

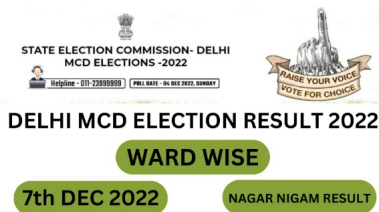
## MCD polls: BJP fights well but AAP is the winner

Written by Administrator

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**By Sidharth Mishra**



One of the first reactions of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leadership on their performance in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) polls has been that the people have rejected the corruption charges against its leaders Satyendra Jain and Manish Sisodia. Those who keenly follow politics of this country would recall that the discovery of fodder scam in Bihar did not really harm the political fortunes of Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) strongman Lalu Prasad Yadav.

It took another decade before the RJD government was replaced by the NDA government led by Nitish Kumar in 2005. The vote against Lalu Yadav was not exactly against his acts of corruption but mal-governance and lack of development with Nitish Kumar promising 'Sushashan' (good governance). Despite Nitish bringing relatively cleaner and more efficient governance in Bihar, Lalu Yadav's party did not go out of business.

Arvind Kejriwal's party which had its genesis in the anti-corruption movement and its leaders claiming to not seek a share in the power structure, today has imprisoned ministers refusing to quit office despite being denied bail by the trial court and also the high court. This was something which the much-maligned Lalu Prasad Yadav also did not indulge in when he was arrested in the fodder scam case.

Despite the abstruse physiognomies, AAP has done electorally very well to have won the Assembly elections with a thumping majority twice in the National Capital, in the border state of Punjab earlier this year and now unseating the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the MCD. Despite a decrepit administration and fast deteriorating civic services, the AAP in Delhi continues to command trust of a larger section of voters than the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

It's the comatose if not already dead Congress in Delhi which is keeping AAP not just alive but also helping its growth in the other states. It's similar to the survival of the hyenas in the animal world, living on cadaver of the dead.

Having said that, where does Delhi go from here, now that it has AAP's "double engine government" sitting at Delhi Secretariat and the Civic Centre? Despite being an incorrigible optimist, one doesn't see any arrest in the decay of civic services and local governance in the national Capital any soon.

For past one decade Delhi has as good as been ungoverned. Collapsing civic and health infrastructure, public transport system and rising levels of pollution are indicators of the national Capital being a filthy city. Kejriwal has promised to clean the city of garbage mounts but then it's easier said than done.

More than half the voters of Delhi live in colonies which are not part of master plan. Christened as unauthorized colonies, these clusters today wield political power in the city and their very existence deflates any attempt to 'decongest' the city of its civic ills.

Delhi's population today stands at two-and-half crore rising from 17 lakh in 1947. Delhi has been the destination of migrants just not from Pakistan, who came post-partition, but also people from the north Indian states. People from larger part of north Indian states, which have been hit by economic despair and lack of employment, looked at Delhi as their El Dorado.

People from these regions kept migrating to the capital in search of livelihood and adding to its population, continuously changing its demographic profile. With the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the central government agency responsible for development of the metropolis, failing to rise to the challenge of providing home to the migrant population, the farmlands were converted into housing colonies, albeit illegally; thus the name unauthorised colonies.

Thus it's not going to be any small task to govern the labyrinth called Delhi especially given chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's disinterest in governance. One of the main charges against Kejriwal, and to a large extent true also, is that he spent more time on strategizing the

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expansion of his party rather than provide leadership to his government. He remains a chief minister without a portfolio.

Kejriwal, who has patented the politics of subsidy, which in turn has helped increase his party's presence in the other states, has also left the government coffers empty. There are several instances of Delhi government having failed to release even salaries of people under it on time.

Now he has the bigger challenge of running the mammoth municipal corporation. For the past five years there was a running battle between AAP-controlled Delhi government and the BJP-controlled MCD over the release and use of funds for the MCD. Now with the AAP at both the places, would the party show the political will to recover the long-pending property taxes to raise monies for civic governance.

Alternatively Kejriwal could sit with city's mayor, call a press conference and blame the centre for lack of funds in the municipal body.

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