

Analysis Of the Milkipur Bypolls 2025

I. Executive Summary

The Milkipur by-election, scheduled for 5th February 2025, can be considered as a pivotal event in the political and electoral history of Uttar Pradesh. Triggered by Samajwadi Party MP Awadesh Prasad vacating the Milkipur seat following his victory on the Faizabad seat. These by-elections indicate the fierce battle between the two major political players - the Samajwadi Party and the BJP, with a complex interplay of caste dynamics and governance malpractices issues in play.

Keywords: bypolls, dalit votes, election integrity, prestige battle

II. Overview

Milkipur is a city in the Ayodhya district of Uttar Pradesh that is included in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly's Milkipur constituency. Last year in the general election, following his victory in the Lok Sabha from Faizabad, Awadhesh Prasad of the Samajwadi Party (SP) abandoned the seat, necessitating the poll in the Milkipur constituency. As a result, voting for the bypolls is scheduled for 5th February, 2025, and the tallying of the votes will take place on 8th February, 2025.

III. Political Landscape

A. Major Contenders

1. Ajit Prasad

Ajit Prasad, the son of Faizabad MP Awadhesh Prasad, has been put forward by the Samajwadi Party for the seat's by-election. Instead of putting forward a candidate from Milkipur, the Congress, the Samajwadi Party's INDIA bloc ally, has declared its support for the SP candidate.

2. Chandrabhan Paswan

Chandrabhan Paswan is the BJP's candidate for the Uttar Pradesh assembly by-election in Milkipur. The BJP is also backed by the Rashtriya Lok Dal, which is led by Jayant Chaudhary, and the Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, which is led by Omprakash Rajbhar.

3. Suraj Choudhary

An SP rebel named Suraj Choudhary has been put forward by the Azad Samaj Party for the Milkipur seat. The forthcoming by-election in the Milkipur assembly constituency, which has turned into a prestige fight between the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the BJP, is expected

to see a triangular contest as the Azad Samaj Party, led by Dalit leader Chandrashekhar, enters the race.

IV. Key Issues

Among other crucial concerns, the ones listed below are quite important:

- A. The **Election Commission's ability to guarantee free and fair voting** is a greater issue in the impending by-election than the election outcome. Many speculate it will be like the previous nine assembly seat by-elections, when police officers were accused of blocking opposition party supporters from casting ballots at gunpoint.
- B. The growing cost of **urea fertilizer and farmers' frequent reports of urea shortages** during crucial stages of the agricultural cycle are highlighted as major difficulties in multiple ground coverage reports. Though the government tries to provide urea at subsidized rates, inefficiencies in the Public Distribution System (PDS) lead to delayed deliveries.
- C. Most farmers in Milkipur have expressed their **extreme worries about stray cattle**, especially bulls. It is common for stray bulls to sneak into farmers' fields and crush the standing crops. As a result, farmers are compelled to invest more money in the material resources necessary to properly fence their fields. Furthermore, locals are injured or killed as a result of stray cattle wandering the area.

V. Caste and Community Dynamics

Milkipur is a reserved constituency where 1.40 lakh of the 3.58 lakh voters are Dalits. The constituency is home to roughly 50,000 OBCs, 60,000 Brahmins, 50,000 Yadavs, 30,000 Muslims, and 25,000 Rajput votes. As a result, the contesting parties' campaign strategy centers on the main concern of the predominant community. For instance, both the BJP and the SP have nominated candidates from the Pasi community, which is the most common Dalit sub-caste in the area. Additionally, they are also contacting the candidates' specific sub-castes. Thus, in the absence of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the BJP and SP are fighting for the support of the Dalit community, since the vote of this community would be crucial.

Responding to the caste dynamics of the territory, the BJP, which stills primarily focus on issues of building a Ram temple in Ayodhya and bringing back the Treta Yug in the Milkipur by-election, is also counting on government welfare programs like free rationing. Similarly, the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath observed during a public rally, emphasizing the Maha Kumbh's "inclusive nature," where individuals from many origins are mingling without any prejudice.

