.3	39	9.7	24
Overall	543	31.0	282	7.4	54

Table 9: Change in vote share of the BJP, state wise

Vote Share (% votes polled)			
States	2009	2014	Change 2009-2014
Uttar Pradesh	18	42	25
Uttarakhand	34	55	22
Assam	16	37	20
Rajasthan	37	55	18
Haryana	17	35	18
Bihar	14	29	16
Jammu and Kashmir	19	32	14
Gujarat	47	59	13

Vote Share (% votes polled)			
States	2009	2014	Change 2009-2014
Jharkhand	28	40	13
NCT of Delhi	34	46	12
West Bengal	6	17	11
Madhya Pradesh	44	54	11
Maharashtra	18	27	9
Goa	45	53	9
Andhra Pradesh	3	9	6
Orissa	17	22	5
Chhatisgarh	45	49	4
Tamil Nadu	2	6	3
Kerala	7	10	3
Tripura	3	6	3
Karnataka	42	43	1
Punjab	10	9	-1

(All figures in percent)

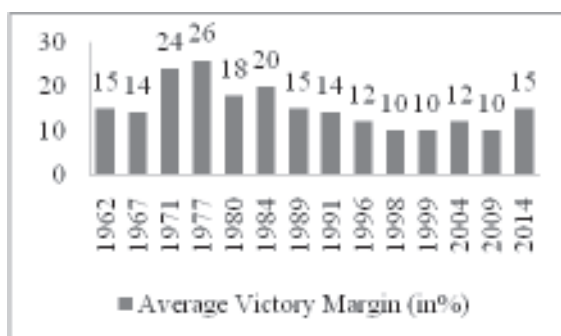
Table 10: Change in vote share for any party between two elections since 1952

	Change in vote share of Congress (in %)	Change in vote share of BJP (in %)
1952 to '57	+2.80	-
1957 to '62	-3.06	-
1962 to '67	-3.94	-

	Change in vote share of Congress (in %)	Change in vote share of BJP (in %)
1967 to '71	+2.90	-
1971 to '77	-9.16	-
1977 to '80	+8.17	-
1980 to '84	+5.32	-
1984 to '89	-8.48	+3.96
1989 to '91	-2.89	+8.68
1991 to '96	-7.84	+0.05
1996 to '98	-2.98	+5.30
1998 to '99	+2.48	-1.84
1999 to '04	-1.77	-1.59
2004 to '09	+2.03	-3.35
2009 to '14	-9.26	+12.24

{All figures in percent)

Chart 1: Average victory margin (1952-2014)



(All figures in percent)

Table 11: Victory margin of BJP and other parties 2014 Lok Sabha Election (All figures in percent)

All India 2014 (543 seats)	15
In Seats where BJP won (282 seats)	18
In Seats where BJP Allies Won (73 Seats)	12
In Seats where Congress Won (44 Seats)	8
In Seats where AIADMK Won (37 Seats)	17
In Seats Where AITC Won (32 Seats)	13
In Uttar Pradesh where the BJP+ won seats (73 seats)	18
In Bihar where the BJP+ won seats (31 seats)	12
In Maharashtra where the BJP+ won seats (42 seats)	21

Section III: Social Cleavages and Voting in India: A shift in the social cleavage based voting during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections

There are different considerations for different people while voting. The voting choice is very often shaped by voters individual caste, community, religion, his or her party's choice, likeness for a particular candidate in a particular constituency, region and various such considerations. While all such considerations work in the mind of Indian voters while voting, the country being so diverse socially, economically, geographically, and politically, it may be appropriate to look at all these cleavages into three main paradigms i.e. the sociological approach, the party identification models and rational choice theory.

The problems which generally arise are from the regional differences which are visible in our country, the social variables and attitudinal measures often specified but they do not think about the influences which lead to the development of thoughts and attitudes. The sociological theory emphasizes the impact of social structure suggesting that the social group memberships influence the voting choices. It emphasizes on the theory that there is an impact of group identities along with their attitudes and interest on voting during elections. The voters are considered to be instrumental hence they vote for parties which best represent their interests or interest of their caste-community or group. Lipton and Rokkan also talked about the social cleavages which frame the political parties in power.

