

Chandni Chowk Lok Sabha Seat Analysis

By Revati Gandekar

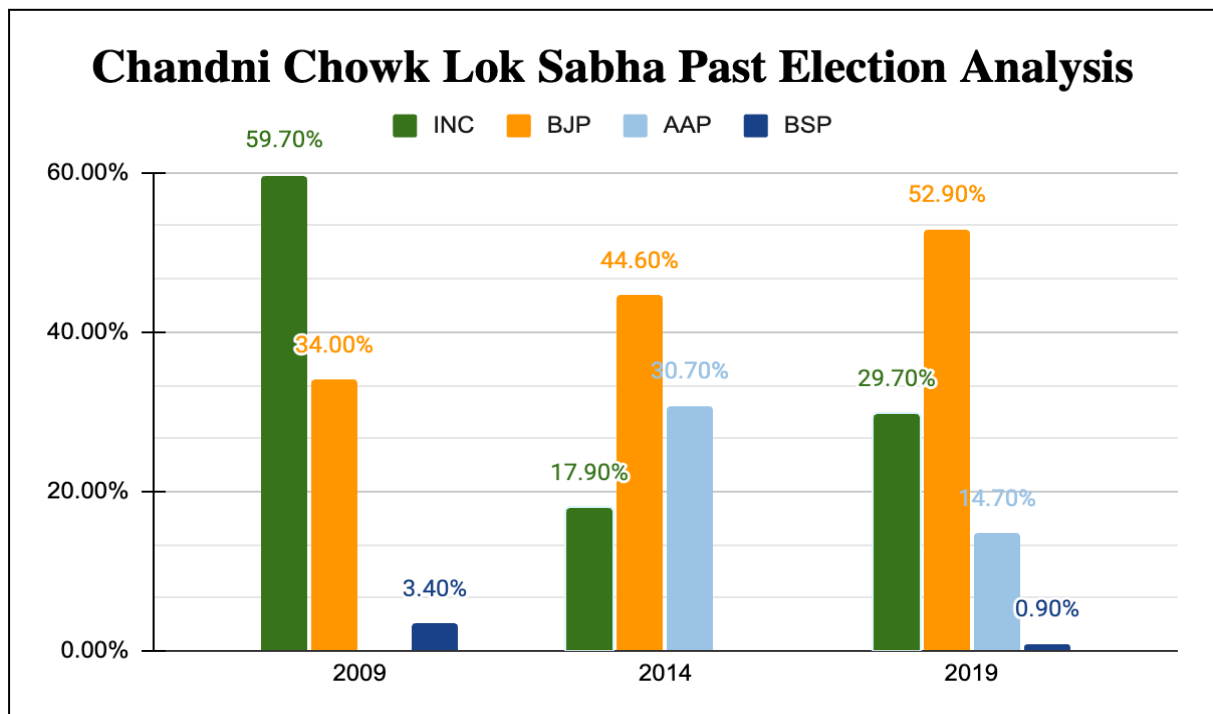
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I. Introduction

Chandni Chowk Lok Sabha constituency is one of the seven Lok Sabha constituencies in the Indian National Capital Territory of Delhi¹. This constituency came into existence in 1956. It is the smallest constituency of Lok Sabha in terms of area. In 1967, Ram Gopal Shalwale of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (now BJP) won, marking the beginning of a new era and defeating the two-time winner INC. While the Congress has been the most powerful and successful party in this constituency in the 70s and the 80s, the BJP has won big in the last two decades.

Janata Party had fielded him from Chandni Chowk in the year 1977 and he was victorious from here. There has been a close contest between BJP and Congress on this Lok Sabha seat.

II. Analysis of Previous Elections



Past election analyses provide invaluable insights into the shifting dynamics and power equations within Chandni Chowk. From the rise of influential leaders to the emergence of grassroots movements, each electoral cycle has left an indelible mark on the socio-political fabric of the constituency. By scrutinizing patterns of voter behavior, coalition dynamics, and campaign strategies, we gain a deeper understanding of the forces at play in this crucible of Indian democracy. The Chandani Chowk Lok Sabha has witnessed a bipolar contest between the BJP and the INC till 2009. After the AAP came to the electoral picture of the UT, the contest turned out to be a tripolar contest between the BJP, INC, and AAP.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lok_Sabha

2014 Elections

Dr. Harsh Vardhan (GEN-Baniya), from BJP, became the Member of Parliament from Chandni Chowk. He grabbed almost 45 percent of the total votes in the elections. He rose to prominence when he beat the former MP Shri Kapil Sibal (GEN- Kshatriya) of INC who is a well-known face in Indian politics. He was leading in every assembly segment, except Matia Mahal where the AAP candidate got more votes. It was a clean sweep by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, which was also supported by the 'Modi Wave' that started at the time.

