

MINORITY ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE ERA OF POLITICAL MAJORITARIANISM IN INDIA

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Sweeping victory of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the two successive parliamentary elections without a single Muslim Member of Parliament (MP) signals a deeper representational crisis of Indian democracy. The highest number of Muslim MPs in the Lok Sabha was in 1980, when 49 legislators from the community were elected. Like in 2014, the BJP is the only winning party to not have a single Muslim MP in the 17th Lok Sabha. While democratic representation of Muslims has dropped in the Modi years, they have always had low representation in the Indian state. Scholars believe that anti-Muslim sentiment stoked by some in the BJP has led to fewer Muslim candidates outside the BJP. Fearing being tagged "anti-Hindu", the Indian National Congress (INC) and other parties are refraining from promoting Muslim candidates (Jafferlot and Vernier, 2018).

This raises questions on the relevance of Muslim votes, the largest minority group in India. What makes a vote of the minority relevant in a democracy? Is relevance to be merely equated with the presence of minority representatives or there exists a larger political landscape where the minority keeps breathing without losing their identity? While their marginalization has been quite evident on the national level for long, they remained quite relevant in the minority concentrated constituencies of Uttar Pradesh. "...in the last three parliamentary elections, Muslim representatives have mainly been elected from constituencies where the community comprised at least 40 percent of the population" (Adnan Farooqui, 2020). They became particularly relevant in the post 1990 phase when identity based political parties established their foothold in the politics of Uttar Pradesh. For Muslim voters this meant availability of alternatives and exercise of greater choice. They gradually came to exercise a wider choice and refused to act as vote-banks for one party. Instead of putting all their eggs in one basket, spread their support fairly widely between the Samajwadi Party (SP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and INC (Beg et al., 2014). This was also the period when their representation in legislature, especially the state legislature was highest in the Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, instead of the fear of the BJP acting as the major factor, over the years, the issues of poverty and unemployment had gradually

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emerged as the most important issues for Muslims, like other social groups in Uttar Pradesh. In several rounds of surveys conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), over the last decade, around 70 per cent of the Muslims have consistently maintained that these issues are their primary concern. This trend seemed to have changed in the 2014 elections particularly when BJP able to register victory on significant Muslim Concentrated Constituencies (MCCs) viz Rampur, Moradabad and Shravasti. This was also looked upon as vote for development that enabled the accommodative shift of Muslim voter's towards BJP. Commentator interpreted that since the political space in INC, BSP, SP or established regional parties was occupied by upper-caste Muslims, the BJP became an attractive destination for Muslims (Verma, 2014).

Our study reveals that the overwhelming support for BJP across caste and community was not reflective of any shift in the Muslim voting behavior in favour of BJP. The paper further highlights that development narrative of BJP essentially remains communal in its outreach, particularly in the Muslim Concentrated Districts (MCDs). In response there is an apparent return to in-bloc voting by Muslims and the advantages of identity politics that accrued to Muslims in terms of greater choice is now receding. Some of the scholars maintain that Muslim voting in a bloc is more of an assumption (Alam, 2009; Devashar, 2014). However, some scholars have also emphasized that this possibility cannot be ruled out (Susewind and Dhattiwala, 2014). It ensures greater political control for the minority elector group (Penrose 1946; Chandra 2007a; 2007b). We maintain that the in-bloc voting may or may not be resorted depending upon the available political choice. More importantly it's to be seen as a reaction towards similar behavior of the Hindu voters. The new trend of in-bloc voting by Muslims has an added disadvantage as it is now pitted against the majority unlike the Congress days when it was part of the larger political bandwagon. Now they are part of the opposition. The ruling BJP may do without their vote but any response to majoritarian politics will essentially need their support to establish itself.

In this paper we attempt to analyse the election outcome of 2014 and 2017 (assembly election) for these three parliamentary constituencies viz ; Rampur, Moradabad and Shravasti, in order to understand the implication of majoritarian politics in minority concentrated constituencies and capturing varied understanding of development for the Hindus and Muslims.

A total of 1225 respondents were interviewed during the field work of two months preceding the Assembly election of 2017. Respondent were asked about their choices in 2014 and the coming elections of 2017. Within three Lok Sabha constituencies, team visited all the 15 assembly seats. Among the total respondents, 54 percent were Hindus and 44

percent were Muslim. Majority of the respondents (58%) belonged to Other Backward Castes (OBCs). Within OBCs category, 48.68 percent belonged to Muslim-OBCs (M-OBCs) and rest was Hindu-OBCs (H-OBCs). Of the total respondents, 37.6 percent were female and 62.36 percent were male. Apart from the quantitative data we also collected qualitative data from all the constituencies in order to unfold the political behavior further. The analysis in the paper is based on the looking relating the party preference of the voters to caste and religion. At the aggregate level these relationships were found to be statistically significant for 20141 as well as 20172 election for the three constituencies.

