CHAPTER – III
Chapter – III

Delhi Municipal Corporation Elections: An Overview

Origin of election is from ‘eliziri’ Latin language word which means election. Election is like a part of world democratic ruling system. It is must for a democratic system. Democratic system is based on the awareness and intelligence of its electorates. The imported parts of democracy are the masses and the voters and elections. The voters decide their own fate by means of elections.

Direct system of election is adopted often in all democratic bodies. For this purpose there are certain provisions in the electoral role is prepared before the general elections in such a manner as may be prescribed by rulers.

The state election commission notifies for the municipal election get it published in the official Gazette. Seven days are given to the candidates for filling up the nominations. Scrutiny of forms is done the next day and incomplete or incorrect forms are rejected. A specific period is also given for the withdrawal of the nominations. The forfeited of those candidates who obtain less than 6% of the votes polled security amount. Some seats are reserved for Scheduled Caste, women and scheduled caste women. One member is elected from each ward. The elected members elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Zonal Committee’s are also constituted for various departments.

First Municipal Corporation election was held in Delhi in 1958. Bhartiya Rashtriya Congress party won this first election in Delhi. The Honorable person to sit on the chair of the Mayor was Aruna Arif Ali. Bhartiya Rashtriya Congress party again won the second election of Delhi Municipal Corporation in 1962. Third Delhi Municipal Corporation elections were held in 1967 which again went in the hands of the Bhartiya Rashtriya Congress party. It was their third time for
this achievement. The Congress party again won the race of Delhi Municipal Corporation election in the year of 1971. This winning of election in a continuation of four time came up as a remarkable achievement for the Bhartiya Rashtriya Congress Party. But after the election of 1958 till 1971, the public had lost its faith in the Congress party and in the fifth Delhi Municipal Corporation election held in June 1977. The Janata Party was declared as the winning party in this election instead of the Congress Party. Sixth Delhi Municipal Corporation elections again took a turn and the election of 1983 again brought up a ray of light to the Bhartiya Rashtriya Congress party and it won the election again. Then the race begin between the Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party (B.J.P.) as Bhartiya Janata Party was, declared as the winning party in the election of February 1997. But again the Congress Party overtook the Bhartiya Janata Party (B.J.P.) and won the Delhi Municipal Corporation election of 2002. Then in the year of 2007 the Bhartiya Janata Party (B.J.P.) was again brought up as the winning party of Delhi Municipal Corporation election and from it then Delhi Municipal Corporation got a new Mayor named Arti Mehra. First Delhi Municipal Corporation election was held in 1958. However, 1997, 2002 and 2007 Delhi Municipal Corporation elections are covered.

**Table 3.1**

**Election Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawals</td>
<td>Feb. 6, 1997</td>
<td>Mar. 9, 2002</td>
<td>March 22, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting day</td>
<td>Feb. 22, 1997</td>
<td>March 24, 2002</td>
<td>April 5, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result day</td>
<td>Feb. 25, 1997</td>
<td>March 27, 2002</td>
<td>April 7, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of election process</td>
<td>Feb. 29, 1997</td>
<td>Mar. 31, 2002</td>
<td>April 12, 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Municipal Corporation Delhi, Election Commission Office, Kashmiri Gate, Delhi.*
Delhi Municipal Corporation elections 1997 notification date was January 1 and nomination forms filed on January 24 to 31. Date of scrutiny of nomination of this election was February 1, withdraw of nomination forms date was February 6. Poll held on February 22 and result was declared on dated 25 February 1997. Completion of election process date of 1997 Delhi Municipal Corporation election was February 29, 1997.

Next Delhi Municipal Corporation elections of 2002, notification date of this election was February 25, 2002 and nomination forms were filed on February 25 to March 3, 2002. Scrutiny of nomination forms of this election date was March 3, 2002. Nomination withdrawals was on dated March 9, 2002 and voting date of this election was March 24, 2002. Result was declared of this election on March 27, 2002 and completion of election process date of this election was March 31, 2002.

Latest election of Delhi Municipal Corporation is 2007. Notification date of this election was February 23, 2007 and nominations were filed on dated March 17, 2007. Scrutiny of nomination forms date was March 20, 2007 and nomination forms withdrawals date was March 22, 2007. Voting day of this election was on dated April 5, 2007. Result was declared of this election on April 7, 2007 and completion of election process on dated April 12, 2007.

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nomination Filed</td>
<td>2561</td>
<td>2188</td>
<td>3510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawals</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of contestants</td>
<td>1437</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td>2515</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Municipal Corporation Delhi, Election Commission Office, Kashmiri Gate, Delhi.
2561, 2188 and 3510 nominations were filed in the year 1997, 2002 and 2007 respectively, 698, 607 and 706 were rejected in the last three Delhi Municipal Corporation elections respectively 326, 423 and 223 withdrawals their names in these elections. Total number of contestants were 137 in 1997, 1165 in 2002 and 2515 in 2007. It shows that contestants were less in the election 2007 in the comparison to 1997 and 2002 elections and contestants were more in the election 2007 in comparison to 2002 election. The main factor was increased earnest money.

