

The Surprising Defeat of BJP in Faizabad Lok Sabha Constituency in General Election 2024

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ABSTRACT

The results of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections were surprising for everyone. Where BJP was dreaming of crossing 400 seats, it was barely able to win 240 seats. The most surprising result was that of Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency, where BJP lost the election. After the inauguration of the much-awaited Ram Mandir and the beautification of Ayodhya by spending thousands of crores of rupees, everyone was convinced that no matter what happened, the BJP could not lose Ayodhya, But the result was unfavorable. This research paper aims to discern the reasons for the defeat of the BJP in the Faizabad Lok Sabha Constituency in 2024 election.

KEYWORDS: *Religious Beliefs, Dispute, Compensation, Caste Equation, Hindutva.*

India is a country of many religious beliefs. People of different religions have been living together in harmony for centuries. Despite this, there are some issues on which there are constant disputes. One such issue was regarding Ram Janmabhoomi and Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. This dispute is believed to have started about 500 years ago. But for the first time, this matter reached the court in the year 1885. This controversy took a new turn when on 23 December 1949, the idol of Ramlala was found inside the mosque. Regarding this idol, while the Hindu side claimed that the idol had appeared, the Muslim side said that this idol had been placed inside the mosque fraudulently. However, in such an environment, the then government sealed the entire disputed area and prohibited anyone from entering it. Both parties filed several petitions in the courts regarding this matter.

The Ayodhya dispute took another dangerous turn when the Babri Mosque was demolished on 6 of December 1992. This incident not only led to communal riots in India but also in our neighboring countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh. Many temples of historical importance were demolished in Bangladesh. Amidst all this, the BJP on one hand strengthened its claim of being an all-India Hindu party and on the other hand also became a political untouchable for some time. This was the time when the BJP led governments in many states were dismissed by the Congress government at the Centre and to ensure accountability for this demolition, the Centre constituted the *Liberhan Committee*.

As time passed, the hearings on the Ayodhya dispute started gaining momentum and soon the matter reached the Supreme Court. On 9th November 2019, the Honourable Supreme Court gave its verdict in favour of Ram Lalla and also ordered the Uttar Pradesh government to provide 5 acres of land to the Sunni Waqf Board for the mosque in the Ayodhya district itself. As soon as

the decision came, the construction work of the temple at Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya started rapidly keeping the temple at the Centre, a lot of construction work was started by the Uttar Pradesh government in the surrounding areas as well. Under this, many big construction works like the airport, Chaudah Kosi Parikrama Marg, Rampath Marg, Bhakti Path Marg, Ram Janmabhoomi Path, and Panchkosi Parikrama Marg were done. In connection with these construction works, hundreds of acres of land, thousands of houses and shops were acquired by the government and compensation was also paid for them. According to the Ayodhya administration-

- 823.21 acres of land was taken for the airport for which compensation of Rs 952.39 crore was given.
- 1357 shops and houses were affected by the Chaudah Kosi Parikrama Marg. In this regard, the government paid Rs 119.20 crore as compensation.
- During the construction of Rampath, a total of 2338 shops and houses were affected for which compensation of Rs 114.69 crore was given by the government.
- 397 houses and shops were affected during the construction of Bhakti Path. In this regard, the government gave Rs 23.66 crore as compensation.
- A total of 14 shops and houses were affected by the Ram Janmabhoomi Path. Rs 14.12 crore compensation was given for this.
- 510 shops and houses were affected for the Panchkosi Parikrama Marg for which compensation of Rs 29 crore was given.
- A total of 401 shops were completely removed. Out of these, 339 people were allotted new shops.
- For the development of the entire Ram Janmabhoomi area, houses of 1845 people were affected, for which the government gave compensation of more than Rs 300 crore. Of these, 79 families were allotted houses at another place.
- People whose businesses were affected for some time were given separate compensation ranging from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 10 lakh rupees.

The above figures reflect the administrative side. But if we look at these figures closely, we also see their humanitarian side, which forces us to think that whenever we talk about these figures, we must also feel the miseries and pains of those people, hidden in these figures, whose houses, land, shops collapsed in front of the grandeur of Ram Mandir.

On closer look, it is seen that a total of 4616 shopkeepers were affected in Ayodhya. According to the administration, 4215 of these shops were partially affected. But no scale was fixed for this partial approach. In such a situation, if 50% or 70% of someone's shop has been lost, or only 20 or 30 percent of someone's shop has been lost, but in the eyes of the administration, all these shops were only partially affected. For Rampath alone, more than 2200 shops, more than 800 houses, 30 temples, 9 mosques, 6 tombs were demolished. If someone's shop was demolished up to 10 feet, he got compensation of 1 to 1.5 lakhs rupees only. Apart from this, the newly constructed shops being allotted by the administration in the Tedi Bazaar area of Ayodhya Nagar are worth more than 15 lakhs, due to which the common shopkeepers cannot even think about these shops. People are not happy with the compensation distributed to the affected people during the development of the Ram Janmabhoomi area. According to them, the amount of compensation is very less.

Apart from this, the government has not increased the circle rate of the lands of Ayodhya district for the last several years, due to which there is resentment among the farmers of the district whose lands were taken away for development work or were bought at cheap prices by big players of other regions.

