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Research Paper - Geography

Spatial Temporal Analysis of Delhi Assembly Elections 1952-2020

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A B S T R A C T   *As we know election in India is a gigantic task. Electoral system is a fundamental cornerstone of successful democracy. In India election is a complex exercise, which involves various schedules, rules and machinery. The present study concerns itself with the electoral geography of Delhi and various elections held so far in Delhi. In this context this study explains the historical evolution of Delhi Assembly Election. The main objective of this study is to emphasize about the present form and composition of Legislative assembly of Delhi. This study also represents the performance of various political parties in Delhi's electoral history so far. It presents an empirical analysis and deep insight into the polls. This study is mainly based on secondary data that have been collected by different sources. The secondary data is mainly obtained from the chief electoral officer, Delhi and election commission of India. Areal structural and spatial process approaches were used to interpret the voting data. Delhi has a long history of assembly election and the first election was held in 1952. In the first assembly election there were only 744668 electorates in Delhi, which increased to 14797990 by 2020 (election Commission of India). Voter turnout is important for the legitimacy of democratic elections, and Delhi's assembly elections are known for their high turnout. Viewed in this light, the present study appears to be particularly relevant and useful to a large variety of social scientists, involved in electoral studies and people at large.*

Keywords: Democracy, Election, Legislative Assembly, Voter turnout, Electorates

Introduction

After independence, India adopted a democratic system of governance. Democracy runs like a golden thread in the social, economic and political fabric woven by the Constitution given by 'We, the People of India' unto ourselves . "Elections have been analyzed on a more comprehensive and widespread scale than almost any other aspect of Indian polities" (Palmer,1976). India has a constitutional democracy where elections have been held at regular interval. The constitution of India has made provisions for the elections to parliament and legislature of every state. It is always useful to look at the electoral experiences of a country

or any state in the context of the study of the elections concerned and interpret it in that line. It therefore follows that the study of legislative assembly election in Delhi, which is the subject of the present work, needs to be interpreted in the light of the electoral system of India.

The present study provides a descriptive examination of electoral system, particularly in Delhi. This study deals with the historical background of Delhi assembly elections. Its main objective is to reveal the history of its origin while highlighting the relevant features of its development. Beside that the spatial and temporal changes that have taken place in the voter turnout and performance of various political parties for all the assembly elections held in Delhi from 1952 to 2020 have been importantly mentioned in this study along with reasons. To understand the electoral geography of Delhi, this study has been developed mainly on the basis of secondary sources of data.

Electoral geography is an important subfield of political geography. Electoral geography is the analysis of the methods and results of elections in the context of geographic space and using geographical techniques (Agnew, John.1996) . The electoral geography of Delhi has an ancient history of its own, the first legislative assembly election in Delhi was held in 1952. The electoral constituencies of Delhi have also undergone changes over the years. During the first Assembly Election Delhi hadonly 48 constituencies and after this their number increased to 70 from 1993 to 2020. The present delimitation of parliamentary constituencies has been done on the basis of 2001 census figures under the provisions of Delimitation Act, 2002. The assembly election in Delhi, conducted in 2008, was the first to use the new boundaries as drawn by the 2002 delimitation commission.After this Delhi has also witnessed 3 legislative assembly elections in the year 2013, 2015 and in 2020, in which the number of constituencies remained the same .

Study Area

Delhi was taken as a case study for the historical analysis of assembly elections and their composition. Delhi the capital of India is a metropolitan area. Delhi is located in northern India,DMS latitude and longitude coordinatesfor Delhi are:28°39'13.72"N & 77°13'44.29"E. Delhi covers an area of 1,484 km2 (573 sq mi). The city is bordered on its northern, western, and southern sides by the state of Haryana and to the east by the state of Uttar Pradesh. Two prominent and distinguished features of the geography of Delhi are the Yamuna flood plains and the Delhi ridge .

Delhi has a long history of assembly elections. The legislative assembly of Delhi is a unicameral law-making body.At present there are 70 constituencies in it and all these came into existence after the delimitation of constituencies in 2008. The study area is presented in map 1.1 with 70 assembly constituencies and 11 election districts of Delhi.

