



### In Conversation with the Experts.....

**Dr P. S. Jayaramu,**  
Former Dean of Arts and Professor (retd) of Political Science, Bangalore University and a well-known election analyst

**Q.** *What are the key issues before parties in the 2018 Karnataka Assembly elections?*

- Quietly frankly, and sadly, the Parties are making it more of a person based election, with the Chief Minister attacking Prime Minister Modi everywhere and Mr.Modi also resorting to attacking Mr.Siddaramaiah personally. Having said this, I feel the following are the issues which will engage the parties as days go by.

i) Growing collapse of law and order following the attack on the Lokayukta a few days ago, the killing of Gowri Lankesh some months ago, and the law and order problems in Dakshina Kannada region in recent times. ii) The Mahadayi water dispute and the issue of Cauvery water sharing, following the Supreme Court's recent judgement. iii) Corruption is also an issue with the major parties accusing each other of it, but it may not be a decisive issue at the voter level.iv)Farmers suicide and the issue of loan waivers, with the parties accusing the State and the Centre to carry out loan waivers. v) Questions of local/regional surrounding the Kannada flag and separate religion status to Lingayats being taken up by the ruling party with but with no united position within the party and the government.vi) Issues relating to the governance of Bangalore like traffic, garbage, water and electricity management, which will engage the attention of Bangalore voters. vii) The BJP may like to raise national issues too like the alleged involvement of the Congress party in the ongoing bank scams to its advantage but with what success being a different matter.

Simply put, the issues for the 2018 Elections are likely to be region-specific and not totally state-specific.

**Q.** *What will be the impact of national trends on Karnataka?*

-It appears that the national trends may not be critical factors in the 2018elections.Karnataka voters have voted different parties to power at the state and national level in the past. The BJP will in all probability like to ride on Modi's success in Gujarat and the Northeast recently.

**Q.** *How would you assess the impact of the strategies of the BJP and the Congress?*

-The two major parties have their own strategies, with Amit Shah as the master strategist for the BJP and Siddaramaiah for the Congress. For the BJP, Modi is the main campaigner and for the Congress it is and will be Siddaramaiah, with the high command playing a supplementary role. For the JD(S) Deve Gowda and Kumara Swamy are the strategists, with Deve Gowda being the main vote getter as he has a better pan Karnataka image. For the Parties however, perception management is going to be more important than performance advocacy.

**Q.** *How important do you think would be the JD(S) and the impact of its alliance with the BSP?*

- The JD(S) has been a third player and a king maker in 2004 and may retain that role this time too, if the voters verdict will be for a hung assembly. As for the alliance with BSP, the Party may marginally succeed in dividing the Congress votes which appears to be its objective as well. . In my view , it is only a pre- poll alliance for the party and the JD(S) will retain the option of sharing power with the other contenders in the event of necessity

**Dr Harish Ramaswamy,**  
Professor of Political Science, Karnatak University, Dharwad and an expert on Karnataka politics

**Q.** *What are the key issues before parties in the 2018 Karnataka Assembly elections?*

-Infrastructural Development in Bangalore and other places  
-Farmers' distress and their value for the produce-pricing issues  
- Veerashaiva- Lingayat issue especially in Northern Karnataka  
- Regional disparity issues  
- Replacement of Lokayukta  
- Law and Order

**Q.** *What will be the impact of national trends on Karnataka?*

- Karnataka has been a state that thinks differently from the rest. However, given the national trends in favour of the BJP there is a likelihood of the voters getting influenced towards the election date and changing their preferences. The margin may be debatable but the effect is likely.

**Q.** *How would you assess the impact of the strategies of the BJP and the Congress?*

-This time around generally BJP's strategy seems to be less impactful and the discourses downgraded and seem very personal in their attacks coloured by its beliefs. Congress seems to be showcasing its achievements and is balanced in its approach to appeal for votes.

**Q.** *How important do you think would be the JD(S) and the impact of its alliance with the BSP?*

-JD(S) - no doubt is an important third player in the Karnataka scenario. Its impact would be marginal and will be specific area centric. It could emerge as a king maker in the last minute given the BSP acts in other states including Goa. Its alliance with the BSP may not cut much ice.