Party identification model talks about the voters to be expressive rather than instrumental. Party affiliations are taken to be framed from socialization and the voters have a long standing affiliation from which they do not waver. Rational choice theory of

voting indicates that voting by individuals depends on the cost-benefit analysis whereby the voting choices made are very individualistic. But it still leaves a space for party identification and sociological approach since social identities play a role to in shaping the individuals attitudes, behaviour and perceptions.

Indian being a multi party democracy, with various kinds of diversities, it is difficult to say which theory in particular defines voting patterns in Indian elections more so especially during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The voting behavior of Indian voters seems to be an assemblage of the above mentioned all the three theories though in different degrees, though the application of party identification is not clear or rather diplomatic. Findings of the survey conducted by the CSDS indicate only a tiny proportion of voters seems to identify closely with one or the other political party, so there is hardly any question of party identification being the dominant theory of voting to describe how Indians voted during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

The voting during the 2014 Lok Sabah elections and even of the past elections both at the national level and at the state level could best be described to reflect the social cleavage theory of voting as voters from various caste-communities remained sharply polarised for or against a political party and voted almost en-block for that party. Compared to past elections, during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, slightly larger proportion of voters may have voted keeping in mind their individual or groups benefit, but even in these elections, the caste based voting was predominant reinforcing the social cleavage theory of voting in Indian elections. While voters from some caste communities who had voted for the BJP even in the past was more sharply polarised in favour of the BJP, the 2014 Lok Sabha elections also witnessed a significant shift in the voting preference of voters of various caste- communities from one party to another.

The 2014 Lok Sabha elections witnessed unprecedented shift in the voting patterns of voters. Not only did this election witnessed highest polarisation of the Upper Caste voters in favour of the BJP and its allies, this election also witnessed decisive shift amongst the voters belonging to the Other Backward Castes (OBC). The Dalits also voted for the BJP and its allies in sizeable numbers. Compared to the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, when only 12 percent Dalits voted for the BJP, nearly 24 percent Dalits voted for the BJP during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. This shift amongst the Dalit voters was largely due to the alliance of Dalit leader Ram Vilas Paswan's Lok Jan Shakti party in Bihar and induction of another leader from Uttar Pradesh, Udit Raj, into the party, who successfully contested the Lok Sabha elections from Delhi. This election also witnessed major shift amongst the Adivasi

towards the BJP. For the first time the Young voters (18-25 years) voted in a decisive manner for a party (BJP), in all previous Lok Sabha elections (since 1996), the young voters had remained as divided as voters of other age group. Hardly any party got more votes amongst the young voters compared to their average national vote share.

The 2014 Lok Sabha elections also witnessed economic class emerging as an important social cleavage in voting. These elections also witnessed a major shift in the voting preference of voters from different economic classes. The voters belonging to the lower and the poor class have been the core supporters of the Congress during past many years. The Congress even used the slogan “Congress Haath, Garib ke Saath” to make this point amongst the voters that Congress cares much more for the poor people in India compared to any other party. No wonder large numbers of poor and lower class voters voted for the Congress even when the party performed relatively badly (1998 and 1999 Lok Sabha elections). The Congress always had a lead over other parties amongst the poor and the lower class voters, but this election witnessed BJP making inroads even amongst Congress core supporters, the BJP took lead over the Congress amongst the poor and the lower class voters. This was possible because, the most significant shift towards the BJP was witnessed amongst the Urban poor and the Urban lower class voters. Amongst the Urban poor, those living in small and medium scale towns, there was 13 percent shift towards the BJP compared to the 2009 elections. Similarly amongst the Lower income class voters, living in small towns and big cities, 35 percent voted for the BJP, a significant shift of 20 percent in favour of the BJP compared to the previous Lok Sabha elections. Amongst the Middle and Upper Class voters, the shift was more in villages than in towns and cities since they had voted for the BJP in sizeable numbers even in the past. The loss in support base of the Congress was amongst voters of all classes, but it was the largest amongst the urban poor, most amongst those living in big metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore or Chennai.