Rampur

According to the Census 2011, the total population of the district is 23.35 lakhs. This district has highest percentage of Muslim population in the state. They constitute 50.57 percent of the total district population. Hindus are 45.97 percent. 13.2 percent of the district population belongs to Scheduled Castes (SCs).

As per trend, the seat has seen Muslim winning elections for maximum number of times. Out of 16 general elections, the seat has been won 11 times by Muslims candidates. Politically, this has been Congress stronghold for long time. Congress Party has won this seat 9 times. During 1967, 1971 and 1977 when political churning was going on for social alliance, Rampur saw three parties in the contest. In 1967, Swantantra Party won the seat. In 1971, INC won it back. And, in 1977 the seat goes to BhartiyaLok Dal (BLD), a constituent of Janata Party (JP).

From 1991 onwards in seven general elections, BJP has won thrice, and SP and INC have won two times each. It can be observed that during this period Muslims and INC alliance went awry. We also see a change in the character of representation from Muslim to non-Muslim candidate from a party hugely supported by Muslims, a probable indicator of party preference over candidate. However as soon as BJP comes to power in 2014 ensuing heightened communal polarization, we see coming back of Muslim candidate in the 2019 elections. In 2014, Nepal Singh won this seat with the margin of 23,435 votes against SP's candidates Naseer Ahmed Khan in a close fight. This kind of result was promptly popularized as Muslim support to BJP. However, if we look at the vote share we would clearly see that BJP managed to get only 37.42% vote and S.P (the runner up) garnered close 34.98% vote, while INC managed 16.33% in 2014. This picture becomes even clearer if we look at the assembly election result of 2017 where BJP registered win in the reserved constituency only (table 1)

**Table 1: Party-wise vote in Assembly seats of Rampur Lok Sabha, 2017
(In absolute number)**

Assembly Seats	SP	INC	BSP	AIMIM	PP	Total	BJP
RAMPUR	102100		54248	-		156348	55258
BILASPUR (SC)		76741	39344	-	2688	118773	99100
SUAR	106443		42233	-		148676	53347
CHAMRAUA	87400		53024	-		140424	50954
MILAK (SC)	73194		39271	-		112465	89861

Source: Author's Calculation from eci.nic.in

In Reserved Constituency (RC) also the major shift that enabled BJP to win was not of Muslims but of non-Jatav SCs and OBCs (Singh and Ali, 2019). BSP had registered good presence on both the seats by retaining its social base, especially Chamar/Jatav. Overall in 2014 the deciding factors were Hindu -OBCs (78.29%) and Hindu General Castes (91.3%) that overwhelmingly supported BJP (table 2).

Table 2: Social Groups support to BJP in 2014 Rampur Lok Sabha

Social Groups	Support to BJP (%)
SCs	20.9
Hindu OBCs	78.29
Hindu Gen.	91.3
Muslim OBCs	0.8
Muslim Gen.	2.9

Source: Field Survey.

Our data reveals that Muslims have largely voted for SP followed by BSP. The miniscule support for BJP came from Pathan and Saiyed from General Muslim category and Saifi from M-OBCs(table 3). The trend was similar in 2017 election where the polarization was less which has resulted in some increased share for BSP and further decline in number for BJP. Within H-OBCs, the chief supporters of BJP were Maurya (92%), Kurmies (93%)andYadav (42%) (table4). In fact, it was the Yadav community that showed a major shift in allegiance from SP to BJP.

Table 3: Party Preference of Caste Groups Rampur for 2014 Election in Rampur

Religion Social Group Caste Party you voted in 2014 (percent)

Religion	Social Group	Caste	Party you voted in 2014 (percent)			
			BJP	BSP	SP	Congress
	SC	Pasi	66.67	0	33.33	0
		Chamar	10.81	83.79	2.70	2.70
		Dhobi	100	0	0	0
		Kori	100	0	0	0
	OBC	Yadav	41.94	0	58.06	0
		Gaderiya	100	0	0	0
		Kurmi	93.75	6.25	0	0
		Maurya	91.67	8.33	0	0
		Lodh	84.22	5.26	5.26	5.26
		Kashyap	100	0	0	0
		Nai	100	0	0	0
		Teli	100	0	0	0
		Saini	91.66	2.78	5.56	0
		Chauhan	0	0	100	0
		Kumhar	100	0	0	0
		GEN	Thakur	100	0	0
	Shrivastav		100	0	0	0
	Goyal		71.43	0	28.57	0
	Brahmin		100	0	0	0
	Muslim	OBC	Dhobi	0	0	100
Badai			0	0	0	100
Nai			0	0	100	0
Teli			0	0	66.67	33.33
Idrishi			0	0	100	0
Ansari			0	7.06	82.35	9.41
Saifi			8.33	8.33	50	33.34
Manihar			0	0	100	0
Kuraisi			0	0	100	0
Fakeer			0	0	50	50
Mansuri			0	0	50	50
Nilgeer			0	0	100	0
Banjara			0	0	100	0
GEN			Sekh	0	5.56	77.78
		Pathan	3.57	5.36	71.43	19.64
		Siddiqui	0	7.14	71.43	14.29
	Saiyad	16.67	0	66.67	16.67	
		Sekhjade	0	28.57	71.43	0