**Mr D. P. Satish,**  
Senior Editor, News18. One of the leading journalists who writes on Karnataka and calls himself neither right, nor left, but just straight.

**Q.** *What are the key issues before parties in the 2018 Karnataka Assembly elections?*

- The ruling Congress has made development the main issue. The CM claims that his government has fulfilled 99% poll promises and it is a record in India. He is also deftly playing social justice, equality and Kannada card. The BJP is not in a position to take on the Congress on development. Because its own track record is poor. The BJP is brazenly playing communal card. The Hindutva is going to be a big issue. The JD(S) is using farmers' card alleging that Siddaramaiah is a total failure as CM.

**Q.** *What will be the impact of national trends on Karnataka?*

- Difficult to say. National trends might have an impact. Modi is still a factor. But don't know how far it can help the BJP. The ruling Congress claims it is a state election and only local issues and trends matter.

**Q.** *How would you assess the impact of the strategies of the BJP and the Congress?*

-The BJP is good at marketing itself. But in Karnataka the ruling Congress seems to have put the BJP on back foot. Congress social media looks impressive. They are setting the agenda forcing the BJP to react. Closer to elections the BJP might change its strategy to put the Congress on back foot. As of now Congress looks better.

**Q.** *How important do you think would be the JD(S) and the impact of its alliance with the BSP?*

- Another untested thing. The BSP vote share is less than 1%. The Congress feels that BSP is a BJP plan to split the Congress votes. If the Congress manages to convince the Dalit voters the JD(S) - BSP experiment may come cropper.

## Karnataka Elections 2018: Seesaw Battle

March 1, 2018

-Bangalore Mirror

The upcoming State Assembly elections would be a battle between juniors and seniors in Yadgir district. Former Minister A. B. Malakareddy, who earlier announced that he will stay away from active politics, is said to have changed his mind and is likely to contest polls. He had made the announcement regarding retirement as he is upset over not being inducted to Cabinet. Ever since he announced political retirement, hectic lobbying has been on among Congress leaders to get ticket from the Yadgir Assembly segment. Of the four Assembly segments in the district, the Congress won three while the BJP bagged three.

Read more at:

<http://bangaloremirror.indiatimes.com/bangalore/karnataka-assembly-election/bangalore/karnataka-assembly-election/karnataka-elections-2018-seesaw-battle/articleshow/63130659.cms>

## BJP Launches 'Save Bengaluru' March, Targets Siddaramaiah Govt

March 2, 2018

-Deccan Chronicle

The BJP leaders highlighted as many as 15 charges against the Siddaramaiah Government as they launched the fortnight-long 'Save Bengaluru' campaign on March 2nd, 2018. Union human resources development minister Prakash Javadekar, Union parliamentary affairs minister H.N. Ananth Kumar, Union minister for statistics and programme implementation, D.V. Sadananda Gowda, and Bengaluru city leaders R. Ashok, Suresh Kumar and large number of party workers participated in the march. The leaders stated that the CM has failed to ensure safety of citizens of Bengaluru and appealed to voters to not vote for Congress candidates in the upcoming elections.

Read more at:

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/politics/030318/bjp-launches-save-bengaluru-march-targets-siddaramaiah-govt.html>

## Poll Results in Northeast Will Have No Bearing on Karnataka Election: Congress

March 4, 2018

- NDTV

The Congress in Karnataka stated that the results in the three North Eastern states would not have an impact on the forthcoming elections in the State. It also alleged that the BJP is unnecessarily projecting its victories. State BJP chief BS Yeddyurappa said the people of North-East in general and Tripura in particular have rejected the "corrupt and divisive" politics, practised by the Congress and the CPI (M). He added that, 'it is now clear that the people of Karnataka will also reject the Congress for its corruption, collapse of law and order and divisive politics being unleashed by Siddaramaiah'.