**Table 3.3**

**Elections symbols in 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>Punja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhartiya Janata Party</td>
<td>Kamal ka Phool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samata Party</td>
<td>Mashal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td>Pahiya (Wheel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhand Mukti Morcha</td>
<td>Teer Kaman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahujan Samajwadi Party</td>
<td>Elephant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Municipal Corporation Delhi, Election Commission Office, Kashmiri Gate, Delhi.*

Others were Tanga, Ghorhi, Car, Cycle, Hut, House, Talwar, Horse, Haldhar, Chair and Kirpan etc.
Mode of Campaign

Many skillful campaign techniques have been used on the eve of elections. These techniques are in accordance with the nature of Indian electorate, including their mass literacy and social attitude and values. In India the channels of communication are still quite limited. It is generally assumed that the electorates who have been exposed to election campaigning in good measure would turn up for voting to a greater extent. The variations in campaign techniques usually differ from party to party, from candidate to candidate and also from constituency to constituency. The media of electioneering can be divided into two categories:- Mass Media refers to such items as newspapers, radio, public meetings, posters, hand-bills etc. The interpersonal includes door to door canvassing holding or processions etc.

Manifestoes

Manifestoes are the most important means of approaching the electorates collectively because all the political parties issued their manifestoes before the election. In these manifestoes include policies and programmes of all parties. In Delhi Municipal Corporation election of 1997, 2002 and 2007 all parties issued their manifestoes for campaigning to the electorates. It is used to inform the electorates about the symbols, policies and programmes of the party. It is good method for party. But illiterate public can not understand these manifestoes.

Public Meetings

Public meetings are one of the important media for approaching the electorates collectively. It is used to inform the electorates about the party, its programme and symbols. It is a good method for party. It is for this reason that an
effort is made to mobilize as large number of the people to attend a public meeting as possible. Though in this study respondents have not attached much importance to public meetings.

In Corporators the Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party organized public meetings at large scale. The parties also held public meetings. This is the most popular and most frequent method of electioneering.

The biggest advantage in this way of campaigning is that the leaders of national level of the concerned party who have little time for campaigning in each ward utilizes such meetings as channels of communicating their views to the voters by spending the minimum possible time. The popularity of a candidate or party can be judged by the number of people attending such meetings. Big meetings also bring down the moral of the opposite parties. In almost all elections, the emphasis has been on election meetings addressed by party’s star speakers.

**Corner Meetings**

This is the best method of campaigning to approach to the electorate individually, but this is just not possible because the electorates being spread over a wide areas. Added to this is the difficulty of means of communications particularly in rural areas. Political parties as well as independents do not command the resources to contact the electorates from individual to individual. It is the corner meetings, mohalla meetings due to which the electorates reach in a collective manner. Those village wise and mohalla wise meetings enable the voters to watch the candidates of various parties closely and they can also convey their grievances. Such meetings are addressed by the candidates and party workers those who have some influence in the locality. No political party lags behind in organizing such meetings in the wards.
Election Processions

The election processions are often vast and big with many colourful features. In fact, they have to popularize the party, its symbol or the candidate. Moreover to some extent at least, involvement of the electorates in election procession may also be taken as an index of his/her support if not involvement in election process. During the period of nomination and polling day, many election processions were organized by different political parties and independents. But the procession of Bhartiya Janata Party and Congress Party were the largest one.

Door to Door Convassing

Door to Door convassing by party candidates along with their supporters is perhaps the most distinguished feature of the campaigning. This technique of personal contact with the voters and covers the big size of the electorates. It is not possible to make use of this technique on a wider scale due to limited resources in terms of time and money. Such campaigns are designed to create a climate in favour of a candidate. It is observed that voters showed less interest if candidate does not visit them. It is also observed that people raise questions about local problems and want for their early solution.

Poster, Pamphlets

This is considered to be a very effective means of campaigning in urban areas rather than rural. Every candidate spend thousands of rupees on printing of posters and other election material. Parties also make extensive use of posters and leaflets containing a considerable amount of printed material as distinguished from large posters and leaflets that appealed mainly to the visibility observability objection, slips, containing such useful information as the identification of a voter’s name on the electoral roll and the election symbol of the party issuing them, pamphlets in great abundance and variety, printed letters and election
manifestoes. The Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party spent a lot of money on the printing of posters and other election material. Similar technique was adopted by the other parties but at a comparatively much smaller scale. Other parties and Independents got the material and posters printed but in their cases the money spent on this way of campaigning was negligible as compared to the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party. The Bhartiya Janata Party is ahead even with regard to the quantum of publicity material. It has sent at least 12,000 posters to each candidate, Congress sources say that they have sent roughly 5000 posters to every ward. The Bharatiya Janata Party has sent about 2000 posters to every candidate and an additional number to these in a relatively stronger position.

**Advertisement in Newspaper**

Newspaper is considered one of the most effective means for electioneering in western democracies. But Indian Newspapers have not been used on any large scale for advertising by the candidates. These elections of February 1997, March 2002 and April 2007 some political parties notably the Bhartiya Janata Party and the Congress party have gone for newspaper advertising at larger scale. As election manifestoes are printed in many newspapers, the regular newspapers report, election news and proceedings at a great length. The newspapers carry fervent editorial comments and articles by columnist on elections.

**Modes Adopted by Different Parties**

All the parties adopted almost same modes to represent their parties to convince people during the elections. Especially Bhartiya Janata Party and the Congress Party who are the national parties of India have put their efforts in campaigning issuing of election manifestoes with respect to the other parties. All the parties issued the manifestoes and emphasized some major points for the public welfare like cleaning of the roads, parks etc. and well working of the
electricity and water supply, mid-day meals supply in all Delhi Municipal Corporation schools. Also maintain the drainage system of the city etc. Other than the manifestoes they have also used different modes like advertisement in newspapers, posters and pamphlets, door-to-door canvassing. Bhartiya Janata Party and Congress Party had also taken some more steps to convince the people like by organizing meetings, publishing posters and organizing speeches for the public. Their national and state level leaders also played a major role in this regard they organized public meetings practice and door to door canvassing. Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee President Rambabu Sharma said, "the public meetings, held by senior party leaders Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Kumar, had been drawing a huge response which showed that people were still firmly behind the Congress." According to party Member of Parliament Jagdish Tytler, the Congress had definitely an edge over the Bhartiya Janata Party which was a divided lot. The Congress activists were united behind the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

There is no unity in the BJP ranks, while in some areas, the party activists have been seen campaigning under the leadership of Rajnath Singh, others have been doing so under the banner of Mr. Lal Krishan Advani. Then, there are those who have been swearing their loyalty to Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, "Mr. Tytler claimed, the Bhartiya Janata Party leaders, however, refute the claims of the Congress."