Source: Field Survey

Table 4: Party Preference of Caste Groups Rampur for 2017 Election in Rampur

	Social Group	Caste	Whom vote in Assembly Election			
			BJP	BSP	SP	Congress
Religion		Pasi	33.33	33.33	33.34	0
	SC	Chamar	5.41	91.89	0	2.7
		Dhobi	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Kori	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Yadav	32.26	3.23	54.84	9.68
		Gaderiya	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Kurmi	93.75	6.25	0.0	0.0
		Maurya	91.67	8.33	0.0	0.0
		Lodh	75.0	15.0	0.0	10.0
	OBC	Kashyap	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Nai	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Teli	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Saini	91.67	2.78	5.56	0.0
		Chauhan	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
		Kumhar	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Thakur	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	GEN	Shrivastav	80.0	0.0	20.0	0.0
		Goyal	85.71	14.29	0.0	0.0
		Brahmin	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Dhobi	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Badai	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	
	Nai	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	
	Teli	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	
	Idrishi	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	
	Ansari	1.12	11.24	76.40	11.24	
	OBC	Saifi	8.33	8.33	41.67	41.67
		Manihar	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Muslim		Kuraisi	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
		Fakeer	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
		Mansuri	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0
		Nilgeer	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
		Banjara	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
		Sekh	0.0	16.67	77.78	5.56
		Pathan	1.72	8.62	75.86	13.79
	GEN	Siddiqui	0.0	0.0	78.57	21.43
		Saiyad	0.0	33.33	50.0	16.67
		Sekhjade	0.0	28.57	71.43	0.0

Source: Field Survey

Once it is clear that Muslims support to BJP is negligible (above tables 3 & 4), then what influences their voting pattern is an important question. In Rampur Lok Sabha, they stood by the side of SP, except in a reserved constituency of Bilaspur, where they have

voted to INC. We have asked voters the issues they keep in mind while voting. In Rampur, like other places, most of the respondents have preferred party followed by candidate. A total of 70.9 percent Hindus have preferred political parties and 28.1 percent kept in mind candidates. On the other hand, 66.8 percent Muslims have preferred parties followed by 31.8 percent preferring candidates.

Of the total votes, Muslims support to SP in Lok Sabha election (2014) was more on the policy of Akhilesh Yadav which can be taken as a proxy to the support for development and the idea of social justice for Muslims. The Idea of secularism or vote on secularism in Rampur presumably mattered the least even for the Muslim voters (table 5).

Table 5: Factors Influence Muslim Voters in Rampur to Vote for SP, 2014

	Total Muslim Respondents	Cant's Say	Mulayam Singh is leader of social justice	Caste-wise SP is closer to me	SP is secular Party	On the Policy of AkhileshYadav	Others
Rampur	45	26.6	20.0	8.8	8.8	33.3	2.2
Milak	21	33.3	23.8	4.7	0.0	33.3	4.7
Suar	59	18.6	13.5	8.5	16.9	42.4	0.0
Bilaspur	34	38.2	20.6	2.9	11.7	26.4	0.0
Chamrauwa	64	25.0	12.5	7.8	15.6	37.5	1.5

Source: Field Survey.

According to our data in 2014 most of the Hindu voters supported BJP for two important reasons viz development and Modi's personality. Saini (50%), Kurmi (43.7%) and Lodh (35%) saw BJP as pro-development and Modi as the engine of growth. Lodh caste with maximum of 15 percent have supported Hindutva plank followed by Saini (8.3%) and Kurmi (6.2%).

The development idea of Hindus is wedded to Modi's leadership just as development idea for Muslims is wedded to SP in a polarized election atmosphere. Hindu voter's development dream was strongly associated with the faith in Modi's personality. The Hindutva flavor of this faith is unraveled a bit when we enquired about the Ayodhya issue, especially with the H-OBCs and SC voters during the election campaign on 2017. Pappu, a Kewat by caste, argued that:

So far me and my community have voted for Samajwadi Party. This time we will vote for KanhaiyaNishad, a BJP candidate. He is from our caste contesting from BJP. Sir, the essence of voting is caste. We are not bothering about end of reservation under BJP as many people are saying. We were not the beneficiary of reservation so far. We are not bothered about it...Our ancestor has helped ShriRam crossing Mother Ganga. I wish reconstruction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya take place soon...

Rajesh, a farmer and BJP supporter argued that:

With the re-construction of Ram mandir in Ayodhya, it is true that Hindus will not benefit anything monetarily but it will teach lesson to the Muslims of this place. Have you moved around this place? Where they are in majority, they don't allow us to enter. They have made their neighborhood like a mini-Pakistan.

