

Aligarh Lok Sabha Analysis

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I. Introduction

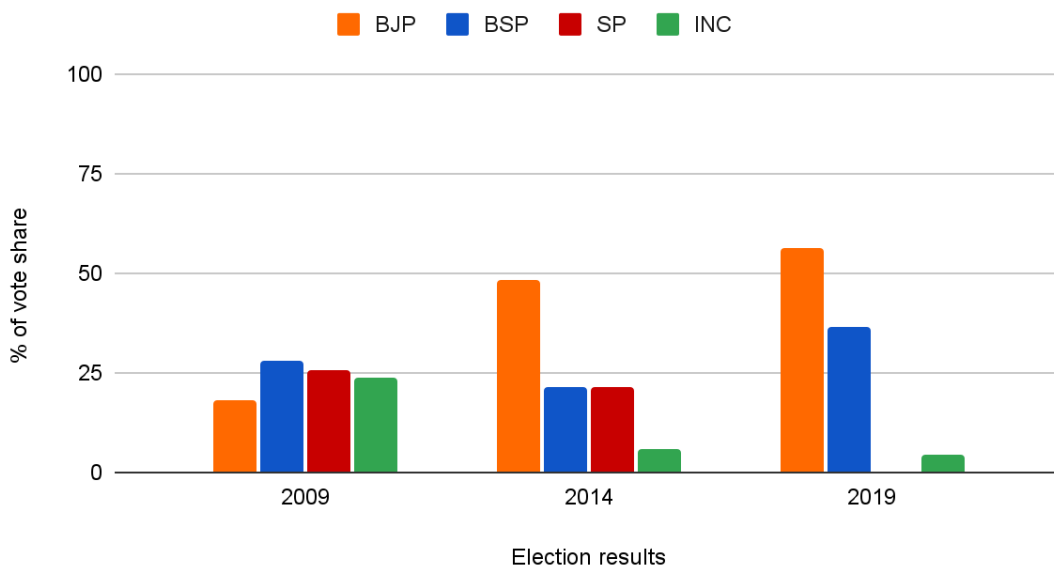
Set in the heartland of India, Aligarh Lok Sabha constituency is the parliamentary representation for Aligarh district, one of the 80 Lok Sabha seats of Uttar Pradesh. Currently, Aligarh is represented by BJP MP Shri Satish Kumar Gautam (Gen- Brahmin), who has held the position for a decade since 2014. It comprises five Legislative Assembly segments of Khair, Barauli, Atrauli, Koil and Aligarh.

Famous for its lock industry and academic institutions, Aligarh is home to diverse community groups including Muslims, SCs etc. Over the years, the constituency has had MPs from diverse political parties like INC, BJP and BSP. Upcoming election will also witness the candidates from BJP, INC-SP (I.N.D.I) Alliance and BSP being the top contenders of Aligarh's Lok Sabha representation.

II. Past Elections

Aligarh has been represented by various political parties over the years. The seat had been a BJP bastion till 1990s, though later the INC's candidate Shri Bijendra Singh (OBC- Jat) won this seat in 2004 LS elections, followed by BSP's Smt Raj Kumari Chauhan (Rajput) in 2009. For the past two general elections of 2014 and 2019, BJP's Shri Satish Kumar Gautam (Gen-Brahmin) has been the incumbent MP.

Aligarh Past Elections



2014 Elections

BJP's Shri Satish Kumar Gautam (Gen- Brahmin) won the 2014 Lok Sabha polls from Aligarh with 514622 (48.35%) votes. His top contenders were BSP's Dr Arvind Kumar Singh (gEN-Thakur) with 227886 (21.41%) votes, SP's Zafar Aalam with 226284 (21.26%) votes, and INC's Shri Bijendra Singh (Jat) with 62674 (5.89%) votes.

BJP's Shri Satish Kumar Gupta (Gen-Brahmin) banked on Aligarh's significant Brahmin-Thakur voters, backing from Former UP CM Shri Kalyan Singh, whose presence played an important role in Aligarh's political backdrop. Alongside all of this, he also garnered a significant amount of votes with Modi being BJP's PM face during 2014 elections. BSP's Dr Arvind Kumar Singh (Gen- Thakur), a young face in Aligarh's political arena banked on SC votes and his mother, then sitting MP Smt Raj Kumari Chauhan's reputation. INC's Shri Bijendra Singh (OBC- Jat) sought Muslim votes under INC, and his position as past MP was banked on. SP's Zafar Aalam garnered the Yadav-Muslim votes, and based his campaign on SP's influence in UP politics.