Map.1.1   Study Area
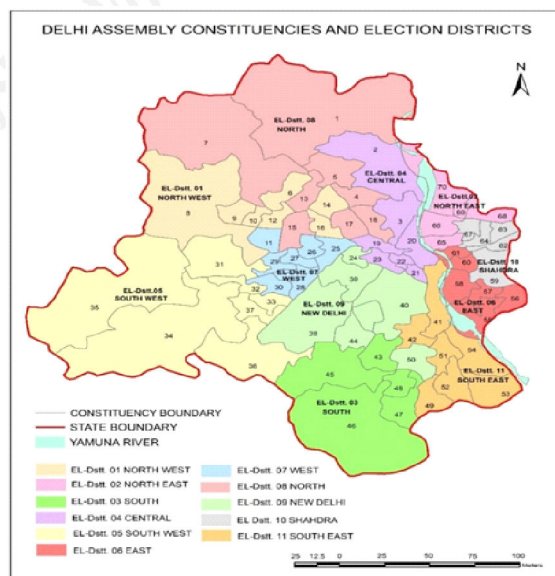
Source: Election Commission of India.

Objectives

1.   To understand the historical evolution of legislative assembly of Delhi.

2. To understand the history of voter turnout (1952-2020).

3. To understand the performance of various political parties in Delhi's electoral history (1952-2020).

Methodology

Secondary sources have been used to carry out the present study. Secondary data is taken from: Chief Electoral Officer Delhi, the Election Commission of India and State Elections in India: Data hand book on Vidhan Sabha Elections 1952-85. Beside that Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)'s   Survey was also used to understand the results of 2020 Delhi assembly election. Several indicators have been taken for analysis of voting data. To represent the electoral participation in various election years from 1952 to 2020 the number of electorates, number of votes polled and percentage of valid votes polled have been taken. Areal structural and spatial process approaches were used to explain the voting data.

History of evolution of legislative Assembly of Delhi

In 1912 Delhi became the capital of India and the first sitting of the Legislative Council was held at the Chamber of Old Secretariat on 27th January, 1913.   Delhi was chosen as the Capital because of its old traditions of Hindu-Muslim unity, strategic and geographical location and as a seat of culture. There were two stages of the evolution of Central Legislature in Delhi. The first one between 1912 to 1920 and second from 1920 onwards. In the first stage (from 1912 to 1920) legislature wascalled the Imperial Legislative Council and it passed very important legislations, covering all aspects regarding budget, legislation, tariff, reforms and working of railways. In the second stage, the Central Legislature consisted of two Houses - The Legislative Assembly and the Council of State. The Central Legislature passed some very important

legislation, matters of constitutional reforms were decided and resolutions condemning the repressive laws were adopted. The budgets made by Indian Leaders who were Members of the Assembly .In the second period of evolution of development of the Legislative Assembly, (1920 onwards) the political and administrative system of Delhi has undergone many changes after independence. The detailed description of which is given below:

i.The political and administrative set up of Delhi

The political and administrative set up of Delhi has undergone several changes after independence. Prior to independence, Delhi had several Municipalities and its administration was overseen by the Chief Commissioner. Delhi State Legislative Assembly came into existence on 17th March, 1952 under the Government of Part- C States Act, 1951. While inaugurating the popular set up at Old Secretariat, the then home minister Sh. K.N. Katju had hailed the event as "a crowning glory of the annals of historical Capital Delhi. "

The 1952 Assembly consisted of 48 members and Choudhary Brahm Prakash Yadav was the first Chief Minister of Delhi. Pursuant to the recommendations of the State reorganization Commission (1955), Delhi ceased to be a Part-C State with effect from 1st November, 1956 and Delhi became a Union Territory. As per another recommendation of the Commission, the Delhi Municipal Corporation of Delhi Act, 1957 was enacted to constitute a Municipal Corporation for Delhi.After that on the basis of recommendations of Administrative Reforms Commission, the Delhi Administration Act, 1966 was enacted.