Fulmati, a Yadav caste, said that:

When I was child, my elders have told me that these Muslims didn't let Kathavachan take place. They even didn't allow blowing conch in neighbor. Our leader fought for a local temple. And, Ram Mandir will be constructed after battle.

Similar kind of polarized response came when we analysed the support for minority programmes/schemes, however the trend is receding in order (see table 6) as one moves down the caste hierarchy.

Table 6: Social Group wise Response to "Whether Government Response or special Programme for Minority is Right" in Rampur 2017

(In Percent)

Social Group	Agree	Disagree
SC	69.8	30.2
Hindu-OBCs	52.7	47.3
Hindu Gen	47.8	57.1

Source: Field Survey.

The most aggressive castes are Saini, Lodh and Maurya. PM Modi's rally speech in Fatehpur, in February 2017, crux of "ShamshanversusKabristan" echoed the majority feeling in the state.

Rajesh, a Jatav caste, talked a lot about development. He argued that development has taken place but not of Hindus. Akhilesh has done everything for these Muslims. He played a video from his mobile which had a scholarship distribution by former Chief Minister (CM). Rajesh paused the playing video and said sir look at this,

All the scholarship has been given to mulli (Muslim girls). Are our daughters and sisters not eligible for this? Under SP rule, these Muslims become dominant, they even control police station.

Communal polarization of voters, which was initiated by 2014, continued in 2019 election but the advantage was reaped by the Grand alliance of major players (BSP and SP). Jaya Prada, former winning Candidates from SP, contested on BJP tickets against Azam Khan, the Muslim face of SP. The election turned murkier with allegation, counter-

allegation. Azam Khan won 2019 election with 52.71 percent of votes as compared to 42.34 percent of Jaya Prada. It was a polarised election where Muslim voted to defeat BJP. In effect the relevance of Muslim voters in Rampur is heightened when they vote in bloc in a communally polarized election environment. BJP can win without sizable support through Hindutva consolidation but for any other credible opposition the Muslim vote remains significant. Consolidation can only be countered by reverse consolidation. The choices opened up by identity politics for Muslim voters gets soon closed in a heightened communal atmosphere.

Moradabad

Moradabad has been the hotbed of communal struggle between the two communities even prior to independence. "Moradabad was seldom free from communal trouble, and its politicians were notorious for their bitter communalism. An illustration of the city's reputation lies in the Hindu saying that 'In Moradabad there is nothing but Makkhian, machharaurmusalman,' (flies, Mosquitoes and Muslims)."

According to Census 2011, Moradabad has second highest Muslims population i.e. 47.1 percent. The percent in urban area is 54.65 as compared to 43.41 percent in rural Moradabad. Despite struggle, 11 times out of 16 general elections, Lok Sabha seat won by Muslim candidates. Unlike Rampur, here INC did not have dominant presence. Jana Sangh (JS) had won this seat in 1967 and 1971, which reflect its rise in overall state politics at that point. BJP returned back to power only in 2014.

Coalition politics and social alliances at various point has been quite significant here, particularly the Dalit-Muslim alliance which was pioneered by B.P.Maurya³. Between 1977-1991, Gulam Mohammad Khan had a dominant presence as an MP. Later on, when caste-based identity politics started, S. Rahman Warq⁴ became S.P's Choice as a MP candidate. In fact, the principle of homogenized politics among Muslim continued in Moradabad Lok Sabha. The communal competition of BJP leaves least scope for social justice politics here.

Although, JS or its progeny BJP has not won Lok Sabha frequently here, but right-wings have performed well in assembly election, especially after 1991. Between 1991-2017, out of 26 contested seats, BJP has won 54 percent of assembly seats. Local caste equation has gone in favour of BJP.

Our data reveals that in 2014 we see that the overwhelming support for BJP is coming from Dalits, H-OBCs and General Caste and not Muslims (see table 7) However, unlike Rampur, in 2014 general election, majority of Dalit voted for BJP. As compared to around 20 percent SCs support to BJP in Rampur, 61.1 percent SCs have supported BJP in Moradabad.

Hindu upper caste led the pack (95.2 percent) in supporting BJP followed by H-OBCs (88.8 percent).