2019 Elections

BJP's sitting MP Shri Satish Kumar Gautam (Gen- Brahmin) won Aligarh's Lok Sabha polls for the second time in 2019, with a significant majority of 656215 (56.42%) votes. This was followed by BSP-SP's Mahagathbandhan candidate Dr Ajeet Baliyan (OBC- Jat) who got 426954 (36.71%) votes, and INC's Shri Bijendra Singh Chaudhary (OBC- Jat) with 50880 (4.37%) votes.

Shri Satish Kumar Gautam won with a significant margin, garnering votes from Aligarh's Brahmin vote bank, his advocacy of Hindutva in the region, and BJP and PM Modi's reputation. Dr Ajeet Baliyan (OBC- Jat), the Mahagathbandhan candidate garnered shares of Jat, Muslim, SC votes with the collective backing of BSP-SP-RLD, but was perceived as an 'outsider' in the local political arena. INC's Shri Bijendra Singh (OBC- Jat) got a small share of Muslim and Jat votes, but he acted more like a vote divisor, and less of a competition in the polls. The Jat votes were divided among BJP and Mahagathbandhan, likewise Muslim votes got distributed between the alliance and INC.

III. Legislative Assembly Seats in the Constituency

Under Aligarh's Parliamentary constituency, there are five Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly seats of Khair (SC), Barauli, Atrauli, Koil and Aligarh. The last elections for the 403 member UP Legislative Assembly was held in 2022, in which all five of Aligarh's Assembly seats were won by BJP. For the past two Assembly elections of 2017 and 2022, BJP has won all five of Aligarh's Assembly seats.

Khair is a reserved seat for Scheduled Caste(SC). Currently the seat is held by BJP's Shri Anoop Pradhan Balmiki (SC- Valmiki), who has held the position since 2017. In the previous elections of 2022, BJP's Shri Anoop Pradhan Balmiki got 55.55% votes, BSP's Shri Charu Kain Kain got 25.98% votes, and RLD's Shri Bhagwati Prasad got 16.57% votes. Khair is a reserved seat for the SC community, which makes up around 23.81%¹ of the constituency's voting population. Apart from SCs, Khair has 13.65%² of Muslim voters, and Jats, Brahmins and Rajputs are also major communities influencing the voter dynamics in the region. Since all candidates are bound to belong to SC category, votes are mostly aligned along the lines of political parties. With CM Yogi Adityanath as BJP's main face, Brahmins, Jats and some sections of SCs vote in favour of BJP. Remaining SC, OBC and Muslim votes go in favour of parties like BSP and RLD.

Barauli is represented by Shri Thakur Jaiveer Singh (Gen- Thakur) of BJP, who won with 60.58% votes in 2022. BSP's Shri Narendra Kumar Sharma had got 23.48% votes, followed by RLD'S Shri Pramod Gaur who got 13.42% votes. Barauli has 23.69%³ of SC voters, and Thakur community voters are present in significant numbers. SC, OBC votes were largely divided among all three major candidates as BSP and RLD banked on their traditional community vote banks, but the winning candidate Shri Thakur Jaiveer Singh's (Thakur) reputation as a well known BSP leader in the past also shifted a lot of BSP's votes to BJP. He also garnered significant votes on BJP's vote bank for the party's reputation, along with Brahmin and Thakur votes, which are also present in significant numbers in the constituency.

Atrauli Assembly seat is held by BJP's Shri Sandeep Kumar Singh (OBC- Lodh-Rajput) from 2017 and 2022 polls. He is also the Minister of State for Education in UP. He won the 2022 election with 52.03 % votes, and was followed by past MLA SP's Shri Viresh Yadav (OBC- Yadav) with 35.76% votes and BSP's Dr Omvir Singh with 9.58% votes. Atrauli has 18.45%⁴ of SC population, and also has a significant share of Lodh and Rajput voters. BJP's winning candidate won with his grandfather former CM Shri Kalyan Singh's reputation in the region, and scored with the family's and party's vote bank of Lodhs, Rajput, SC communities.

Koil Legislative Assembly constituency is represented by Shri Anil Parashar (Gen- Brahmin) from BJP, since the past two elections. He won the previous election with 42.82% votes, defeating SP's Shaz Ishaq with 40.83% votes, BSP's Mohd Bilal with 9.12% votes, and INC's

¹ Chanakya website, <http://www.chanakya.com/Assembly-Details>

² Censusindia website, <https://www.censusindia.co.in/towns/khair-population-aligarh-uttar-pradesh-800764>

³ News18 article, <https://www.news18.com/news/politics/barauli-election-result-2022-live-updates-winner-loser-leading-trailing-mla-margin-4850255.html>

⁴News18 article, <https://www.news18.com/news/politics/atrauli-election-result-2022-live-updates-winner-loser-leading-trailing-mla-margin-4850264.html>

Vivek Bansal with 6.17% votes. Koil has 15.44% SC voters, and sizable vote banks of Brahmins and Thakurs. While BJP's Shri Anil Parashar got the party's SC, Brahmin, Thakur votes, and BJP party's votes with CM Yogi Adityanath as their face of elections, his main contender SP's Shaz Ishaq banked on Muslim votes, and the shares of SC, OBC votes which were divided between SP and BJP.