Table 12: Shift in the votes of different communities for BJP (All figures in percent)

Community	Votes 2014 (in %)	Change since 2009 (in %)
Upper castes	47	+18
Dalits	24	+12
OBC	34	+13
Tribals	38	+14
Muslims	8	+4

(All figures in percent)

Table 13: Class by vote for Congress and BJP 2009-2014

	BJP		Congress	
	2014	Change from 2009	2014	Change from 2009
Poor	24	+8	20	-7
Lower	31	+12	19	-10
Rich	32	+10	20	-9
Middle	38	+13	17	-12

(All figures in percent)

IV: Explaining the Outcome: What resulted in this massive shift in the voters

This was simply not a routine election, such a massive shift amongst the voters, that too amongst the core supporters of the Congress who had remained loyal to the party for many decades was due to twin factors. The first and foremost, large scale dissatisfaction of the people during the past 10 years of Congress led United Front Government and at the same time an attraction for the BJP as a national alternative. The dissatisfaction with ruling Congress led UPA government was besides other factors, largely due to rising prices and corruption scandals during the UPA government. It is important to note that the dissatisfaction with the ruling UPA was not much couple of years ago, in-fact the findings of the CSDS surveys indicate the opinion of the voters on the performance of the work done by the UPA government was positive, the net figure was 18 (figures for positive opinion minus figures for negative opinion) but slowly and gradually the dissatisfaction against the government started growing and it was at its peak few months before election. Findings of the survey indicate, it was 15 percent negative in January. Though the negative opinion on government's overall performance declined somewhat close to the day of elections (March) but that was not enough to tilt the balance in favour of the Congress.

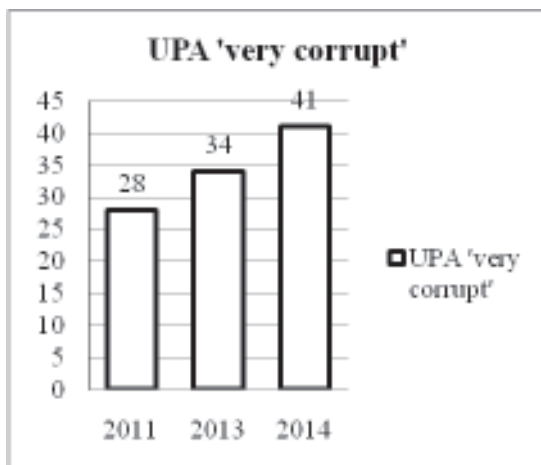
People may be unhappy about various things, but the findings of the survey clearly indicate that one of the main issues which angered large sections of Indian voters was the rising prices of essential commodities which pinched the pocket of voters cutting across class, locality age and community. Findings of the survey indicate 85 percent voters mentioned prices have gone up during last few years. This view was shared equally amongst the rich and the poor voters. Price rise was also an issue which influenced voting decision of large number of voters. As per survey estimates, 20 percent mentioned that their voting decision was influenced by the issue of price rise, 16 percent mentioned development, 12 percent mentioned corruption, 7 percent mentioned issue of civic amenities like road water and electricity while another 7 percent voters mentioned issue of unemployment as the

guiding factor for their voting. There were 16 percent voters who mentioned various other issues and 23 percent voters could not access which factor has the most influence on their voting during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Besides the price rise, what also angered the voters was the shared belief that the government was corrupt. People shared this negative view about the government since last few years, but what made the situation even worse for the ruling party was the growing belief that the government is corrupt and corruption has increased under the present Congress led UPA government. In the survey, 41 percent voters believed that UPA government was very corrupt, 74 percent also believed that corruption has also increased under the UPA government. This view was shared equally amongst the voters cutting various sections.