This Act provided a deliberative body called the Metropolitan Council , which has recommendatory powers. The establishment of the Metropolitan Council set-up suffered from many inherent shortcomings. There was, therefore, a constant demand for a full-fledged State Assembly with a Council of Ministers to aid and advice the Lt. Governor. Accordingly, on 24th

December, 1987, The Government of India appointed Sarkaria Committee (later on called Balakrishnan Committee) on various issues related to the administration of Union Territory of Delhi and to recommend measures to streamline the administrative set up.As per the recommendations of the Balakrishnan Committee, the Parliament passed the Constitution (69th Amendment) Act, 1991, which inserted new Articles 239AA and 239AB in the Constitution, which inter alia, provide for a Legislative Assembly for Delhi.

Another comprehensive law passed by Parliament called "the government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991", complements the Constitutional provisions relating to the Legislative Assembly and the Council of Ministers and matters relating thereto. The legislative assembly of Delhi has the power to make laws with respect to all the matters in the State List or in the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India except Entries1 (Public Order), 2 (Police), and 18 (Land) and entries 64,65 and 66 relatable to the said entries of the State List .

ii.Present structure of Delhi Legislature

Article 239AA of the Constitution of India provided that there shall be a Legislative Assembly for the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The Assembly consists of 70 Members - all chosen by direct election from as many constituencies. For the purpose of elections, the states are divided in to geographically compact areas known as constituencies.

There are two types of constituencies: parliamentary constituencies and state legislative assembly. Each parliamentary constituency consists of an integral number of assembly constituencies. This number varies from state to state. At present Delhi has a Legislative Assembly of 70 seats out of which 12 seats are reserved for SC category and 58 seats for General Category. In the 1952 Assembly Election, Delhi had 48 con-

stituencies, out of which 6 seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes and 42 seats were reserved for the General category. After that in 1972 Delhi had 56 constituencies out of which 7 seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes category and 49 seats for General category. The distribution of number of constituencies are described in table 1.1. This distribution or division of constituencies in any state would be as per the Delimitation Commission Act.Under Article 82, the Parliament makes a Delimitation Act after every Census.

The Delimitation Commission determines the number and boundaries of constituencies in such a way that the population of all seats, so far as practicable, is the same. The allocation of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes becomes possible only where their population is relatively large. The last delimitation exercise - started in July 2002 and completed on May 31, 2008 - was based on the 2001 Census . From 1993 to 2003, there were total 70 assembly constituencies in Delhi out of which 57 belonged to the general constituencies and 13 from scheduled cast constituencies. The 2008 Delhi legislative assembly election was the first election to be held after the last delimitation commission Act 2002. In all the assembly elections held so far in Delhi from 2008 to 2020, the total constituencies remained same 70, but there was a change in their distribution (diagram1.1).   **Table 1.1**

Number of constituencies	Seats		
Year of Election	General	SC	Total
1952	42	6	48
1972	49	7	56
1977	47	9	56
1983	47	9	56
1993	57	13	70
1998	57	13	70
2003	57	13	70
2008	58	12	70
2013	58	12	70
2015	58	12	70
2020	58	12	70
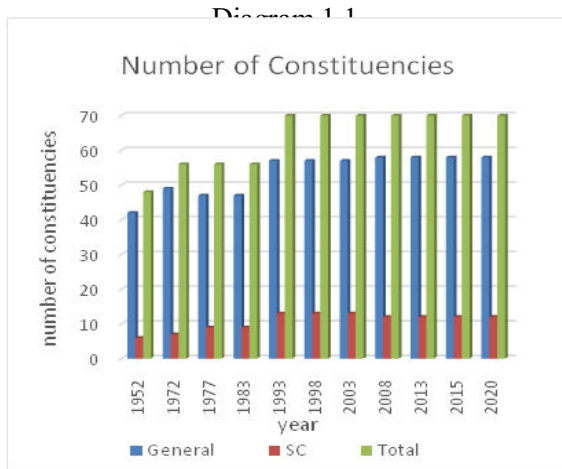
Diagram 1.1

Source: (Table & Diagram) Chief electoral officer Delhi

## History of voter's participation -1952 to 2020

The first general election in India on the basis of adult suffrage was held in 1952. There was simultaneous election both for the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. Delhi has its own interesting electoral history. Here in this study the participation of people in various elections held in Delhi has been mentioned. Especially in all the elections held from 1952 to 2020, the fluctuations in voter turnout have been shown in this study **(see table 1.2& graph 1.1).**