Claiming that meetings of the Bhartiya Janata Party leaders in the previous days had been witnessing huge public gatherings, senior Bhartiya Janata Party leader Vijay Kumar Malhotra said, "this shows that the public is fed up with the Congress rule and wants a change, the Bhartiya Janata Party is going to secure two thirds majority in the Delhi Municipal Corporation Poll." Says the Bhartiya Janata Party leader, "Going by the response to the campaign meetings, Bhartiya

Janata Party is sure to win the Delhi Municipal Corporation polls by two thirds majority. Bhartiya Janata Party’s win in the Delhi Municipal Corporation polls will pave the way for its winning the polls to Delhi Legislative Assembly next year.” Other parties like the Ramvir Singh Bidhuri led Nationalist Congress Party in Delhi are also planning to organize a series of public meetings in Delhi in a bid to boost the chances in the Delhi Municipal Corporation polls.

The National Congress Party, along with the Left Parties, the Janata Dal(s) and the Jan Morcha has formed a third front called the Pragatisheel Jan Morcha. Former Delhi Chief Minister Madan Lal Khurana began his election campaign on March 6, 2007, saying the twin issues of price rise and Delhi Master Plan would be the Bhartiya Jan Shakti party’s main plunk, addressing media persons, along with firebrand conceding that the forthcoming Delhi Municipal Corporation polls were an acid test for his political career.2

On March 17, 2007, the Congress Party released its list of candidates for the Delhi Municipal Corporation election, keeping the focus on youth. Youth comprise a major chunk of the list of 269 names announced by Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee President Rambabu Sharma. Many sitting councillors have been dropped from the list. An excellent response from residents of various areas for contesting the coming Delhi Municipal Corporation polls, the NGO people’s action decay embarked on a campaign to identify candidates from mofussil areas of Delhi. People’s action announced that it would also indirect candidates from areas where there are no formal resident organizations. Ram temple is not to the Bhartiya Janata Party campaign agenda this time, the party is talking about “bijliee, sadak, paani’ (Power, roads and water). Shiksha, swasthya, swarozgar, surksha and samajik nyaya”(irrigation, education, health, self-employment, security and social justice).3

---

Both parties Bhartiya Janata Party and Congress released their manifestoes, documents whose lofty promises would easily turn Delhi into one of the best cities in the world. The Congress promises include doubling green cover every year, a clean Yamuna, elimination of pollution, rebate in house tax for senior citizen, single women and widows, development of parks with underground parking, multi level parking facilities and so on. The Bhartiya Janata Party vision is similar every Delhi be to get a multi-purpose identity card, making the city sparkling clean, graded subsidy on power and 50 percent subsidy on drinking water in J.J. Colonies and slums. The Bhartiya Janata Party also promises to reclassify colonies so as to reduce house tax burden, clean the Yamuna, improve roads, and introduce compulsory physical education in the schools.

The Bhartiya Janata Party seems to have bowed the concept of making Delhi a “World Class City” from the Congress, it’s a team repeatedly used in the manifesto. The Congress other hand, said it will make Delhi “a city of your dreams”.

The Congress does not talk about division of mammoth civic body. Addressing a press conference at the manifesto release, DPCC (Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee) President Ram Babu Sharma said there was no need for division at present. Chief Minister Shiela Dikshit said the Delhi Municipal Corporation is now more representatives with smaller words and greater acceptability, “We have already brought about reforms in the Delhi Municipal Corporation.” she said.

Bhartiya Janata Party’s Delhi In-charge Vijay Kumar Malhotra and State Party President Harsh Vardhan said the city would be a better place to live if the party were voted to power in the civic elections. “All exploitation oriented and oppressive decisions of the Congress would be reviewed,” said Harsh Vardhan.

Bhartiya Janata Party President Rajnath Singh attracted the Congress for its “appeasement policy” and failure to contain inflationary trends and terror. He said there was a “crisis of confidence” among the masses due to the ruling party’s “faulty” policies. Addressing the Delhi Bhartiya Janata Party’s Parivartan Sabha, Singh asked party workers to gear up for the coming Delhi Municipal Corporation elections. The objective behind the Parivartan Sabha was to impart lessons on discipline to workers by citing the party’s recent victories in the civic polls in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra and the Assembly elections in Punjab and Uttarakhand. Leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha and former Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishan Advani, Delhi Bhartiya Janata Party President Harsh Vardhan, Deputy Leader in the Lok Sabha Vijay Kumar Malhotra, former Chief Minister Lt. Sh. Sahib Singh Verma and former Union Minister Vijay Goel, among others, were present at the Privartan Sabha. In his speech Advani referred to the 1958 civic polls in the city and said it had calapulled him to the national stage from Rajasthan. He said 1989 was the turning point for the Bhartiya Janata Party, when the number of Members of Parliament in the party rose from 2 to 86. The same phase has come now after the recent victories”, Advani told a gathering of around 10,000 party workers at the Talkatora Indoor Stadium.

While Advani limited his speech to disciplinary issues, Rajnath Singh outlined the issues the party needs to focus on during the election campaign, “we brought Prevention of Terrorism Act, but they (Congress) repealed it without any alternative law. This has only helped the cause of the terrorists,” he said.