Table 7: Caste wise Party Preference in the Moradabad Loksabha Election of 2014

Religion	Social Group	Caste	Party you voted in 2014 (percent)				
			BJP	BSP	SP	Congress	
Hindu	SC	Chamar	61.54	34.62	0	0	
		Balmiki	100	0	0	0	
		Sonkar	0	0	100	0	
	OBC	Yadav	71.42	0	14.29	0	
		Gaderiya	93.33	0	6.67	0	
		Kurmi	100.0	0	0	0	
		Kashyap	86.67	0	13.33	0	
		Teli	10.0	0	10.	0	
		Saini	92.86	0	3.57	3.57	
		Chauhan	50	50	0	0	
		Jat	90	0	0	0	
	GEN	Gujar	100	0	0	0	
		Thakur	100	0	0	0	
		Shrivastav	75	0	25	0	
		Chauhan	100	0	0	0	
		Tyagi	87.50	0	12.50	0	
		Bhumihar	100	0	0	0	
		Goyal	100	0	0	0	
	Muslim	OBC	Baniya	100	0	0	0
			Brahmin	100	0	0	0
Dhobi			0	0.0	100	0	
Badai			0	0	100	0	
Nai			0	0	0	0	
Teli			0	0	100	0	
Ansari			3	5	76.66	11.67	
Gaddi,Ghosi			0	0	100	0	
Saifi			0	5.56	88	0	
Manihar			0	0	100	0	
Jat			0	0	100	0	
GEN		Kuraisi	0	0	80	20	
		Fakeer	0	0	50	33.33	
Muslim	Mansuri	0	50	50	50		
	Halwai	0	0	100	0		
	Sekh	5.56	5.56	17.22	5.55		
	Pathan	7.69	0	79.49	0.26		
	Siddiqui	20	0	80	0		
	Sekhjade	0	0	87.50	0		

Source: Field Survey

The results for the Assembly election were slightly less polarized and we see shifting of Chamar votes to BSP, however OBC and other general caste Hindu stood behind BJP with almost same force (Table 8).

Table 8: Caste wise Party Preference in the Assembly Election of 2017 in Moradabad

Religion	Social Group	Caste	Whom vote in Assembly Election (percent)			
			BJP	BSP	SP	Congress
	SC	Chamar	44.23	51.92	3.85	0
		Balmiki	100	0	0	0
		Sonkar	0	0	100	0
	OBC	Yadav	71.43	0	28.57	0
		Gaderiya	73.33	6.67	0	0
		Kurmi	100	0	0	0
		Kashyap	66.67	0	26.67	0
		Teli	90	0	10	0
		Saini	92.86	0	0	0
		Chauhan	50	50	0	0
		Jat	100	0	0	0
		Gujar	0	0	100	0
		GEN	Thakur	66.67	0	0
	Shrivastav		50	0	50	0
	Chauhan		100	0	0	0
	Tyagi		87.50	0	12.50	0
	Bhumihar		100	0	0	0
	Goyal		100	0	0	0
	Baniya		50	0	0	0
	Brahmin	100	0	0	0	
Muslim	OBC	Dhobi	0	0	100	0
		Badai	0	0	100	0
		Nai	0	0	0	0
		Teli	0	0	100	0
		Ansari	1.64	3.28	75.41	8
		Gaddi,Ghosi	0	0	100	0
		Saifi	0	5.56	83.33	0
		Manihar	0	0	100	0
		Jat	0	0	100	0
		Kuraisi	0	9.09	54.55	9.09
		Fakeer	0	0	16.67	83.33
		Mansuri	0	0	50	0
	Halwai	0	0	100	0	
	GEN	Sekh	0	5.56	61.11	22.22
		Pathan	5.13	5.13	74.36	0
Siddiqui		0	20.0	80	0	
		Sekhjade	0	0	50	2

Source: Field Survey

In both the election we see that the small Muslim support to BJP is coming from General Caste Muslim primarily Pathan (in 2017), Pathan and Siddiqui (in 2014). From the Muslim-OBC category it was the Ansari caste in both the elections.

The situation manifests clear communal polarisation. Since the rise of BJP in the middle of 1980s, party has been in consistant search of reliable social base which could prove enough against Muslim demography in Moradabad. It has been successful in reversing the Dalit-Muslim alliance, the foundation of which was laid by B.P. Maurya under the aegis of Republican Party (table 9).

Table 9: Social Groups support to BJP in 2014 Moradabad Lok Sabha

Social Groups	Support to BJP (%)
SCs	61.11
Hindu OBCs	88.76
Hindu Gen.	95.24
Muslim OBCs	2.75
Muslim Gen.	7.14

Source: Field Survey.

Rampal, a Jatav caste, was ardent supporter of BJP and Modi. He thought that,

Modi's act of demonetization has taught a lesson to the Muslim. They had a lot of money which was used to bribe officers to seek control. Now, demonetization has taken away all that money. That is why these (Muslims) are abusing Modiji.

Triloki, Jatav priest of Raidas temple, tell a story which opens the persisting social gap between the Dalit and Muslims in Moradabad. He tells

10 years back, a marriage party to a Balmiki house has come. Everyone was invited. During dinner time it was known that the foods were cooked in Muslim's utensils. People boycotted dinner and left the place. Jatav and Saini were angry about this.

Those who supported BJP in Moradabad were impressed by Modi's personality. 70 percent of Jats and 62.5 Tyagies were influenced by the Modi's personality respectively. On the other hand, 21.4 percent Saini have voted to BJP based on their Hindutva agenda. Our data further revealed that that majority of them who were supporting BJP have also supported the Ram mandir cause. Among the total Hindu voter 52.9 percent were in support of the issue. Ravi, Yadav caste, argued that,

Akhilesh has done a lot of work in the state. Now, there is good electricity and road in the Thakurdwara. But, for five years life was hell for us. Police were not listening to us. In one case of love marriage between Muslim boy and Hindu girl, police was not cooperative to Hindus. Bhainaakkatgayibiradariki.Mulla ne ladkifasaliya(Brother we lost all our respect, Muslim has taken our girl).