It is clear from the graph 1.1 that the numbers of electors involved have increased rapidly, there has been also a huge increase in the percentage of valid votes polled. If we compare the data for all the election years between 1952 to 2020, it was observed that the highest 68.9 percent valid votes were cast in the year 1972. Table 1.2 indicates that historically elections in Delhi have had an average voter turnout of about above 55 percent but there have been massive differences in turnout across different elections. It also represents that Delhi has experienced unprecedented voter turnout of more than 60 percent in 1993, 2013, 2015 and in 2020 respectively. If we look at the history of voter turnout, 1972 is the remark-

able election year when highest voter turnout was recorded.This was due to a renewed sense of national pride and self-confidence among voters due to the dramatic events of 1971, particularly the massive victory of prime minister Indira Gandhi's Congress party in the parliamentary election and Indo- Pakistani war that gave independence to Bangladesh. Which assured India of internal stability and excellence in South Asia . The 1993 assembly election was the first one that took place after the National Capital Territory Act was passed in 1991.In this election year also, people voted in large number. Talking about the last few election years, there is a huge increase in voter turnout in Delhi. In 2013 Delhi recorded high voter turnout above 65 percent, with this Aam Aadmi

Year of Election	Electorate	Vote polled numbers	Valid votes polled numbers	Votes polled %
1952	744668	521766	521766	58.5
1972	2068437	1424384	1403764	68.9
1977	2740443	1530495	1490959	55.9
1983	3349987	1863526	1802118	55.6
1993	5850545	3612713	3551248	61.75
1998	8364773	4124986	4087426	48.99
2003	8448324	4513135	4512872	53.42
2008	10726573	6176075	6177344	57.58
2013	11936360	7833919	7823820	65.63
2015	13313295	8982228	8942372	67.47
2020	14797990	9295793	9242689	62.55

Performance of Political Parties: 1952 to 2020

Delhi: Changes in number of electors and valid votes polled
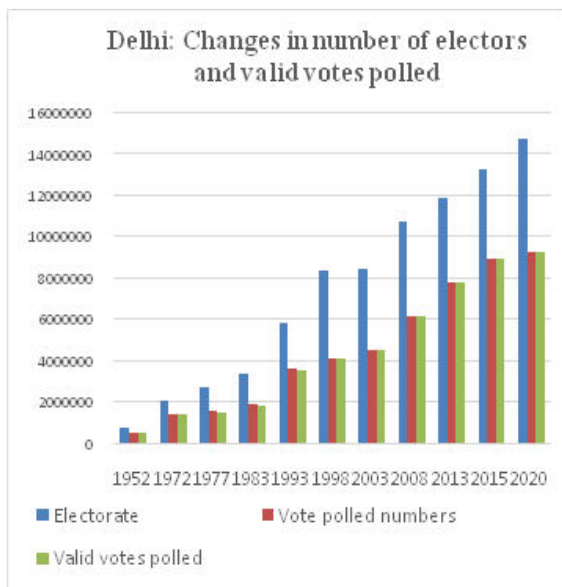
Source: (Table 1.1&Graph1.1) State elections in India, Data Handbook on Vidhan Sabha Elections, 1952-85(Vol.1), Sage publication& Election Commission of India.

Party emerged as a new political party in Delhi. The Congress party, which was running the government in Delhi for a long time, had to face a heavy defeat. A large number of people voted for the change in government and provided an opportunity to a newly emerging party. Simultaneously, inflation, corruption and women security were also the main issues, due to which the two old National parties Indian National Congress and Bhartiya Janta Party had to face defeat.