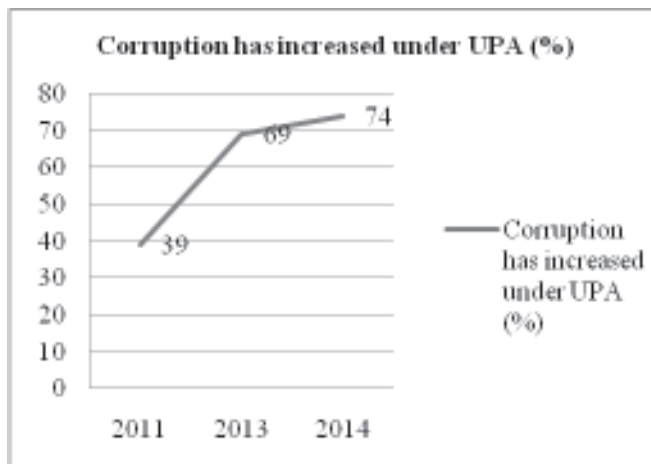
Table 14: Dissatisfaction with the UPA government (all figures in percent)

Years	Net satisfaction with the UPA (%)
2011 (Jul)	18
2013 (Jul)	-2
2014 (Jan)	-15
2014 (March)	-6

Chart 2.1: UPA government was corrupt



2.2: Corruption has increased under the UPA (all figures in percent)



The reason for this big shift amongst voters from Congress to BJP was not only due to the dissatisfaction with the ruling UPA government, there was also a positive attraction amongst the voters for the BJP's as a party of national alternative and Narendra Modi as the leader. Till few years back not many saw Narendra Modi as a leader who should be India's Prime Minister, but his popularity as a leader or someone whom voters preferred as country's Prime Minister grew during last eight months or at best during last one year mainly after he was first declared chairman of the BJP's campaign committee in Goa meeting of the party and later on after he was declared the party's Prime Ministerial candidate. During the survey conducted in 2011, only 5 percent were willing to name Narendra Modi as country's preferred Prime Minister while at that time 19 percent were willing to see Rahul Gandhi as India's Prime Minister. But his popularity amongst common voters increased dramatically since January 2014 when 34 percent voters were willing to mention his name as country's Prime Minister while Rahul Gandhi's popularity graph declined to 15 percent. Modi's popularity increased further and close to the day of election, 36 percent voters mentioned his name as their preferred choice for country's Prime Minister, while Rahul Gandhi's popularity declined marginally to 14 percent. One can't deny media's contribution in Modi's growing popularity as survey clearly indicate, higher was the exposure to the media greater was the fan following for Narendra Modi. Amongst those highly exposed to media 44 percent preferred him as the Prime Minister while amongst those who hardly had any exposure to the media only 23 percent mentioned his name as their preferred choice for country's next Prime Minister. There seems to be a strong co-relation between level of media exposure of voters and their preferred choice of Narendra Modi as country's Prime Minister. Amongst those with low level of media exposure, 36 percent indicated that they would like to see Narendra Modi as the next Prime Minister of India.

The positive image of Narendra Modi shared amongst large section of voters also has an impact on the voting choices. Findings of the post poll survey indicate, of those who indicated voting for the BJP, 27 percent mentioned that they might have preferred voting for some other party if Narendra Modi was not the Prime Ministerial candidate of the BJP, while 48 percent voters mentioned, irrespective of whether Modi was the Prime Ministerial candidate or not, they would have voted for the BJP in 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

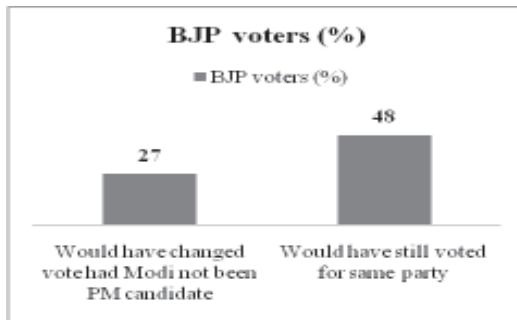
Besides other reasons, one of the main causes for Modi's popularity has been his ability to successfully convince large sections of Indian voters of the success of Gujarat as a model of a developed state. Findings of the survey clearly indicate, there is a shared view amongst the Indian voters that Gujarat is the most developed state. When asked to name which state is the most developed state in their opinion, 20 percent mentioned the name of Gujarat, way ahead of any other state. Only 4 percent people mentioned the name of Maharashtra and Kerala, 3 percent mentioned Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka while a large number of voters (48 percent) were unable to express their opinions on this question. While the data on social and economic development would hardly substantiate this view expressed by the common voters, but this is the shared perception of large number of voters, a perception which may have been developed by intense campaign by the BJP, the state government and Narendra Modi himself which was helped by the massive media attention which Narendra Modi received. Perception plays an important role in election and BJP and its leadership has been successful in creating a perception amongst large section of voters, if BJP would come to power, "*Achhe din Aayege*" ie good days will come for them.