Rajnath Singh said the party should be able to win the civic polls with a majority, “If we win this election, none can prevent us from occupying the seat of power in New Delhi in the 2009 elections,” he said.

As many as 1,216 independent candidates mostly Resident Welfare Association members in the fray this time, the highest in a Delhi election so far, on the last day of campaigning, these candidates mainly relied on door to door
campaigning as in their words, residents are expected to vote for a candidate they personally know. For Resident Welfare Association members, contesting the Municipal poll has been an uphill task. As KumKum Talwar, a candidate from Vasant Vihar, says: “organizing my campaign has been taxing, as of don’t have battery of party supporters to help me or years of experience. The political parties have tried to keep us out of governance for so many years, but we hope to make our voice heard this time.” Talwar has been fielded by Jan Pratinidhi Manch – a platform that includes 20 political groups and citizens. The idea is not only to win but to show the people that they do have a choice apart from Congress and Bhartiya Janata Party. Said Geeta Bharghave, a candidate from Andrews Ganj: “I have door to door campaigning in South Extension, Defence Colony and Indira Camp, since I have been an Resident Welfare Association member of Defence Colony, people already know me. I have given out T-shirts to garbage collectors and they are working as my walking partners.”

Captain Dron from Mayur Vihar Phase-II has been fielded by people’s action. He said, “we took out a rally on the last day. We also concentrated on problems being faced by people in my word.” Meanwhile, youth leaders were seen making the most of the last day of campaigning, said Anorita Dhawan, a young Congress candidate from Vikaspuri, “We took out a padyatra in Hartsal, besides car and bike rallies. Everyone has expectations from the youth, and I hope to live up to them.”

An unique feature of the Delhi Municipal Corporation elections this year was (in 2007) that both the Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party have preferred youth leaders over seasoned politicians. These Yuva netas and a large number of independents, many of them first times, are giving the Stalwarts a run for their money.

---

6 Ibid
Also, a record number of contestants (1216) were fought as independent candidates this time around, with many of them first times. V.H. Nair, an independent from Mayur Vihar Ward-II, was also upbeat about his chances. He had based his election campaign on the fact that the candidates of political parties had failed to deliver their promises and believes that independent candidates will make a major impact his time around.

“The roads in the area are in a dilapidated condition. Even the water supply is inadequate and the residents are now feeling the pinch. I am sure that this dissatisfaction will play major role in the elections,” he said.

Pragatisheel Jan Morcha, which emerging as the third front in the Delhi Municipal elections declared that it would contest from all the 272 wards and if required would support independent candidates or containing Resident Welfare Association (RWA) members.

Pragatisheel Jan Morcha is serving as an umbrella for seven parties – Jan Morcha, National Communist Party, Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Janata Dal (Secular-Surendra Mohan), Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and All India Forward Block (AIFB).

Jan Morcha said, “we are trying to work out a division of seats that the parties want to contest, we will contest on all 272 seats. There is no shortage of good candidates. A Resident Welfare Association or an independent candidate, who is strong, is welcome, we can support them.”

The Morcha is trying to portray itself as a “Secular Option”, “Had we joined hands in 1993 and this Morcha come about in the Assembly elections than, we would have been very close to seizing power,” Bidhuri said, Leaders of all the seven parties are now putting their heads together to frame a strong alliance. Secretary Communist Party of India, Amarjeet Kaur said, “People are angry with

---

7 The Times of India, April 3, Tuesday, page 7, 2007.
the present government, there are issues like paani-bijli, civic amenities, rampant corruption, price rise, sealing and demolitions that have angered the common man, they do not want to vote for the Congress and in may cases they are forced to turn towards the Bhartiya Janata Party, we want to take up the fight for the people, we are giving the common man a secular option.

A day before the Delhi Municipal Corporation election candidates were busy luring electors in the last lag of their campaign. However, with potholed roads, sewerage problems and sealing issue lurking in the background, people seemed more reluctant than before to believe them. The report card of several colonies marked the outgoing candidates in negative.

After dates and declarations, here comes the action plan as political parties drew out the criteria for selection of candidates for the Delhi Municipal Corporation elections, while Bhartiya Janata Party said that it would field candidates with a clean image who have actively participated in party rallies, the Congress said it would give importance to what its district-level committees suggest. Bhartiya Janata Party Pradesh Election Committee also held a meeting under state Bhartiya Janata Party Chief Harsh Vardhan. The Committee unanimously passed these criteria for selection of candidates. Harsh Vardhan said, “we do not want a candidate with a criminal background rather a local candidate.”

Chief Minister Shiela Dikshit, who began campaigning the civic polls just three days before campaigning comes to an end said the result will not be a reflection on the functioning of the state government. Addressing a news conference at the state party headquarters, Dikshit said, “There are three tiers of governance in the capital – local, state and central. The election are being fought only on the local issues.”

The Chief Minister was replying to a volley of questions on whether the civic polls was referendum on the functioning on her government and if she was facing a "litmus test", as made out by the opposition Bhartiya Janata Party.

Delhi Municipal Corporation election time is "Dhoom" time for the Bhartiya Janata Party, quite literally. Armed with audio cassettes, containing six parodies set to the tunes of Bollywood chartbusters like "Kajra re" and "Dhoom Machale", the party is all set to make its arch rival Congress, face the music. Some other songs were ridiculing the ruling Congress handling of issues such as sealing, demolition and the price hike – playing in neighbourhood, as the campaign picks up in those days. The catching tunes at least promise to enliven the usual loudspeaker-stage speech routine.