On 22nd of January 2024, Ram mandir was inaugurated with great fanfare by the BJP government at the Centre and the state. The 500-years wait of Hindus was completed on 22 January. BJP demonstrated that it had fulfilled its promise of building the Ram Mandir. It seemed that the wave of Hindutva had come in the country once again. Then suddenly what happened, was that in the Lok Sabha 2024 general elections which was held a few months later, the BJP, which had given the slogan of crossing 400 (abki baar 400 paar), could not even touch its old figure of 303 but limited down to only 240 seats. BJP got an even bigger shock when it could not even save the seat of Ayodhya (Faizabad). Before understanding this, we have to know that the Ayodhya which the media and the opposition have been saying that the BJP lost, for the past several days, is not Ayodhya but the Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency, under which Ayodhya city comes. Ayodhya is just an assembly constituency. In the year 2018, the name of Faizabad district was changed to Ayodhya by the Yogi government. But, even today it is known as Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency.

A total of 5 assembly constituencies come under the Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency, Dariyabad, Rudauli, Bikapur, Milkipur, and Ayodhya. If seen according to the assembly constituency, BJP was the party that got the most votes in the Ayodhya assembly constituency in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, while it lagged behind in the remaining four assemblies. Thus, looking at the voting pattern, it can be said that during the construction of the Ram temple in the Ayodhya assembly constituency, even though the people who lost their farms, houses, shops and they did not even get the desired compensation in exchange for their property, still the people of this area voted in favour of BJP.

There were many reasons behind BJP's defeat in the Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency. Two of the main reasons are as follows -

The first reason was anti-incumbency against the then BJP MP Lallu Singh from Faizabad parliamentary constituency. Lallu Singh has been a continuous MP since 2014. There are many parliamentary constituencies from where the same person reaches the Parliament several times. In such a situation, it would not be right to say that there was a kind of political fatigue against Lallu Singh among the people of Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency. Lallu Singh himself was responsible for the atmosphere that was created against him among the public. His inefficient behaviour towards the people, inaction, not listening to the regular problems of the common people, and overconfidence that he will win the election this time too only in the name of Ram Mandir and Prime Minister Modi, became the main grounds for his defeat. Apart from this, there was a lack of coordination between Lallu Singh and BJP workers which also became the major reason for the defeat of the BJP in Faizabad.

During this election, Lallu Singh was the first to give an irresponsible statement like changing the Constitution. The opposition took full advantage of this and succeeded in conveying to the common people that if the BJP wins this election, it will change the constitution and abolish reservations. The BJP suffered losses not only in the Faizabad Lok Sabha seat but in the entire country because of this statement.

The second major reason behind the defeat of the BJP in the Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency was the impenetrable caste equations set by the Samajwadi Party. There are a total of 18 lakh voters in Faizabad, of which about 21% are Dalits, 18% Muslims and 12% Yadavs. The number of Pasi community among Dalits is more than 3 lakh. In such a situation, fielding a Dalit candidate on the seat of Faizabad, which is a general category seat, proved to be a masterstroke for the Samajwadi Party. SP made its face Awadhesh Prasad, a 9 time MLA, who has also been a minister for 6 times, and comes from the Pasi community. Awadhesh Prasad is an experienced and popular politician. During the 2022 assembly elections, the BJP managed to win four out of the five assembly constituencies falling under the Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency.

But, could not win the Milkipur assembly. Awadhesh Prasad was elected as MLA from this assembly constituency. While assessing the defeat of BJP in this Lok Sabha constituency, we should also keep in mind that the BJP has lost this seat many times before. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, while BJP won the elections on other seats by a huge margin of 2 to 4 lakh, the margin in Faizabad Lok Sabha was approximately 65 thousand at that time. Apart from this, just 6 days before the election, Sachchidanand Pandey left BJP and joined Bahujan samaj Party (BSP). BSP made him its face for Faizabad. In this election, he got only 46,402 votes. At the same time, Awadhesh Prasad got a total of 5,54,289 votes while Lallu Singh got 4,99,722 votes. NOTA got a total of 7,536 votes in this Lok Sabha constituency.

Looking at these figures, it is clear that the margin of victory of Awadhesh Prasad is almost the same as the votes received by Sachchidanand Pandey and NOTA. In such a situation, it would not be wrong to say that the BJP's Ram Mandir issue got left behind in front of the caste equation of Samajwadi Party and because of this, the Hindu vote got divided.

Prashant Kishor had said in January itself that BJP will not get any beneficial advantage in the name of Ram Mandir. In an interview after the result of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, when he was asked whether BJP's Hindutva is over, he replied that Hindutva is the core of BJP. It is like coffee. In this election, only the froth on top of it has reduced a little.

Looking at the result of the Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency, it became clear that in the Ayodhya assembly constituency where people's houses and shops were demolished, due to which their businesses were affected, lands were taken and proper compensation was not given, despite the resentment against the BJP, public opinion was in favour of the BJP whereas, in the other four assembly constituencies, public opinion was against the BJP.

CONCLUSION

In such a situation, it is not correct to say that the main reason for BJP's defeat in the Faizabad Lok Sabha seat, by the opposition and other media channels, is the displeasure of the people affected during the construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

If BJP had been able to understand the ground reality in time and had made favourable changes like making someone more competent its candidate instead of Lallu Singh and also if it had stopped Sachchidanand Pandey from changing party amid election campaigns, then it would not have to face defeat in Faizabad.

Learning from its mistakes in this election, the Uttar Pradesh government has taken many steps regarding Ayodhya which will provide relief to the common people there. In this sequence, appropriate changes have been made in the traffic rules while eliminating the VIP culture so that the common people of Ayodhya do not face difficulties in their daily work and in commuting. Apart from this, the government has also stopped its Aerocity project for the time being. Along with this, the prices of the shops that were to be allotted have also been reduced by 20 to 30 percent and a provision has also been made to pay these prices in easy installments for 20 years. The government has also decided that now no house, shop or land will be acquired.

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