In Kanth assembly seat, Anurag, an upper caste, is unemployed MBA graduate. His father RajendraKaushik argued that,

There is a Muslim family (Saifi caste) lives nearby. Earlier, you call one, three come. Now, their children are moving like Salman Khan. They sell rice, they get from quota and eat Basmati, high variety of rice. Nearby village Hasangarhi is full of them. It is like Pakistan. We cannot visit this village after 5 pm.

It is clear from the above table that Hindu-OBCs and upper castes are against the special policies for the Muslims (table 10). If we further disaggregate caste-wise data on opposition, Teli (80 %), Saini (67.9 %), Yadav (57.1 %), Gaderia (53.3 %), Jat (70 %), Shrivastava (75 %), Tyagi (62.5%), Bania (100%) and Brahmin (60%) were against special schemes to Muslims.

Table 10: Social Group wise Response to "Whether Government Response or special Programme for Minority is Right" in Moradabad 2017

(In Percent)

Social Group	Agree	Disagree
SC (54)	61.1	38.9
Hindu-OBCs (89)	41.6	58.4
Hindu Gen (42)	40.5	59.5

Source: Field Survey. Note: Figure in parenthesis is total number of respondents.

Muslims too were following the already set trend of supporting party followed by candidates, with the exception of Quraishi caste, which preferred candidate over party. The inter-Pasmanda rivalry can be seen here. Ansari caste is large in number in Moradabad whose leader AnisurRahman contested from SP ticket in Kanth assembly seat. Quraishi caste group wanted to support their caste candidates thus supported BSP's candidate Mohammad Nasir.

Everyone knows what the issues are. Everyone knows what to do. Since independence, issues have been fixed for Muslims. That is still continuing. It should continue. We will be able to vote only when alive... Samajwadi Party has given candidates from Saifi community, another M-OBC caste. They have good electoral strength. However, Gaffur, from Saifi caste, had shown inclination toward BSP. But, he was not sure about family women who might vote to SP due to Samajwadi Pension Yojna. On the other hand, Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen (MIM) and RashtriyaLokDal (RLD) have given candidates from Pathan community. BSP has given candidate from our community, Quraishi. Now, it is the question of community honour. 18,000-20,000 votes would be respectable. Election is all about the honour....

People supported SP largely on the policy of AkhileshYadav, followed by appeal of Mulayam Singh Yadav as a leader of social justice Saif, brother of Gram Pradhan, argued that,

What Muslim want, Rozi-Roti (employment and food). Akhilesh has distributed e-rikshaws to us. After election victory other poor would get. He is not talking about Muslim and their security issue right now, because of political reason. Once he will come to power, he will work for us. Right now, talking about Muslims' issue would distract Hindu voters from SP.

This internal division disappears in 2019 election. The result was clearly in favour of Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) candidate. INC had fielded poet Imran Pratapgarhi from Moradabad. However Muslims' clear choice was S.T. Hasan, a popular local doctor. Hasan received 50.65 percent votes as compared to 4.62 percent of Imran Pratapgarhi. On the other hand, BJP got 43.01 percent of vote share. Despite triangular fight, alliance's candidate won with huge margin.

Shravasti

Until 2008, it was known as BalrampurLokSabha constituency. The political history of this place, prior to independence, has seen a confrontation between Hindu Mahasabha and pro-Pakistan voice in Balrampur. After partition, migration to Pakistan had taken place. Also, Balrampur estate was led by Rajput/Thakur which led to their rivalry with Brahmin caste.

Under Shravasti LokSabha, there are five assembly seats - Tulsipur, Gainsar, Balrampur, Bhinga and Shravasti. First three seats come under Balrampur district and other two falls under Sharvasti district. The two districts have varied Muslim population. Balrampur has 37.5 percent Muslim population whereas Shravasti has 30.8 percent. Unlike other two studied LokSabha seats, Shravasti.with one-third Muslim population has not been able to send proportional minority representatives. However the deficit in representation here is more a problem at the level of political parties that did not give tickets to Muslim candidates inspite of large number of Muslim population. In sixteen General Elections, only four Muslims have been elected. These Muslims belonged to upper caste. The politics here remains dominated by Hindu upper castes. Thakur won this seat four times and Brahmins eight times. AtalBehariBajpai, NanajiDeshmukh and Subhadra Joshi were some prominent elected representatives.

In political contest between INC and JS or BJP, INC has won LokSabha seat six times and BJP seven times. SP has won it twice. Assembly-wise analysis of the result also confirms the BJP/BJS domination on the seat. Out of 16 times in Shravasti, BJP and INC have won 6 times each. SP and BSP have won three and one time respectively. In Tulsipur - 7 times BJP, 4 times INC, 3 times SP, once BSP and Independent won the election. In Bhinga - 7 times BJP, BSP twice, Independent thrice and SP, Swantantra Party

and INC one time each won the election. In Gainsari - 8 times BJP/BJS, SP and INC thrice each and once BSP.