2019 Elections

In the 2019 elections, the three major parties, the BJP, INC, and AAP gave their candidature to a Baniya candidate, thereby following the caste equations in the PC. The Modi wave in the 2019 Lok Sabha again helped the BJP incumbent MP Dr Harsh Vardhan. He defeated the INC candidate Shri PK Gupta (GEN-Baniya) by a margin of 2,28,145 votes (23.2% vote share). Even though he won by a greater margin, he was running behind in the Chandni Chowk, Ballimaran, and Matia Mahal assembly regions, which are dominated by the Muslim population, which votes for the INC. Baniyas and OBCs, on the other hand, voted for the BJP which contributed to this win. The vote share of INC was more than AAP, unlike the 2014 elections.

III. Voting Patterns

Caste and community have played a crucial role in deciding the voting patterns in Chandni Chowk, which is an accurate representation of Indian politics. There are a good number of people in the Muslim community in Chandni Chowk. 20.34 percent of the population belongs to the Muslim community. Whereas 21.14% are SC, 1.24% are Jains and 2.26% are Sikhs in Chandni Chowk². Because of this, Muslim votes were the deciding factor in most elections, but post-delimitation, the Muslim population stands at just 13.38%. This seat is now dominated by the Baniyas, Vaishya, and Sikhs who are the core voters of the BJP because of their initiatives supporting the business community.

Muslims have historically always voted for the Indian National Congress. SC, ST, and OBC votes are divided between INC and AAP in the assembly elections³. Now, the OBC votes are seen to be shifting to BJP in the Lok Sabha elections. The voters of Chandni Chowk vote differently in different elections. If we look at the figures of the last 2 Lok Sabha elections and Assembly elections, it is clear that most of the voters here are voting for the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections and for the Aam Aadmi Party in the Assembly elections. This might have been the effect of the Modi wave that took off in 2014 and has been on a high since. Shri Narendra Modi has been the

² <http://www.chanakyya.com/Parliament-Details>

³ <https://www.oneindia.com/chandni-chowk-lok-sabha-election-result-97/>

face of the party nationwide and in Delhi which has proven to be a helping factor in the campaign. On the other hand, INC has not had a well-known face after Shri Kapil Sibal.

IV. Candidates Contesting In 2024 Elections

It is noteworthy that an alliance has been formed between the Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress in Delhi for the upcoming elections. From the point of view of alliance, this seat has come to the account of Congress. However, Congress has not yet declared its candidate here. The names of Shri J P Aggarwal (Baniya) and former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit's son Sandeep Dikshit (Brahmin) are running from the Congress side, but Smt. Alka Lamba who is a Punjabi Khatri is also a probable candidate. The INC wants to consolidate the Punjabi votes who now form a major share of the total votes. At the same time, Shri Praveen Khandelwal, who is a successful businessman and belongs to the Baniya (Vaishya) community, is the candidate from BJP for Chandni Chowk Lok Sabha seat. The BJP decided to replace the incumbent MP Dr Harsh Vardhan with Shri. Praveen Khandelwal. This might be because of his unsatisfactory performance as a health minister during COVID-19. With sitting MP Harsh Vardhan's name not figuring from this constituency in the list of candidates announced by the BJP, he on March 3 announced bowing out of active politics⁴. Here a tough competition can be seen between the BJP and I.N.D.I. alliance.

V. Conclusion

AAP and Congress alliance could prove effective for them to win. If we look at the percentage share of the votes for these parties in the previous elections, it's possible for the alliance to cross the line. The votes of Muslims, SCs, and STs that were being divided between the two, will now unify and give a tough time to the BJP candidate, Shri Praveen Khandelwal. Traders' community, which is the most powerful and deciding community is standing strong behind BJP because the candidate himself is a businessman, which they believe will act in their favor⁵. They also support the government's decision to enforce GST and provisions regarding the MSMEs. There are concerns about safety and the transportation of goods by these people, which they trust the BJP to solve. On the other hand, there is not much support for the INC-AAP alliance because of the reducing popularity of the Congress. The citizens feel, from prior experiences, that the promises of the freebies that AAP is making cannot be trusted. The religious ideology, along with the face of Narendra Modi will also prove to be a significant factor. For the 2024 polls, the saffron party is betting big on fresh faces and relying on the upper-caste and Baniya votes. Even though there is a clear edge for one party, it is going to be a riveting race in Chandni Chowk this time.

⁴ <https://www.thehindu.com/elections/lok-sabha/>

⁵ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/traders-muslims-hold-key-to-success/articleshow/69181219.cms>