Table 1.3 represents the vote share of different political parties since 1952 to 1983.In all of them Indian National Congress emerged as a big ruling party and none of the opposition parties presented an effective challenge to the Indian National Congress except for the 1977 election only. In 1952 there were 187 candidates in fray for 48 seatsout of which 6 constituencies was double member constituencies. In such constituencies each elector had two votes and the name of these constituencies are Reading Road, Sita Ram Bazar Turkman Gate, Pahari Dhiraj Basti Jullahan, Rehgar Pura, Dev Nagar, Narela and Mehrauli. In this election Indian National Congress secured highest 52.1 % votes and Bhartiya Jan Sangh emerged as a second largest party with 21.9% votes. Indian National Congress once again emerged as a major party in 1972. During the election campaign Congress used the slogan GaribiHatao (remove poverty) with the promise of a new hope and the victory of India during the 1971 war with Pakistan over the Bangladesh issue played an important role for the massive victory of Congress party in 1971 parliamentary election . The direct impact of which was also seen in the 1972 assembly election held in Delhi and congress won overwhelmingly. The third Assembly election for Delhi was held in 1977. It was a historic election as for the first time, the Indian National Congress won very few seats in Delhi Assembly election. It managed to get only 10 seats. The Janta Party (JNP) won the maximum number of seats in this election. The Janta Party was a political party that was formed as a group of Indian Political parties to protest the emergency imposed between 1975 to 1977. Which became one of the main reasons for the defeat of the Indian National Congress. In the fourth assembly election of Delhi held in 1983, the Indian National Congress made a resounding comeback.

Table 1.3: Delhi: Party-wise distribution of percent votes polled, candidates and seats won (1952-1983)

Election Year 1952

Political Parties	INC	CPI	SOC	KMPP	BJS	Other Parties	IND
Votes Polled (%)	52.1	0.5	2.4	2.6	21.9	4.7	15.9
Candidates	47	1	6	7	31	17	78
Seats Won	39	-	2	-	5	1	1

Election Year 1972

Political parties	INC	NCO	CPI	SOC	BJS	SWA	RPI	Other parties	IND
Votes Polled (%)	48.5	2.0	3.9	0.3	38.5	0.1	1.2	-	5.6
Candidates	52	19	4	11	56	6	17	1	104
Seats Won	44	2	3	-	5	-	-	-	2

Election Year 1977

Political parties	INC	NCO	CPI	CPM	JNP	State parties	Other parties	IND
Votes Polled (%)	36.1		3.2	0.2	52.6	0.2%	0.1	7.7
Candidates	52		4	1	56	1	6	128
Seats Won	10		0	0	46	-	-	

Election year 1983

Political parties	INC	NCO	CPI	CPM	BJP	JNP	LKD	IND
Votes Polled (%)	47.5	0.1	0.2	0.1	37.0	3.7	4.1	7.3
Candidates	56	5	2	1	50	37	6	243
Seats Won	34	-			19	1	2	-

Source: State elections in India, Data Handbook on Vidhan Sabha Elections, 1952-85(Vol.1), Sage publication.

SEE TABLE 1.4 ON NEX PAGE

It is clear from the above table 1.4 that barring the 1993 assembly election of Delhi, the Indian National Congress was in power for three consecutive terms from 1998 to 2008 and emerged as a major winning party (see map 1.2). During these years, Sheila Dikshit served as the chief Minister of Delhi. Many efforts were made by her for the transformation of Delhi and to make it world class city. For this she started many projects like iconic signature bridge over the Yamuna River, developed many infrastructures during the commonwealth games, public transport including Delhi Metro, flyovers, CNG based public transport, several elevated roads and underpasses and signal free ring road etc. These were some of the actions that played a major role in the success of the congress in three consecutive elections.

Massive victory of Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi Assembly elections

Aam Aadmi party contested election in Delhi for the first time in 2013 and secured 29.64 percent votes and won 28 seats and came out as a second largest party. Whereas the Indian National Congress had to face defeat badly from 2013 to 2020. On the other hand, Bhartiya Janata Party emergedas largest party in 2013. However, 2013assembly electiongave a hung mandate (see map 1.3). The Indian National Congress had to face a massive anti - incumbency wave. Poor

Table 1.4: Delhi: Party-wise distribution of percent votes polled, candidates and seats won(1993-2020)