As state Bhartiya Janata Party Chief Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, "It's a way to attract people to the concerns and issues that affect Delhi now. The cassettes have been distributed among all 271 candidates who can play them at street, corner meetings or from loudspeaker-fitted vehicles that are allowed to operate between 3 pm and 6 pm everyday." Curious for a preview of Bhartiya Jananata Party's musical offering? The first song in the list draws from an evergreen, patriotic number – "Yeh desh hai veer jawano ka, albelon ka mastano ka". The party's version goes as, "Yeh Shaan hamaari Bhartiya Janata Party, Yeh Shaan hemari Bhartiya Janata Party." The "desh-bhakti" song gives way to a whaky number, "Kab tak chupaogi jawani O Raani", from the Salman Khan Starrer "Mujhse Shaadi Karogi", taking the Congress, the Bhartiya Janata Party has changed the lyrics to "Kab tak dukhon ko Sahegi yeh Janata, ab toa Yeh Khulke Kaheg, Yeh Duniya, Bhartiya Janata Party Ko Lani, Abke Bhartiya Janata Party Ko Lana."

Next in live is the clone of another chartbuster, "Kajra Re" from the film "Bunty aur Babli", The Bhartiya Janata Party's remixed version says, "Ayegi, ayegi, ab Bhartiya Janata Party ayegi." The other interesting number, "BJP, BJP,
The Bhartiya Janata Party also preparing television spots of 30 seconds each, said Harsh Vardhan, with messages relating to civic issues like water, power and faulty metres, “The party was tried to tie up with television channels to air these ads. If that does not materialize, we'll try to show these T.V. spots on the city cable that reaches every home. An advertisement campaign through newspapers is also in the pipeline.” He adds.

Bhartiya Janata Party is all set to kick-start its campaign by wooing purvayya vote bank with its star campaigner Shatrughan Sinha. He said, “The Delhi Municipal elections will be good trailer or a tremendous treasure. Delhi is India’s ‘dil’. It will reflect what people really want. It will lead the way to Assembly elections and then will point towards the Parliament of India”. Bhartiya Janata Party has directly acknowledged of Purvanchali voters in Delhi. This time, the party has fielded 32 candidates who hail from this belt. According to party sources, Sinha had a big hand in this. Sinha said, “You cannot call it my insistence, I have always requested it to my party purvanchalis cannot be treated as just a ‘vote bank’. If they are increasing in number, they should be involved in the democratic process. So we should give them more representation through candidates.”

It will not just be the national or international issues which Sinha would rake up. With three meetings lined up daily, Sinha is likely to rake up more local issues, “A star cannot carry an entire film on his shoulder. He embellistics a film. There has to be a story. I won’t talk about nuclear proliferation or Iraq war. The issues would be price rise, health, pollution, sealing and demolition.”

---

9 Hindustan Times, April 2, Tuesday, page 6, 2007.
A Unique feature of the Delhi Municipal election 2007 is that both the Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party have preferred youth leaders over seasoned politicians. These yuva netas and a large number of independents, many of them first times, are giving the stalwarts a run for their money.

Gaurav Khatri, who is the Bhartiya Janata Party’s young face contesting the elections from Jharoda ward, believes that the anti-incumbency factor would help him in winning the seat, “People have finally realized that development has always taken a backseat in our area. The water supply, sewerage system and roads are in a bad state.” said Khatri, who has been an active member of the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad. The issues raised by him are being a youngster will not work to his disadvantage.

The youth factor figures prominently in the Congress list with four ex-Delhi University Students Union Presidents as well as the current president getting the chance to contest the Delhi Municipal elections 2007. Nearly 50 seats out of the 272 have gone to leaders from Indian Youth Congress and the National Students Union of India. Last time in 2002 elections the youth wing could get nearly a few of its leaders into the battlefield.

Amit Malik happens to be the Delhi Pradesh Youth Congress president and was to Delhi University Student’s Union President in 2000. He was contest from Narela ward. Rohit Chaudhary, currently the All India Vice-President of National Student’s Union India, has got a ticket from Qammruddin Nagar. Amrita Dhawan was also fights it out in Vikaspuri. She said, “I am banking on youth appeal. The young leader can do better job of improving the city as we deal with problems in our everyday lives and feel strongly about them.”

Congress leaders feel the large youth presence in the list is a trend-setting statement. Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Ram Babu Sharma said,
“The large youth presence only shows that we have lived up to what was assured. The party had promised to give 50% of the seats to the youth and more than that have been given. The present list has a number of contestants who are in their early 40s. They are also considered as young in terms of a political career.”

Also a record number of contestants were fighting as independent candidates this time around, with many of them first times.

Delhi Municipal Corporation plans to lodge First Information Reports against politicians found guilty of repeatedly violating the model code of conduct for the Delhi Municipal elections. There had been regular complaints on use of posters and banners by politicians, despite the Delhi Election Commission’s ban on items. The model code of conduct that came into effect on February 23 bans the use of banners, posters, buntings and hoardings in public places.

According to officials, the Remunerative Projects Cell of the Delhi Municipal Corporation has already prepared draft First Information Reports against 40 politicians cutting across party lines. Delhi Municipal Corporation submitted an action taken report to Delhi Urban Development Minister Ashok Kumar Walia. In a four-day operation that ended on March 3, the Delhi Municipal removed 3,411 hoardings, posters and banners from 12 zones in the city.