It was Hindu-OBCs and general castes who supported BJP in 2014 general election in Shravasti (table 11). 68.8 percent Hindu-OBCs and 92.6 percent general caste supported Modi led BJP in 2014.

Table 11: Social

Social Groups	Support to BJP (%)
SCs	30.0
Hindu OBCs	61.8
Hindu Gen.	92.6
Muslim OBCs	4.9
Muslim Gen.	6.5

Groups support to BJP in 2014 ShravastiLokSabha

Source: Field Survey.

Our data reveals that the among OBCs caste, Kurmi (70%), BadhaiandTeli (78.6%) were the biggest support base. Among the Dalits the support was coming from Chamars, Dhobi and few Pasi. Yadavs have largely remained with S.P along with Muslims. The small amount of support from Muslims to BJP was again coming from Saifi, Teli, Faker (all OBC) and Sekh (Upper caste muslim) (Table 12)

Table 12: Caste wise Party Preference in the LokSabha Election of 2014 in Shravasti

Religion	Social Group	Caste	Party you voted in 2014 (percent)			
			BJP	BSP	SP	Congress
SC		Pasi	17.38	69.57	4.35	0
		Chamar	28.95	60.53	7.89	0
		Dhobi	71.43	14.29	14.28	0
		Kori	40	60	0	0
		Sonkar	0	100	0	0
OBC		Yadav	21.87	0	71.87	3.13
		Gaderiya	50	50	0	0
		Kurmi	70	13.33	13.33	0
		Badai	83.33	0	0	16.67
		Maurya	76.92	7.69	15.38	0
		Lodh	100	0	0	0
		Kashyap	100	0	0	0
		Nai	100	0	0	0
		Teli	8.58	7.14	7.14	7.14
		Goswami	0	100	0	0
		Jaiswal	100	0	0	0
		Chauhan	100	0	0	0
		Kahar	66.67	0	33.33	0
		Kumhar	100	0	0	0

		Kewat	0	100	0	0
		Sonar	66.67	0	33.33	0
Chaurasiya		0	0	100	0	
	GEN	Thakur	88.89	11.11	0	0
		Brahmin	94.84	1.72	1.72	1.72
Muslim	OBC	Dhobi	0	0	0	100
		Nai	0	0	100	0
		Teli	100	0	0	0
		Ansari	1.47	16.18	67.65	14.71
		Saifi	25.0	0	50	25
		Manihar	0	0	50	25
		Kuraisi	0	0	100	0
		Fakeer	16.67	0	83.33	0
		Mansuri	0	0	85.71	14.29
		Halwai	0	0	100	0
		Nat	0	100	0	0
		Nilgeer	0	0	50	25
		Kabadiya	0	0	100	0
		GEN	Sekh	20	40	40
	Pathan		5.56	19.44	58.33	16.67
	Siddiqui		0	0	100	0

Source: Field Survey

The trend was similar in the Assembly election. Infact there was greater diversity of votes and large number of Dalits including Dhobi, Chamars and Pasi returned to their old party BSP. All muslims went back to BSP and SP, while the trend for OBC remained similar (table 13)

Table 13: Caste wise Party Preference in the Assembly Election of 2017 in Shrawasti

Social Group	Caste	Whom vote in Assembly Election				
		BJP	BSP	SP	Congress	
Religion	Pasi	8.70	86.96	0.0	4.35	
	SC	Chamar	23.08	74.36	2.56	0.0
		Dhobi	57.14	8.57	14.29	0.0
		Kori	30.0	60.0	10.0	0.0
		Sonkar	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
		Yadav	21.88	0.0	75.0	3.13
		Gaderiya	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
		Kurmi	73.34	13.33	13.33	0.0
		Badai	66.67	0.0	0.0	33.33
		Maurya	53.85	7.69	30.77	7.69
		Lodh	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Kashyap	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Nai	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	OBC	Teli	78.58	0.0	7.14	7.14
		Goswami	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Jaiswal	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

	Chauhan	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Kahar	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
	Kumhar	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Kewat	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
	Sonar	66.67	0.0	33.33	0.0
	Chaurasiya	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
GEN	Thakur	90.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
	Brahmin	89.66	7.2	0.0	6.90
	Dhobi	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Nai	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Teli	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Ansari	1.47	17.65	63.24	16.17
	Saifi	25.0	0.0	50.0	25.0
	Manihar	0.0	25.0	75.0	0.0
OBC	Kuraisi	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
	Fakeer	16.67	0.0	50.0	33.33
	Mansuri	0.0	12.50	87.50	0.0
Muslim	Halwai	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
	Nat	0	100	0.0	0.0
	Nilgeer	0	0	25	75
	Kabadiya	0	0	100	0
	Sekh	0	40	40	20
GEN	Pathan	0	23.68	55.26	18.42
	Siddiqui	0	0	66.67	33.33

Source: Field Survey

Most of the castes voted BJP for the development and inspired by the leadership of Modi. The average support to Hindutva among H-OBCs was merely 5.5 percent as per our data. Like other two constituencies it was development that dictated the voting behaviour of both Hindus and Muslims. However, Hindus pro-development vote went to BJP and Muslims' pro-development went to other parties (table 14).

