

The politics behind AAP, BJP fight over state of govt schools

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By Sidharth Mishra



The summer heat has warmed up politics in the national Capital. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has suddenly become aggressive and its members are out 'exposing' the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi government. Whether they would be able to have any success in their endeavour only time would say.

The party strategists see AAP now as a real time threat as they could emerge as challengers in the two BJP-ruled states – Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, which are going to the polls next. In their enthusiasm to have a 'Congress-mukht Bharat', the party leaders now realize that AAP which till the other day was viewed as convenient tool to cut into the Congress votes was actually now becoming a big time usurper.

In the last round of the assembly polls, AAP formed government in Punjab with a thumping majority and in Uttarakhand and Goa cut into sufficient number of Congress votes to block the grand old party's attempt at forming the government. There are clear indications that with the Congress in complete disarray, its votes are shifting in bulk and AAP is the biggest beneficiary, a repetition of Delhi model in the other states too.

Given the situation, the BJP strategists now plan an assault on AAP in its stronghold of Delhi. First the move to unify the municipal corporations, bringing it under the Centre for all practical purposes. This has been done keeping in mind that even if the AAP wins MCD, it would be emaciated of any financial sinews.

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Next the move to 'expose' the AAP government. That would be difficult, not because AAP has been impeccable in governance but because BJP's local level leadership doesn't have enough intelligence to match Arvind Kejriwal's cerebral strength. It takes a National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) to point out that about 80 percent government schools in Delhi are functioning without the head of schools. This when the AAP leaders Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia leave no stone unturned to challenge education ministers of the BJP-ruled states to compare their state government schools to the schools in Delhi.

The NCPCR has written to the Chief Secretary of Delhi, asking about vacant posts for heads in Delhi government schools and seeking a factual position in the matter. Only 203 out of 1,027 government schools in the national capital have a headmaster or principal, the apex child rights body NCPCR said. Since then BJP leaders have visited several schools in Delhi, trying to puncture holes in the AAP government's assertions that schools in Delhi were among the best in the country. Unfortunately they were spurred into action only after Deputy CM Manish Sisodia criticised the state of education in BJP-ruled Gujarat.

This also shows that the local BJP leadership is blissfully unaware of the shortcomings of Delhi government largely due to their absence from the grassroots level. There are similar stories in almost all the sectors under Delhi government, be it health, transport or roads but the local BJP leadership has never shown the zeal to taken up these issues.

From being a party with a charismatic pantheon of local leadership, BJP in Delhi today is led by an assembly of rootless wonders. The model of winning polls in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has somehow created an inertia wherein the local leaders would act only on a signal from the Centre. Even a major move like the unification of MCD has no participation of the decision making. A situation like this can only suit Arvind Kejriwal.

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