

India Elects



simplifying sustainable success....

As we enter into seventh & last phase of a really long, & boring, election, here are my ten take aways:

By choice, I am refraining from using the word “prediction” because

- a) It is based on MY interactions with thousands of ordinary citizens across twenty odd states in last three months,
- b) I have no privilege access to any trend / exit poll / research output; and
- c) perhaps most appropriately because it's foolish, utterly stupid and non-sensical (pardon my language influenced by my recent interactions – refer take away #1) to predict something where outcome doesn't matter (take away #2).

For whatever it's worth, here's a humble attempt to provoke your weekend thoughts:

1. This is the first election (& I have seen quite a few) where every time I thought it cannot go below this, the candidates, & their supports, have shockingly, unashamedly and unsurprisingly surprized me and proven me repeatedly & consistently wrong. This is irrespective of the party, candidate, geography, philosophy, age & their very raison d'etre. Now that I am proven novice, no harm in admitting that my expectations from the persons in, or aspiring to be in, responsible public positions were little too high. While I was dejected, my overseas friends were (at least some), appalled by the slogans, nomenclature, language and methods deployed in this age and in the nation that aspires to have it's place in the comity of nations – civilized, inclusive and empowered – materialistically as well as intellectually.

We, as a society, have disappointed ourselves and everybody else whoever cared for or expected from us.

2. This is the only election I have come across where it actually does not matter whosoever wins, the loser is Indian (ordinary) Public. Our “Leaders” have (*qualifier: at least I am not aware*) no vision, roadmap, will or even faintest of idea where they want to see India in 2024 – the time when the next elections would be due – as per current constitution (*pun intended*). Both the “major” claimants are blaming what has not been done rather that

what has been achieved in the past and are expecting to get a magic wand on May 23rd to change the trajectory & orbit of the nation. ***Don't know whether to write Alas or Amen?***

Irrespective of whether it is left, right, centre, liberal, secular or a combination thereof, we would have achieved mahamilawat with mahagirawat – bankruptcy of ideas, ideology, social & moral values and ethics.

3. Incumbent Prime Minister is in by far pole position to retain the position not only because of his strengths (which are a plenty) but also because of the weaknesses of those who claim to challenge him. I clearly visualise him at Lok Kalyan Marg for next 5, if not 10 years at least (the caveat is only because of the **retirement policy** introduced by him of which I am a great fan).
4. It is unlikely that BJP would get a majority of its own, even NDA *may* have to struggle on the numbers and *may* have to resort to some post poll alliance(s), that should not be difficult, and may be **desirable for the checks & balances** are key to the success of any democracy.
5. Third Front does not have a glorious past, does not exist in present and I see no future for it either. I, almost clearly, see BJD, TRS, YSRC et. all inclining towards NDA and TMC(?), SP, BSP, AAP (for whatever reason – they still exist) towards UPA (or by its new, yet to be coined, name).
6. The outcome in UP & Bengal would not determine who forms but the comforts & challenges of the next government. Not sure about Bengal (the people there are obsessively intellectual making predictions extremely difficult), BJP is sure to face challenges in UP, both now and in 2022 – for the lightning rarely strikes twice at the same place.
7. INC would gain (there was little left to lose anyway) significantly but not as much as they would have liked / projected / predicted. BJP's loss would not be entirely their gain. Similarly BSP – SP combine would fall short of their expectations. Though not to the extent it favoured BJP in 2014, Hindi Heartland would be a great saviour for INC on May 23rd
8. Contrary to popular belief (*and even at the risk of earning eggs on my face*), I believe regional parties would be further marginalized in their influence on national politics while retaining control in their respective states. This would be as much true in Tamil Nadu, as in Andhra, Telangana, Bengal, North East, and – dare I say – UP.
9. Economic sentiments would be more governed by what happens between US & China, US & Iran, Brexit etc than who forms the next government. Since I expect the current regime to continue, I see the continuity of the policy framework, may be, *and sadly*, with little more complacency, and, arrogance.
10. Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, nothing is going to fundamentally change in the lives of ordinary citizens. **Miseries for Many & Luxuries for Limited** have been and shall continue to reign. I do not expect any major shift either in the job market (if at all it would *get worse, faster*) or infrastructural investments (uncertainty would be more certain) or foreign policy (I am afraid India have stopped mattering in geo-politics).

Be it as it is, if you are yet to, have a brush with democracy on 19th, don't plan anything for 23rd, it would be another hot summer day in north, and get ready to enjoy the forthcoming world cup.

Let me know what you think!