Table 14: Important Issues that Determine the Voting, Shravasti

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Social Justice</i>	<i>Communalism</i>	<i>Law & Order</i>	<i>Others</i>
Hindu	78.7	2.6	1.1	16.5	1.1
Muslim	92.6	2.0	1.4	3.4	0.7

Source: Field Survey.

Interestingly supporters of all the parties recognized the improved status of the Uttar Pradesh. How many agree to this varies across caste. 60.3 percent H-Gen and 51.2 percent SCs noted the improvement in Uttar Pradesh. Among Muslims 89.2 percent M-Gen acknowledged the improved status of the State under Akhilesh's government followed by M-OBCs.

Like other two MCCs here again more than 90 percent Chamar, Dhobi, Kurmi and Thakur thought that Ram mandir issue was valid. We also asked respondents to opine whether special policy for the uplift of Muslims is correct or not. 62.5 percent SCs agreed with the policy. This percentage reduces to 52 among OBCs. Interestingly 41.2 percent of Hindu general caste disagreed with the special effort of the government.

In 2019, BSP won this seat under alliance but with slim margin. BSP's candidate has 44.31 percent as compared to 43.78 percent of BJP's candidate. INC's candidate has secured 5.82 percent, and in case of INC not contesting election, only Muslim votes would have added to alliance vote. It means majority of Muslims, here too, have voted in favour of winnable opposition candidate.

Conclusion

Looking at the three MCCs we find that before the emergence of identity politics, Congress remained in strong positions and Muslims voted for Congress in large number in the Muslim majority seats. The Muslim support for the Congress also gets translated into Muslim candidates winning election on the ticket of Congress. So the probable emerging equation for Muslim electorate during this period was Muslim voters, Muslim candidate (especially in Muslim majority constituencies) and Congress Party. This can be termed as Muslims voting in-bloc. The emergence of Identity politics created space for the Muslim Voters. As mentioned above BSP and SP became strong contenders of Congress in seeking the Muslim vote. The disenchantment of Muslim voters with Congress was a continuous process and the signs were visible during the anti Congress phase when they shifted towards Janata Party and Janata Dal.

Muslims largely vote to defeat BJP, which is a Hindu right wing party and in recent years also there has been no shift in the political allegiance of Muslims towards BJP. They largely remain behind SP. A small percentage of Muslims, as usual, have also voted for BJP. Here again there are no new entrants.

The consolidation of Muslim vote against BJP is in direct response to the consolidation of Hindu vote behind BJP. The return to in-bloc voting by Muslims diminishes the advantages of identity politics that accrued to them. This essentially means movement from development to survival. The large support that Muslims gave to SP was on the developmental policies of Akhilesh's government. Interestingly the meaning of development for them after decades of independence remains access to government schemes. On the other hand, the development oriented political expression of BJP voters is inherently communal in nature. There is a top-up of Hindutva political campaign that defines and redefines their political

choices. The disintegration of Dalit-Muslim alliance in Moradabad, the polarisation of Yadavs and other OBCs towards BJP is indicative of this. MCC s had remained important for ensuring Muslim representation in the Parliament and Assembly. However, in the absence of any other social alliance on the ground Muslim representation is bound to collapse even in the MCCs.

Nevertheless, the failure of Muslim representation by Muslims or parties being supported by Muslims does not in itself make Muslim vote irrelevant in a democracy. Any secular opposition against BJP cannot do without Muslim votes. Opposition party fortunes depend on Muslim votes. And, through electoral participation Muslims create a possibility for political alternatives to the political and social majoritarianism.

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End notes:

1. For SC the Chi square value was 355.94 p stood at 0.001; for OBC Hindu 246.99, <0.001; for General Hindu 181.79, <0.001; for Muslim OBC 343.41, <0.001; and for General Muslim 172.74, <0.001
2. For SC the Chi square value was 424.14, <0.001; for OBC Hindu 255.70, <0.001; for General Hindu 192.83, <0.001; for Muslim OBC 314.41, <0.001; and for General Muslim 172.79, <0.001
3. a teacher in AMU, He worked among Dalits, especially Chamars, and makes them aware about the Ambedkarite politics. He was also critical to the Hindu upper caste such as Brahmin and Thakur.
4. Warq belonged to Jhojha caste, which has OBC status in the State. Although, many Jhojha claims that they are Turk, an upper caste. But, we cannot assume that selection of Dr. Warq bring forth Muslim OBCs' collective politics