To keep the seat, the Samajwadi Party is depending on its tried-and-true “Pichda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak” (PDA) recipe. With this policy at the forefront, the Samajwadi Party is optimistic that more members of these communities will join the SP. Whereas the BJP hopes to win over voters from the upper castes of Rajput and Brahmin. Thus, the BJP and the SP are engaged in a fierce battle over casteism and prestige in the by-elections. The BJP is pushing voters to reject the SP candidate on the basis of nepotism, while the SP has labeled BJP nominee Chandrabhanu Paswan as an outsider since he is not a local resident and is from a neighboring seat.

VI. Reactions from various stakeholders

Akhilesh Yadav, the leader of the SP, has frequently cited his party's win in Milkipur in the 2022 Assemblies to disparage the BJP and the Yogi Adityanath administration, charging them with polarizing politics and poor governance. Not only this, he said, the government plotted to postpone the elections since the BJP's internal survey and intelligence report had forecast defeat in the Milkipur bypoll. Similarly, while criticizing the BJP, the Congress Party stated that it fears the electorate in Milkipur will suffer another defeat. According to Congress spokesperson Manish Hindvi, the BJP was humiliated following its loss in the Lok Sabha seat of Faizabad. For this reason, no election was held for the Ayodhya seat of Milkipur.

In response to these allegations, Uttar Pradesh BJP Chief Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary rejected all these comments from the opposition. He asserted that it was the Congress Party and the Samajwadi Party who were trying to ensure that by-elections would not be held. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while speaking at a Chandrabhanu Paswan rally in Milkipur, claimed that the Samajwadi Party rejected BR Ambedkar and other great figures, backed mafia elements, and even read mersiya (lament for the dead) for them. Additionally, he blasted Akhilesh Yadav, the former chief minister and president of the SP, for allegedly tampering with India's religion and disseminating misleading information about the Maha Kumbh. He makes indirect allusions to the SP Party and the Congress while criticizing the politics of casteism and parivarvad (dynasty).

Among the voters in Milkipur, the maintenance of integrity throughout the election process by the Election Commission is a primary concern. Nevertheless, Milkipur voters are closely examining the candidate and party pledges, despite the region having historically been an SP Party stronghold.

VII. Potential Implications

The Samajwadi Party's leader, Akhilesh Yadav, has called the elections in Milkipur the "biggest by-election" in the country. According to him, winning the Milkipur assembly seat is "essential for

saving democracy”. On the other hand, by associating this by-election with its stature, the Bharatiya Janata Party views it as crucial. Mahant Girishpati Tripathi, the mayor of Ayodhya and a BJP leader, has referred to it as more significant than the Delhi assembly elections, arguing that the BJP derives pride in its link with Ayodhya.

In preparation for the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections in 2027, the BJP and SP both want to expand their base of support. According to a number of pundits, both the SP and the BJP are having difficulties in the current election, but for different reasons, and none of neither is certain of a clear win. But each side is attempting to take advantage of the other's flaws for its own gain.

VIII. Results and Analysis

In the Milkipur Assembly by-election held on February 5, 2025, BJP candidate Chandrabhanu Paswan emerged victorious with a decisive lead over Samajwadi Party (SP) contender Ajit Prasad. Paswan secured 146,397 votes, defeating Prasad by a margin of 61,710 votes after 31 rounds of counting. This victory marks a significant comeback for the BJP in the Milkipur constituency, which it had lost in the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections. The bypoll saw a voter turnout exceeding 65% of the 370,000-strong electorate, surpassing the turnout recorded in the 2022 Assembly elections, indicating an increase in political engagement among the electorate.

The outcome of this by-election has been widely interpreted as a reflection of the BJP's efforts to consolidate its position in the region. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath praised the win, attributing it to the public's trust in the "Double Engine BJP Government" and its welfare policies. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya went further, describing the victory as a "trailer" for the upcoming 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, suggesting that the SP would be relegated to insignificance in the future. However, the Samajwadi Party contested the result, with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav calling it a "false win." Yadav alleged that the BJP had misused electoral machinery and engaged in administrative manipulation, while also emphasizing the growing strength of the Pichhda, Dalit, and Alpsankhyak (PDA) alliance, which he believed the BJP was attempting to undermine.

Overall, the Milkipur by-election results underscore the BJP's strategic efforts to strengthen its influence in Uttar Pradesh, particularly among Dalit and OBC communities. This victory also highlights the complex role of caste-based politics and community outreach in shaping the electoral dynamics of the state, illustrating how these factors continue to play a significant role in the region's political landscape.