The maximum number of violations-918 was reported from Shahdara (North) and Shahdara (South) zones. In any other derive on March 5, the Delhi Municipal Corporation removed 629 posters and banners, indicating that certain politicians had no intention to follow the mode code of conduct. The Delhi Municipal Corporation had now hired 600 people and six trucks to carry out the inspection drive. But the Delhi Municipal Corporation field inspectors was facing protests from various party workers in several areas. “About 100 people gheraoed one of our inspectors in Dwarka today, when he tried to remove the banners and posters of a political party. This was a regular feature. People just do not want to
follow the rules”, said Remunerative Projects Cell Additional Deputy Commissioner Amiya Chandra.¹¹

In an effort to check such violations, the Election Commission had warned that offenders could be booked under the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984, the West Bengal Prevention of Defacement of Property Act, 1976, and the Indian Penal Code respectively. Poll candidates better follow the rules”, said Delhi Election Commissioner S.P. Marwah.

The Contrast in the campaign style of the Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party for the civic polls on April 5, was now clear. In the two weeks of the parties reaching out to the voters the Bhartiya Janata Party has fielded its top leaders and vote catchers while the Congress has banked only on the state leaders.

Bhartiya Janata Party kicked off its electoral campaign with Lal Krishan Advani, leader of the opposition and also brought in party president Rajnath Singh on several occasions to bolster its chances. After an uprising in the fortunes of the party following victories in Punjab and Uttrakhand elections, it fielded Uttarakhand Chief Minister B.C. Khanduri and then Sukhbir Singh Badal, son of Punjab Chief Minster Parkash Singh Badal.

To garner the Poorvanchal votes which number close to 30 lakhs in the city, film star turned politician Shatrughan Sinha was roped in. He addressed almost two dozen public meetings in the last few days. For gathering the minority voters, Arif Beg was brought in. Star speakers like Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj were involved in the campaign from the beginning. Amritsar Member of Parliament Navjot Singh Sindhu also campaigned towards the end. “There will be widespread ramifications of the elections. It will give a message to the country that the Congress has failed,” said state Bhartiya Janata Party president on the importance of the campaign strategy.

The Congress on the other hand, banked on old hands – Minister of State Ajay Maken, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Ram Babu Sharma, Members of Parliament Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler along with local Members of Legislative Assembly. It was only towards the end that Chief Minister Shela Dikshit involved herself in the campaign.

“We are capable of winning the elections on our own. In Delhi Municipal elections, local issues dominate and we have managed to take the message of development across,” said Ram Babu Sharma.

Campaigning for the Delhi Municipal Corporation elections was at its peak in West Delhi with the State Election Commission allowing only Rs. 1.5 lakh per candidate as campaign expenses, and also keeping a strict watch, the door to door approach has become the preferred mode for most candidates.

Rajouri Garden, which was a reserved seat for women and interestingly has only two candidates, was witness to an interesting mode of campaign. The candidates here have been seen taking part in early morning satsangs, singing bhajans and participating in the just concluded Navratri celebrations. “This is a good way to meet at least the women voters,” said J. C. Narang, member Tagore Garden Senior Citizen Mission.\(^\text{12}\)

Prithvi Raj Sahni, Bhartiya Janata Party candidate from Janakpuri South Ward No. 118, canvasses extensively in the colony parks where he also has tea and biscuits with the people. “This is the best time to meet the people. This way, I can meet the senior citizens, the youth and the ladies in one place,” he said.

R. P. Gupta, an independent Resident Welfare Association candidate from Rajender Nagar, makes his presence felt among the people by blowing a whistle while campaigning. His election symbol was the whistle. He and his supporters blow their whistles till the voters come out of their homes, “I have been a whistle

\(^{12}\) Hindustan Times, April 3, Tuesday, page 6, 2007.
blower to the wrong doings in the colony for a long time. That is why I have a whistle as my symbol," he said.

Some candidates got themselves weighed in coins and ladoos. The coins thus collected were used in campaigning and everyone present to eat the ladoos.


With the Election Commission blowing the bugle for elections to the Delhi Municipal Corporation, it was time for the political parties to firm up their strategies in syne with the restrictive character of the campaign calendar. Addressing a new conference, Delhi Election Commissioner S.P. Marwah made it clear that for the first time, no posters, banners and bunting will be allowed during the campaign. "This (restriction) has been included in the model code of conduct," he said. With the announcement, the model code of conduct, too, has come into force. In effect, the Delhi government and the civic body would not be able to make any financial grant or lay foundation stones for any proposed project till the completion of the election process. Even crucial administrative decisions such as transfer of officials within the government, or the Delhi Police, can be made only in consultation with the Election Commission. In all elections will be held in 272 municipal wards.

New Curbs in Delhi Municipal Election – 2007

- Candidates can’t exceed the expenditure limit for elections of Rs. 1.5 lakh.
- For the first time, putting up hoardings, banners, bunting and posters have been banned.
- There was a proposed to ban loudspeakers but political parties were not happy. It can now be used only till 10 p.m.

• Door to door campaigning, public meetings and distribution of pamphlets were allowed.

• Candidates violating the code of conduct will face serious action, from being served notices by the State Election Commission to prosecution under Indian Penal Code Sections like defacement of public property.

• Till the election process concludes, the government and local bodies cannot announce any financial grant or new schemes from now onwards. Any promises for construction of new roads and providing better water facilities is also barred under the code of conduct.

**Poll Arithmetic (Delhi Municipal Election, 2007)**

April 5: Polling date.

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. when people can cast votes.

April 9: Counting at 17 centres. 272: The number of seats for which the polls were held up from last time 134. The number of Delhi Municipal Wards increased following a delimitation exercise.

2757 Candidates in fray.

99,62,000 voters likely to exercise franchise

10,200 electronic voting machines being used for the first time.

76 seats reserved for women in general category.

62 seats reserved for Scheduled Tribe candidates.

16 seats reserved for Scheduled Caste women.