Read more at:

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/tripura-meghalaya-and-nagaland-assembly-elections-result-2018-poll-results-in-northeast-will-have-no-1819322>

## CM Siddaramaiah Releases 'Nava Karnataka Vision 2025' Document

March 4, 2018

-Deccan Herald

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, along with former Union Minister Jayaram Ramesh, on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018, released 'Nava Karnataka Vision 2025' document, which provides strategy for state's governance for the next seven years. The CM stated that "Karnataka stands number one in the country in many sectors. Our government is very proud of it. We have reached the people across 30 districts in the state and considered their views and aspirations in the last three months before preparing the Vision 2025 document." He added that out of the 165 promises made in their pre-poll manifesto the Government has successfully fulfilled 155 of its promises.

Read more at:

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/662658/cm-releases-vision-25-document.html>

## Karnataka Election 2018: Rahul Gandhi to Campaign in Dakshina Kannada on March 20, 21

-Financial Express

March 4, 2018

Congress President Rahul Gandhi would begin his third leg of campaign in Karnataka on March 20<sup>th</sup> 2018. The agenda of his two-day visit is to campaign in the Mysore and coastal regions of the State. As the tenure of the current Government is coming to an end, the Congress is putting all its might to retain power in the State. The Congress has been losing one State after the other to BJP in the past few years, and after BJP's victory in Tripura recently it has 21 States in its kitty making the upcoming election in Karnataka crucial for both the parties.

Read more at:

<http://www.financialexpress.com/elections/karnataka-election-2018-rahul-gandhi-to-campaign-in-dakshina-kannada-on-march-20-21/1087220/>

## Chief Minister Siddaramaiah Turns Tables on BJP over 'Chargesheet'

- The New Indian Express

March 4, 2018

CM Siddaramaiah criticised the on-going 'Save Bengaluru' campaign by the BJP. The CM stated that the campaign was being carried out by those who had turned Bengaluru into a 'garbage city'. He charged that the BJP alleged that the Congress government had made Karnataka a crime state, however, the State ranked 10th as per the National Crime Record Bureau when it comes to crime. States that scored first to ninth rank are governed by BJP. The CM highlighted the Government's initiatives to alleviate poverty in the State.

Read more at:

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2018/mar/04/chief-minister-siddaramaiah-turns-tables-on-bjp-over-chargesheet-1781817.html>

## Karnataka Election 2018: Bidar MLA Ashok Kheny Joins Congress

-Chennabasaveshwar

March 5, 2018

Bidar MLA Ashok Kheny joined Congress party on Monday in a function held at KPCC office in Bengaluru. Energy Minister DK Shivakumar, Home Minister G Parameshwar welcomed the MLA to the party. However, several Congress MLAs in Bengaluru and a section within Bidar Congress expressed opposition to Kheny's induction. A group of party workers also staged a protest in Bidar. In the previous State Assembly election in 2013 Ashok Kheny had contested from the Bidar South Assembly as a Karnataka Makkala Paksha candidate and won the election. He is also the Managing Director of Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises (NICE), known for its BMIC Project in the State. Kheny is also the Director of India International Infrastructure Engineers (IIIE) Limited.

Read more at:

<https://www.oneindia.com/india/karnataka-election-2018-bidar-mla-ashok-kheny-joins-congress-2652639.html>

## Deve Gowda- Kheny Rivalry Puts Possible Cong- JD(S) Post-Poll Alliance in Jeopardy

-The News Minute

March 5, 2018

Soon after the news of Ashok Kheny's induction into Congress broke, JD(S) supremo and former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda hinted at withdrawing his party's support from the coalition it had formed with the Congress in the BBMP council. Kheny's long-standing rivalry with JD(S) supremo H D Deve Gowda has now put the possibility of a Congress-JD(S) post-election alliance in jeopardy. Political analyst Dr. Sandeep Shastri said that the distancing between the Congress and the JD (S) will be more intense, as it is partly political and partly personal.