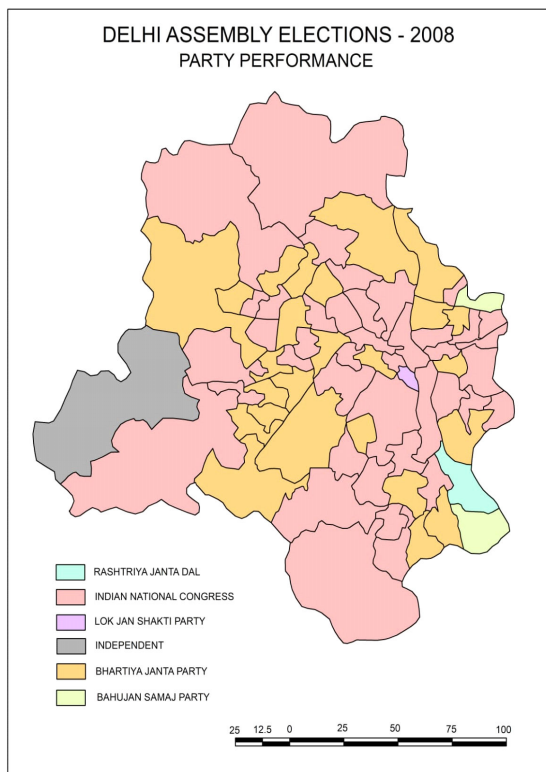| Election year	1993		1998		2003		2008		2013		2015		2020	
	Votes polled %	Seats Won	Votes polled %	Seats Won	Votes polled %	Seats Won	Votes polled %	Seats Won	Votes polled %	Seats Won	Votes polled %	Seats Won	Votes polled %	Seats Won
BJP	42.8	49	35.82	15	35.22	20	36.84	23	34.12	31	32.78	3	40.57	8
CPI	1.32	0	1.14	0	0.67	0	0.66	0	0.52	0	0.38	0	0.02	0
CPM	4.47	6	3.20	0	2.62	0	1.28	0	0.56	0	0.25	0		
INC	34.48	14	47.76	52	48.13	47	40.31	43	24.67	8	9.70	0	4.63	0
JD	12.65	4	2.62	1	-	-	5.93	0	-	-	-	-		
JP	0.69	0	0.24	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
BSP	2.42	0	3.63	0	8.96	0	14.05	2	5.44	0	1.31	0	0.74	0
SAP	-	-	3.89	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
NCP	-	-	-	-	4.94	1	-	-	0.84	0	0.12	0	0.28	0
IND	5.92	3	8.94	2	5.13	1	3.98	1	3.07	1	0.61	0	0.19	0
RJD	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.82	0	-	-	0.23	0	0.47	0
AAAP	-								29.64	28	54.59	67	53.57	62

Source: Election Commission of India New Delhi.

water supply and power outages, high electricity and water bills, weak infrastructure, corruption, crime against women, problem of law and order, unemployment, price rise are some major issues which played an important role in the defeat of congress. The Aam Admi Party formed its government in 2013 with the support of Indian National Congress but the tenure of this government lasted only for 49 days,as over the issue of Jan Lokpal billChief Minister Arvind Kejriwal resigned. Delhi elections once again showed that the state elections are decided on local issues and come with decisions that can be quite different from the general elections. The Bhartiya Janata Party, which won the General Election by a huge margin, could win only 8 seats in Delhi assembly election 2020. On the other hand, Aam Aadmi Party came out with a massive victory in 2015.This party won historic 67 seats (see map 1.4). In 2020, once again this party was successful in getting the support of the people.Through various programs and policies, this party won the trust of the people and won 62 seats (see map 1.5).A Lokniti-CSDS conducted survey before the election among 3,335 voters in 175 locations (polling stations) spread across 35 of the totals70 Assembly Constituencies of the capital. It was found that around 51% voters were fully

satisfied with the performance of the Aam Adam Party's Government in Delhi during last five years. Around 46.9% voters considered Aam Admi Party as their favorite political party in Delhi . The popularity of Kejriwal and the absence of a chief ministerial face for the Bhartiya Janta Party had a huge impact on the election results. Apart from that this survey also revealed that most of the voters made development and governance as their priority issues in Delhi assembly election as compared to issues like Citizenship Amendment Act etc.The development programs and policies made by Delhi government played an important role in achieving massivevictory.Many important factors played their part in the victory of Aam Aadmi Party such as- the party launched a positive campaign and highlighting its performance. Special attention was given to the development of certain sectors viz. the development works of govern-