9,649 polling booths.

307 sensitive booths.

---

57 hypersensitive booths.

55,000 personnel to oversee exercise.

68 Returning Officers.

1,078 Sector Officers.

34 General Observers.

34 Expenditure Observers.

7,170 Officials deployed at counting centres.

1,100 Delhi Transport Corporation buses.

Special Service by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation on polling day.

The Bhartiya Janata Party has swept to power in the Delhi civil polls, 2007, securing 164 seats in the 272 member Delhi Municipal Corporation House. The Congress, that had made a similar sweep in the last polls in 2002, has won 69 seats, while the Bahujan Samaj Party has got 15 seats, Independents and other parties have won 24.\(^{15}\)

The poll results declared on April 7, 2007 are being seen by many Congress leaders as a vote against the sealing and demolition drives in Delhi. The water and power shortages in the city were also to be blamed, they said.

Bhartiya Janata Party Delhi Chief Harsh Vardhan said the march to the Town Hall, the Delhi Municipal Headquarters, was the first of the three targets for the party. “This was the quarter final for us, the Assembly Elections in 2008 will be the semi-final and the General Elections 2009 the final,” he said.

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee Chief Ram Babu Sharma, blaming the “Court orders demolition and sealing drives” for the defeat, called it a “Collective failure”. But Chief Minister Shiela Dikshit refused to take responsibility, exposing

\(^{15}\) The Times of India, April 4, Wednesday, page 5, 2007.
cracks in the State Congress. "This was not a referendum on the state government", Dikshit said. "We need to introspect and improve co-ordination." In another indication of growing factionalism in the party, 14 Members of Legislative Assembly all supporters of Dikshit, met at the Chief Minister's residence and blamed the defeat on Sharma. "There was no co-ordination between the party and the government, and candidates were chosen on the whims and fancies of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee President," Ramakant Goswami, Chief Whip of the party, told.

The anti Dikshit camp in the Congress blamed the defeat on the Chief Minister and her governance. "Dikshit is the face of the government and the party in the capital", said an Member of Legislative Assembly. All India Congress Committee General Secretary Ashok Gehlot, party in-charge of Delhi, was saying, "The results could have been somewhat better had Shiela Dikshit and Ram Babu Sharma worked in tandem," Ram Babu Sharma had alerted the party high command a month ago that it would be extremely difficult to win the Delhi Municipal Corporation polls in view of the non-cooperative and negative attitude of Chief Minister Shiela Dikshit.

Ram Babu Sharma, who was under attack from half a dozen Members of Legislative Assembly owing allegiance to Shiela Dikshit, wrote to Ms. Sonia Gandhi, "It is well known that when sealing and demonstration was in full swing, our Chief Minister was delivering controversial bombshells. Our rival Bhartiya Janata Party, taking full advantage of the situation, succeeded in misleading the people against us. This disappointed the Congress workers and lowered their moral. But unfortunately, by that time irreparable damage had been done to the party by irresponsible and adverse actions of our Chief Minister." The letter said.

The anti Shiela Dikshit camp, which mainly comprises office-bearers of the party, says that Shiela Dikshit was the political "face" of the city, "who knows Ram Babu Sharma? It is Shiela Dikshit who is the face of the government and the
party in the capital,” said an Member of Legislative Assembly opposed to Shiela Dikshit. He did not want to be named in the surcharged political atmosphere. A minister in the government said, it was a failure of both Sharma and Dikshit, “As the head of the government, she should definitely own responsibility”, he said on condition of anonymity. At present, the anti Dikshit camp comprises of Sharma, two Members of Parliament and two ministers of her own cabinet. “The fence-sitters would soon join us as the issues on which people voted like water and power has the state government as the principal stakeholder,” said a two time Member of Legislative Assembly.

Analyst and Jawaharlal Nehru University Professor Pushpesh Pant said, “It seems the honeymoon of the Delhi voters with Shiela Dikshit is over.” He said the Congress leadership has already brought in Tejinder Khanna as the new Lieutenant Governor to mark the deficiencies of Dikshit’s administration, “The message is clear, Khanna is an able administrator and Lieutenant General has considerable power to exercise in Delhi,” said Pant. He said the party would have to make fundamental changes in the run-up to 2008 Assembly Elections to reserve its declining fortunes.

Basking in the glory of the Bhartiya Janata Party victory in Delhi Municipal Corporation election 2007, Delhi Unit President Harsh Vardhan said about the party’s success, of won’t go into details on issues like sealing, demolitions, half baked master plan, inflation and price rise. These contributed to the disenchantment of the voters with the Congress. We started the campaign much before the dates for the polls were announced. The key element was door to door campaigning. We gave tickets to all sections of society – doctors, engineers, professionals, housewives, business people, traders, youth people hailing from Poorvanchal and Uttrakhand, so as to reach out to all sections. We realized the changing demographic profile of the city and included a cross-section of the society in our list.
Harsh Vardhan said, the campaign began with Advaniji addressing workers. Our President Rajnath Singh was with us throughout. Then Shatrughan Sinha campaigned intensively guidance from Vijay Kumar Malhotra, Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj and others were of tremendous help. Bhartiya Janata Party leader and councillor Subhash Arya said, the rise in prices has also played a major role in deciding the Bhartiya Janata Party’s electoral fortunes. Although the issue does not pertain to the Delhi Municipal Corporation, Arya said that the Bhartiya Janata Party would pressure the central government to check inflation.\[16\]

With the 2007 Municipal elections, the Mayawati led Bhartiya Samajwadi Party has emerged as a resurgent force in Delhi’s politics of the 224 Municipal wards it contested in, Bhartiya Samajwadi Party has concerned 17. In the last elections, the party had only one councillor. The party mainly won wards located in resettlement colonies and slums. The victory is significant as a Delhi’s politics has largely been traditional face off between Bhartiya Janata Party and Congress. So far, slum dwellers, rural villages and lower middle class voters were considered the preserve of the Congress. These are voters who can make or break political careers. The Congress has emerged strong on the New Delhi parliamentary seat because of slums-dwellers and the Minto Road lower middle class voters. Jagmohan for instance, lost the parliamentary elections when he removed the slum dwellers from Yamuna Pushta with the emergence of Bhartiya Samajwadi Party in Delhi, the lower, middle class voters have a choice. There is a party which nurtures this vote bank specifically.