Read more at:

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/deve-gowda-kheny-rivalry-puts-possible-cong-jds-post-poll-alliance-jeopardy-77451>

## Minority status for Lingayats a distant dream, say experts

-The Times of India

March 6, 2018

Although a seven member expert committee examining the demand for minority status to Lingayats recommended that the government consider the community's plea, experts are of the view that it's unlikely to become a reality in the near future due to lack of time and legal tangles. To take advantage of the opportunity, the Congress government may accept the report by placing it before the cabinet and recommend to the Union government that minority status is granted. This will only result in putting the ball in the BJP's court ahead of the assembly polls in the State. Political Analyst Dr. Sandeep Shastri is of the view that the minority status won't be of much gain to the community. However, the recommendation has come as a boon for political parties to extract the maximum advantage.

Read more at:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/minority-status-for-lingayats-a-distant-dream-say-experts/articleshow/63182496.cms>

## Rajya Sabha election: JD(S) warns ally Congress of consequences in Karnataka state polls

- Hindustan Times

March 6, 2018

The Janata Dal (Secular) warned the Congress of consequences in the Karnataka assembly election after the national party ruled out an alliance in the upcoming Rajya Sabha election. The Congress has decided to contest three of the four Rajya Sabha seats in the state, leaving no seat for the Janata Dal (S) in the March 23rd election. Former chief minister and JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy stated that CM Siddaramaiah's attitude was unfortunate. Kumaraswamy said if the Congress continued to behave in this manner, the JD(S) would have no option but to teach it a lesson after the assembly polls.

Read more at:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/rajya-sabha-election-jd-s-warns-ally-congress-of-consequences-in-karnataka-state-polls/story-fwXEN2tbP1ucJTqxRCKYxM.html>

## Karnataka Flag Release by CM Puts BJP, JD(S) in Quandary

-The Economic Times

March 9, 2018

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah invoked Kannada pride ahead of the assembly elections and released an official state flag on March 8, 2018. The proposal has been forwarded to the Centre for sanction to be used in all state government functions, flown below the Indian flag. With this, Karnataka becomes the first state after J&K to declare an official state flag for itself. The new flag has the original red and yellow horizontal stripes of the Kannada flag that signify kumkuma (vermilion) and turmeric, which are considered auspicious. The move has caught BJP in Karnataka on the wrong foot, as it does not tie in with the nationalism narrative and the "one nation one flag" theory that their national leaders uphold. While state leaders privately admit they are in favour of the Karnataka flag as it is a cultural demand in the state, they are unable to articulate it publicly.

Read more at:

[https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/63217237.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/63217237.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

## Karnataka Polls 2018: Cong to Back Only Winnable Candidates in a 'Do-Or-Die' Elections

-The News Minute

March 9, 2018

The state Congress party has formed a screening committee, headed by former MP Madhusudan Mistry, to ensure that winnable candidates are given tickets. While one faction of leaders in the party believe that it should field the children of politicians, another faction, headed by Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee President Dr G Parameshwara has demanded for a 'one family, one ticket' policy to avoid an anti-incumbency wave. Mistry, who is on a two-day visit to Bengaluru, held a meeting with the selection committee members and conducted informal interviews with applicants who wanted to present their cause. On March 9, 2018 after extensive discussions, the party's campaign committee chalked out some ideas to counter the BJP's Bengaluru Rakshisi campaign.

Read more at:

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/karnataka-polls-2018-cong-back-only-winnable-candidates-do-or-die-elections-77732>



## ‘Siddaramaiah Realises Kannada Identity is the Sole Bond that Unites the State ... Regional Disparity Most Important Fault Line

-The Times of India

March 9, 2018

Political scientist Valerian Rodrigues, who holds the Ambedkar Chair at Ambedkar University, Delhi, spoke with Rohit E David, from Times of India on the upcoming Karnataka state elections. He is of the opinion that the Congress party, particularly Siddaramaiah, has come to realise that Kannada identity encompasses the deep pluralism in Karnataka, and it is the sole bond that unites all people in the state. The Kannada language also reaches out to a rich social capital of ancestry, laurels and social movements. Congress – desirous not to leave the rich heritage of Hinduism to Hindutva – has found in Lingayat heritage elements of thought and practice that it thinks can be directed against the latter.