ment schools; including parent teacher meeting, full school fee waiver for children of very poor families, promoting startups and de-stressing children through happiness and mindfulness classes. Not only this, education of patriotism was also included in the schools.Medical facilities were also improved; opening of polyclinics, providing free medicines in Mohalla clinics and free lab testing facilities, free treatment of road accident victims under the scheme 'Farishte Delhi Ke', free surgeries at empaneled hospitals.Apart from this laying a network of sewer lines and water pipelines in unauthorized colonies and providing 20 kilolitersof free water to the people every month, free electricity for up to 200 units consumed and subsidies for up to 400 units, free Wi-Fi, free pilgrimage for senior citizens and waiver of development charges for new water and sewer connections, ensuring free public transport for women (free rides in DTC buses), facility of CCTV etc.
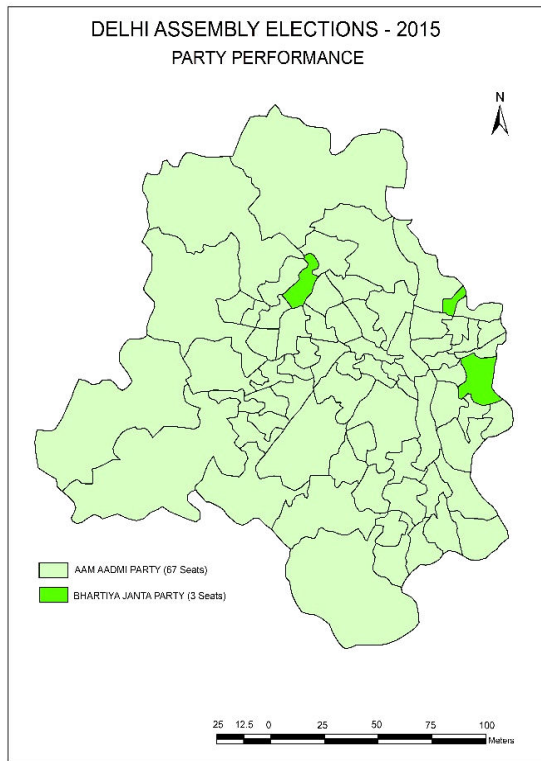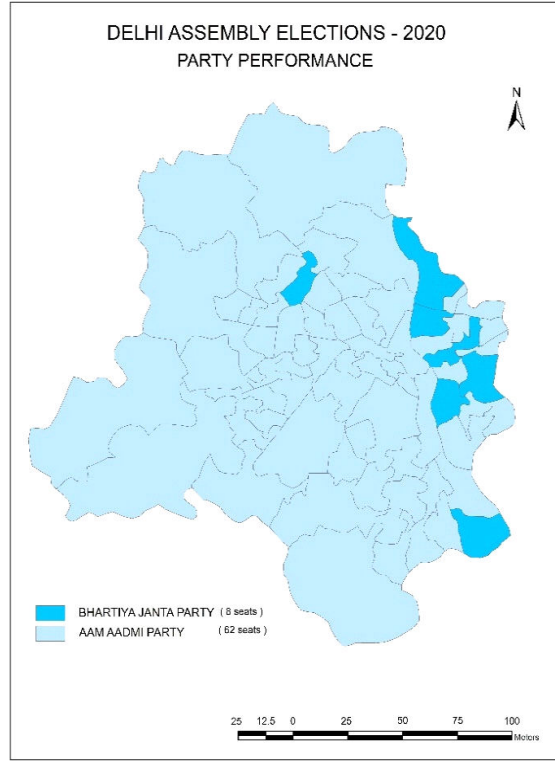