Aligarh Assembly seat is represented by Smt Mukta Raja from 2022. She won the elections with a thin margin receiving 47.67% votes, defeating SP's Zafar Alam who scored 42.61% votes, and BSP's Razia Khan with 7.24% votes. The current MLA Smt Mukta Raja won with BJP's vote bank of Brahmin, Thakur, Jat, SC votes, and her husband, the then sitting MLA Sanjeev Raja's support. While the runner up candidate of SP banked on their traditional SC, OBC and Muslim votes.

For the past two State Assembly elections, BJP has established its strong hold of the five Assembly seats of Khair, Barauli, Atrauli, Koil and Aligarh. Since MLAs and their reputation in a region contribute significantly for their party's Lok Sabha candidates, BJP's performance in the Parliamentary elections will receive a strong backing from the region's five BJP MLAs.

IV. Voting Patterns

Aligarh is a socially and culturally diverse constituency. Hence, caste and religious divisions play a crucial role in determining the voter dynamics in the politics of Aligarh. The constituency has 20.2% SCs, about 18% Upper Castes of Brahmins and Thakurs, and Muslims make up almost 20% of the voters. Apart from these, there is a significant presence of Jats, Lodhs, Yadavs, Rajputs in the constituency's voter pools.

BJP banks on the Brahmin and Thakur votes. It also gets a sizable share of Rajputs, Lodhs, and SC, OBC votes. More than anything, PM Modi and BJP's national level politics plays a major role in swaying voters in favour of the party. Presence of regional parties like BSP and SP plays a major role in the political dynamics of Aligarh as they not only garner SC, OBC, Yadav, Muslim community votes, but also the parties' influence in UP's regional politics affects their vote banks. While Baghel, Jats vote in favour of BSP, BJP garners the Valmiki vote bank in the region. INC gets shares of Muslim, Jat votes with Shri Bijendra Singh (Jat) being the party's face in the constituency for almost two decades. But since the past two elections, INC has been less of a competition, and more of a vote bank divider in Aligarh's political arena. Apart from caste and community divisions, political parties' reputation at national and state level politics, constituency's grass root issues of development also affect the voting decisions in Aligarh.

V. 2024 Lok Sabha Elections

The upcoming Lok Sabha elections for the Aligarh Parliamentary constituency will be a competition to witness. Sitting MP Shri Satish Kumar Gautam (GEN- Brahmin) will be fighting from BJP for the third time. INC and SP will contest this election together under the I.N.D.I. Alliance. Past MP Shri Bijendra Singh (OBC- Jat) will be their face from SP, who was previously a part of INC, and has also served as Aligarh's MP from 2004 to 2009. BSP was to initially be represented by Gufraan Noor, who had joined the party by parting ways with AIMIM, but he suffered a heart attack days before filing his nomination and will no longer be contesting as the BSP candidate. To counter BJP's sitting MP, BSP will now be contesting elections with Shri Hitendra Kumar Upadhyay/ Bunty (GEN- Brahmin) as their candidate.

This is the first election without Former UP CM Late Shri Kalyan Singh, whose presence played a crucial role in swaying voter dynamics in the region. While BJP is confident of gaining votes with his influence, opposition hopes to bring in changes in Aligarh's politics in Shri Kalyan Singh's absence. Shri Satish Kumar Gautam (GEN- Brahmin) will be contesting the elections with the reputation of PM Modi and BJP at the national level. His performance as the last MP will be scrutinised, as he hopes to garner votes from the Brahmin and Thakur, SC ,OBC vote banks, and RLD's support. BSP, who hold a significant influence in Aligarh have now placed a Brahmin candidate to counter BJP. He is expected to divide the Brahmin vote bank, and also gain support for SCs and OBCs. I.N.D.I. Alliance candidate will bank on Muslim votes, and will get collective vote bank of INC and SP, though the parties seem to have a very little power in Aligarh's political dynamics. Thus, the competition for Aligarh's Parliamentary seat will be a sight to witness as social divisions, national politics and regional issues will determine voting decisions.