Read more at:

<https://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/the-interviews-blog/siddaramaiah-realises-kannada-identity-is-the-sole-bond-that-unites-the-state-regional-disparity-most-important-fault-line/>

## Karnataka Voter Survey 2018: Water, Power are Top Priorities

-Business Line

March 10, 2018

Improving water supply and quality in Karnataka is by far the most important issue for the people of the State, according to the Karnataka Voter Survey 2018 conducted by ADR and DAKSH. According to the survey, water supply had a significant score of 8.06 on a scale of 10 in rural areas and 8.02 out of 10 in urban areas. The Survey was released by the Chief Election Commissioner, OP Rawat, at the 14th annual national conference organised by ADR and the Karnataka Election Watch (KEW). Better electricity supply and better schools with 7.97 and 7.94 out of 10. Followed by better roads and environment protection with 7.81 and 7.80 out of 10. In rural areas, the most important issues included better schools and better roads with scores of 8.03 and 7.99 out of 10. These were followed by better electricity supply and more hospitals/public health centres with a score of 7.96 and 7.92 out of 10.

Read more at:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/karnataka-voter-survey-2018-water-power-are-top-priorities/article23032891.ece>

## In India's Silicon Valley, Parties go Full Throttle to Get IT Votes

-D P Satish

March 10, 2018

For the first time in Karnataka Assembly elections, political parties are giving a special attention to voters from the IT and IT-enabled services. The “Silicon Valley” of India, Bengaluru, is home to over 40% of the total IT workforce in India. Even though there is no authentic data, there are about 12-15 lakh IT professionals in Bengaluru says an industry watcher. Including their family members, there are at least 25 lakh voters who are directly linked to the IT industry. According to revised voters list, Bengaluru city alone has 86 lakh registered voters. The BJP is already miles ahead of Congress and JD(S) in catching the software voters claim its local poll managers. Noted political scientist Dr. Sandeep Shastri said, “People in the tech industry are mostly from the upper class and upper middle-class background. More than the BJP, they are supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.”

Read more at:

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/karnataka-assembly-elections-in-indias-silicon-valley-parties-go-full-throttle-to-get-it-votes-1684901.html>

## Congress Candidates List for Karnataka Assembly Elections 2018

-Chennabasaveshwar

March 12, 2018

The Congress has begun the process of selections of candidate ahead of 2108 Karnataka Assembly elections. The party has invited applications from all the 224 assembly constituencies. Congress has assured ticket to 123 sitting MLAs, 7 rebel leaders who quit JD (S), former BJP leader Anand Singh, Kudligi Nagendra and Bidar South MLA Ashok Kheny. Consultations are underway to finalize candidates for 91 assembly constituencies. The final list is likely to be released in the last week of April. AICC General Secretary Madhusudan Mistry heads the screening committee for the selection of candidates.

Read more at:

<https://www.oneindia.com/india/karnataka-assembly-election-2018-congress-candidates-list-2657044.html>

# Diary of Political Developments

## KARNATAKA STATE ELECTIONS -2018



### BJP Launches 'Save Bengaluru' Campaign

Karnataka State BJP launched the 'Save Bengaluru' campaign on March 2nd, 2018 ahead of the State polls. The 'Save Bengaluru' campaign involves *padyatras* through all the 28 assembly constituencies in the city with BJP representatives talking to people on the streets and to local residents.

### CM launched Nava Karnataka: Vision 2025 on March 3rd

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah released the Nava Karnataka: Vision 2025 document on March 3rd, 2018. The document enumerates the strategies for the State's governance in the next seven years.

### Congress President Rahul Gandhi to campaign in Karnataka on March 20th and 21st

During his third leg of campaign Rahul Gandhi will cover Dakshin Kannada region in his two-day visit to the poll-bound Karnataka state. He would address many rallies and corner meetings in the coastal and Mysore region of the State.

### Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath In The State to Woo Voters

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was in Karnataka on March 6th 2018 evening to address the culmination of Jan Suraksha Yatra largely covering coastal areas. Yogi addressed the yatra culmination programme at Nehru Maidan in Mangaluru district. The UP CM is also scheduled to address a rally at Suratkal on March 19th, 2018.

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