Table 15: Leadership factor, Popularity rating of Narendra Modi

Year	Modi's popularity	Rahul Gandhi's popularity
2009	2	6
2011	5	19
2013	19	12
Jan-14	34	15
Mar-14	34	15
April-May 2014	36	14

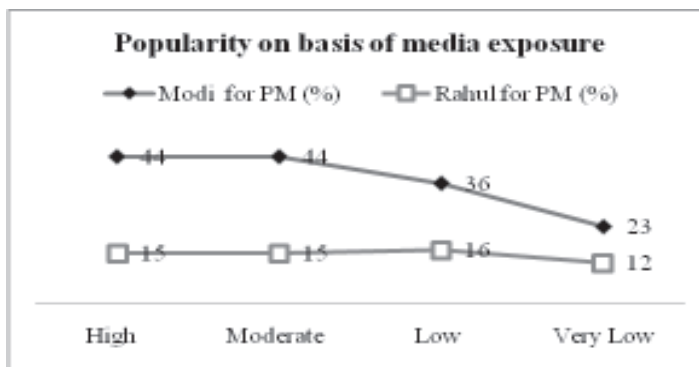
(All figures in percent)

Chart 3.1: Modi's impact on Voting



Note: Figures are in percent

Chart 3.2: Modi's popularity increases with an increase in media exposure as compared to Rahul Gandhi's as depicted below:



(All figures in percent)

Table 16: People's perception about the most development state

Name of State	Figures in percent
Gujarat	20
Maharashtra	4
Kerala	4
Delhi	3
Tamil Nadu	3
Karnataka	3
No Opinion	48

Section V: Conclusion

Election in most of the instances is a means of political change. In a multi party political system election would result in victory and defeat for political party, it brings about change in government. If seen in this respect, the 2014 Lok Sabha elections may not seem unusual. It resulted in a change of government, from UPA government to the BJP government. But what makes this election different from others is the fact that this election not only brought about change in the government, it has changed the nature of electoral politics in India. The electoral politics in India for the past sixty years has been dominated by the anti Congress plank which at times had witnessed non Congress parties either forming alliance or coalition, or at least working out a seat sharing arrangement to avoid splitting of anti Congress vote with the single motive of defeating the Congress. Such alliance or seat-sharing arrangement were worked out between the parties at times keeping difference in ideology of these parties aside. The results of these elections have resulted in significant shift in the nature of electoral contest and political alliance in India. From non Congress polity, there is a sharp shift towards the non BJP polity. Both the Congress and the BJP failed to attract new alliance before the 2014 Lok Sabha elections barring few exceptions, but things seem to have changed after the election results. There is a complete U turn in the nature of political alliance from non-Congress to non-BJP. This began in a small way in Bihar where the two arch rivals Nitish Kumar and Laloo who opposed each other for the last fifteen years formed a grand alliance along with the Congress (Referred as Maha Gathjod) to oppose the BJP in Bihar. With initial success there is a strong possibility of the alliance being able to continue even for the assembly elections (provincial elections) due in the state in year 2015. While we do not see such moves in other state at this moment, but clearly the next one decade of electoral politics more so pattern of alliance would be dominated by the anti-BJP alliance a significant shift in Indian Politics.

What has triggered this shift in Indian politics is also the fundamental shift in the support base of political parties during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP which was seen as largely a party of the urban upper-middle class voters has expanded its support bases significantly amongst the rural voters and section of voters who have hardly voted for the party in the past. Barring the Muslims voters, voters from most of the other caste-communities shifted towards the BJP in a significant way. The tag of “catch all party” or a party with “an umbrella coalition” which was associated with Congress seemed to have shifted to the BJP. Parties in the past have won and lost elections, but the result of this election certainly goes beyond that, in many ways it has altered the nature of electoral politics in India.