With these victories Bhartiya Samajwadi Party national spokesman Sudhir Goel claimed, “This victory is significant for us as it came despite our national leader Mayawati not campaigning here. The credit goes to the local leaders. We would have won a hundred seats had Mayawati campaigning here.” Goel said the Bhartiya Samajwadi Party hoped to play a bigger role in Delhi, politics. He said

16 The Times of India, April 4, Wednesday, page 7, 2007.
the Congress defeat should open its eyes. “Delhiites have definitely sent a message to the Congress for ignoring their aspirations,” he said.

It is not just the Bhartiya Samajwadi Party but also Jharkhand Mukti Morcha that was gained considerable ground. Meghraj Dayanand of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) won from ward 107, Vishnu Garden, even as the entire west zone was swept by the saffron bridge, while he won 4189 of the total 17,871 votes, his wife, Meenakshi Chandela won from Khyala ward with 9,046 votes. In Khayala ward, Independent candidates – Vinod Sharma and Om Parkash – who secured 2728 and 2772 votes respectively ensured his win as both Bhartiya Janata Party and Congress vote bank were affected.

The defeat of Congress in a typical middle class area like Janakpuri where its sitting councillor Sanjay Puri lost to Bhartiya Janata Party’s Ishwer Singh exemplifies the aam admi’s anger with the government, both in city and at centre.

Bhartiya Janata Party President Harsh Vardhan admits that the party has won seats where it never stood a chance earlier “Middle and upper middle class areas like Pushp Vihar, Lado Sarai, Chirg Delhi, Sarita Vihar and Punjabi Bagh were Congress strongholds. But the disenchantment with the mess in the city which is not just limited to scaling and demolition but extends to poor basic services – led people in these areas to vote for us,” he said.17

Bhartiya Janata Party’s strategy to not consider minority bastions and slum clusters as lost causes also paid off. The party won areas like Seelampur, New Usmanpur, Welcome, Ballimaran, Bhalwa, Jahangirpuri, Lal Bagh and Sultanpuri. “I specifically asked party workers to fight for these seats and we had earlier held well-attended public meetings here,” said Harsh Vardhan.

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee Chief Ram Babu Sharma claimed ticket distribution was done in the consultation with Chief Minister Shiela

17 The Times of India, April 4, Wednesday, page 7, 2007.
Dikshit, rebutting her charge that he was responsible for the debacle. Following the result, Shiela Dikshit loyalist Members of Legislative Assembly, has asked for Ram Babu Sharma’s resignation “Everyone is equally responsible for the failure. Apart from sealing and demolition, power ‘reforms’ of the government have also angered the people. They feel electronic meters run fast and the discover are raising huge bills. In fact, power is one of the main issues in this defeat.” Sharma said.

While the dis-enhanceement with Congress came out clearly in this election, caste appeal of Bhartiya Samajwadi Party led to slums and J.J. clusters voting for Bahujan Samajwadi Party while the Indian National Lok Dal - Bhartiya Janshakti combine and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha got just two seats each. As many as 15 independents have also won.

Observations

From three routs to a comprehensive sweep - Bhartiya Janata Party has successfully tread the comeback path, ruling a hard-headed assessment of voter interests, zeroing in one concerns like price rise and a feeling of in-security over the capital being a target. To get its act together was not easy. Bhartiya Janata Party lost the 2002 Delhi Municipal Corporation election getting 16 in a house of 134. In 2003, it failed to challenge Congress, allowing Shiela Dikshit a second term. And in the 2004 general elections, it was again handed out a crushing 6-1 defeat.

But in 2006, the court driven demolitions and sealing began to make Congress look vulnerable. And then the incessant price rise, urban issues like rising home loan rates and United Progressive Alliance government’s alleged “Soft approach” to terrorism began to gain traction, these issues were uppermost on the minds of people.
Bhartiya Janata Party also understood the value of planning. Senior leaders like Sushma Swaraj handed out tips to candidates. Former Union Minister Arun Jaitley was part of the brains trust and played a key role in campaign strategy. Equations amongst Delhi leaders were worked out with Vijay Kumar Malhotra heading the campaign committee.

The ticket distribution was carried out in a systematic manner. Gauging the importance of Purvanchali voters. The civic polls highlighted the changing demographic profile of the capital and the growing influence of migrants on its politics. The Congress failed to understand this change while Bhartiya Janata Party seems to have exploited it to the hilt. The Bhartiya Janata Party had neglected Poorvanchal origin residents in the past but allocated 32 seats to candidates from the region this time. Of these the party won 28 seats. Candidates from Uttarakhand were allotted a dozen seats and managed to win eight.

Candidates were advised not to use loudspeakers and asked to cover each household twice. Special campaign CDs, complete with popular Bollywood songs adopted to Bhartiya Janata Party’s slogans, were brought out. The party spots on FM radio channels were particularly effectively – with the catch line “Delhi gul ya Congress gul” was working to the oppositions favour.