Map 1.2

Map 1.3

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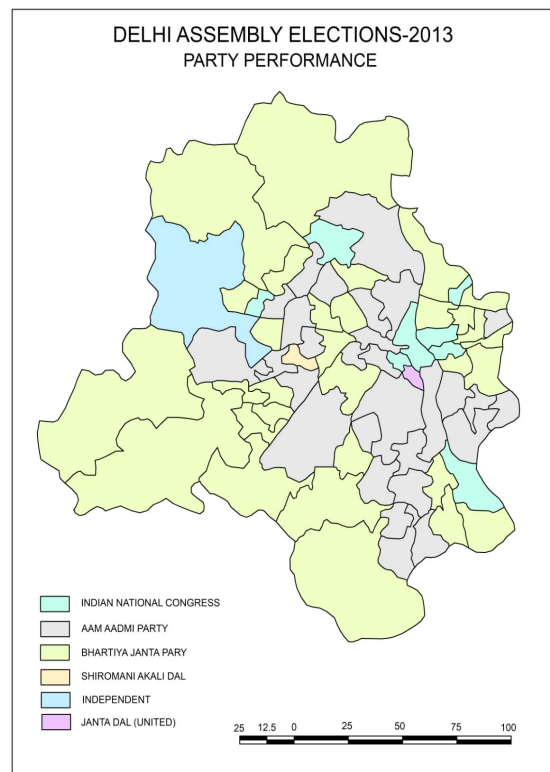
Map 1.4   Map 1.5

Source: Election Commission of India.

Conclusion

It is clear from the above description that Delhi has a long history of legislative assembly elections. Delhi and its assembly elections have evolved over time. In which voter turnout and party performance also have its own history. This study describes the present form and features of the history of legislative assembly and its structure. Simultaneously, this study presents the spatial and temporal analysis of all the assembly elections held in Delhi from 1952 to 2020. Looking at the electoral geography of Delhi, the change in the number and spatial nature of its electoral areas was possible due to the process of demarcation. Delhi has faced many political and developmental changes that took place from time to time in various election years. Through this study, an attempt has also been made to show how the number of voters has changed and increased rapidly from 1952 to 2020. In the first assembly election in Delhi, in 1952, the number of electorates was just 744668, which increased to 14797990 by 2020. Huge changes have also been recorded in valid votes percentage from 1952 to 2020. Furthermore, the study sheds light on the differences in the role and performance of political parties in different election years, including the reasons. Barring the 1977 and 1993 elections, the Indian National Congress won most of the assembly elections from 1952 to 2008. In 1993 Bhartiya Janta Party came out in power. After that by winning three consecutive elections from 1998 to 2008, the Indian National Congress was successful in forming its government in Delhi till 2013. Aam Aadmi Party, a new party, entered in

Delhi assembly election for the first time in 2013 and this party brought a dramatic change in the electoral history of Delhi. New comer Aam Aadmi Party, born out of Anna Hazare's anti-corruption agitation, created history in 2013 by winning 28 seats in Delhi assembly election, Bhartiya Janta Party emerged as the single largest party by winning 31 seats and congress suffered a massive defeat with only 8 seats, resulting in a hung assembly. The Aam Aadmi Party formed the government in 2013 with the support of the Indian National Congress, but resigned after 49 days over the issue of Jan Lokpal bill, which led to the 2015 assembly election in Delhi. After this, the Aam Aadmi Party won a tremendous victory in the 2015 and 2020 Delhi assembly elections and changed the electoral history of Delhi. Thus, this study reflects the history of electoral geography that developed in Delhi from 1952 to 2020.

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Foot Note

[1]https://eci.gov.in/about/about-eci/the-functions-electoral-system-of-india

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[3]https://eci.gov.in/faqs/elections/delimitation-of-constituencies/

[4]http://web.delhi.gov.in/DoIT/DOIT_DM/state%20profile.pdf

[5]http://delhiassembly.nic.in/history_assembly.pdf

[6]http://delhiassembly.nic.in/DYP/Docs/AboutDelhiAssembly.pdf

[7]*Delhi Administration Act, 1966 - An Act to provide for the administration of the Union Territory of Delhi and for matters connected therewith. (Act providing for a deliberative body called the Metropolitan Council, which has recommendatory powers.)*

[8]The Metropolitan Council was a unicameral democratic body consisting of members – 56 elected and 5 nominated by the President.

[9]http://delhiassembly.nic.in/DYP/Docs/AboutDelhiAssembly.pdf

[10]https://eci.gov.in/faqs/elections/delimitation-of-constituencies

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