



# BJP's base stable, AAP makes gains: survey

BY RAHUL VERMA & VAIBHAV PARIK

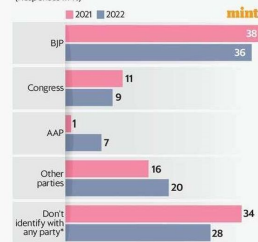
The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) continues to hold sway over a large section of urban Indians, even as the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) gains some foothold as a national alternative after its remarkable victory in Punjab earlier this year, the latest round of the YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey indicated. Meanwhile, the claim of the Congress over the Opposition space is shrinking away, responses to multiple questions in the survey showed ahead of key state elections later this year. Around 36% of the 10,271 respondents in 204 cities and towns said they identified with the BJP, down from 38% in the previous round of the survey held in November-December 2021. Just 9% chose the Congress, against 11% the last time, while 7% picked AAP, against 1% earlier. The figures for AAP are not strictly comparable as the party was clubbed under "Others" in the previous survey. Regional parties gained support, from 16% to 20%.

The marginal decline for the BJP was led by younger, male respondents. Pre-millennials, or those born before 1981, were the only age group where the BJP gained share. The party retained a strong foothold in metro and Tier-2 cities, with more than 40% expressing support. A cause of worry for the BJP is its support in Tier-3 cities, which has fallen below 30%.

The online survey was conducted jointly by the Indian arm of the global market research firm YouGov, Mint, and the Delhi-based think tank Centre for Policy Research (CPR). It was the eighth in a series of bi-annual online surveys aimed at examining the aspirations, anxieties, and attitudes of India's digital natives.

## BJP's appeal in urban India still high, AAP appears to make gains

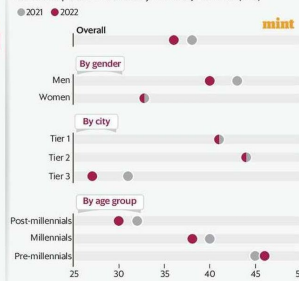
Which political party do you identify with the most? (Responses in %)



\*Includes those who said "Don't know/can't say". The 2021 survey covered 12,000 respondents, and the 2022 survey covered 10,271 respondents. AAP was not a listed option in the 2021 survey, but respondents could choose "Others" and then type the name of their favoured party. The support level for AAP in 2021 has been computed based on manual entries. AAP was a listed option in the 2022 survey.

## Support for BJP declines among the young, males and in tier-3 cities

Share of respondents who identify with the BJP the most (in %)



Post-millennials are those who were born after 1996, millennials were born between 1981 and 1996, and pre-millennials were born before 1981.

Source: YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey (Nov-Dec 2021 and Jun-Jul 2022)

## AAP Upwards

A STRIKING trend from the survey is that political partisanship is on the rise, with a decline in the share of Indians who do not identify with any party. The major likely gainer from this broader societal shift could be AAP.

Fresh off its decisive victory in Punjab and raring to go in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh later this year, AAP seems to be capturing public imagination more than before, the survey showed. However, the party remains a large-city phenomenon: Tier-1 and Tier-2 are the key drivers of its voter base. There are geographical limitations, too, to which pockets the party is gaining. AAP's popularity is concentrated primarily in North India (33%), followed by western India (7%), and to spread further, it will need to gain significant ground in the South, where its support base is the lowest. The survey largely represents affluent urban Indians based on ownership of consumer goods and is not representative of the entire voter base.

## AAP's limited popularity driven by metro cities and north India for now

Share of respondents who identify with the AAP the most (in %)

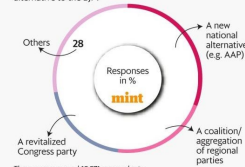


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Source: YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey (Jun-Jul 2022)

## Indians prefer a new national counter to BJP instead of Congress revival

Which of these do you consider a viable alternative to the BJP?



The survey covered 10,271 respondents. Source: YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey (Jun-Jul 2022)

## Political Alternative

THE GRADUAL rise of AAP indicates a churn in the opposition space in general. The fact that its support base is just marginally lower than the Congress' is telling. Another question in the survey attests to this churn. When asked for the preferred opposition to the BJP, as many as 31% respondents favoured a "new national alternative" like the AAP.

All the chatter around the efforts to revive the Congress is inspiring little confidence among the masses. More respondents (27%) favoured a coalition or aggregation of regional parties over a revitalized Congress (19%).

The regional parties, especially in the southern and eastern states, seem to be holding on to their bases. The AAP's traction seems to be limited in areas where the Congress has been a significant player. And this may continue to remain an obstacle for the AAP to gain a foothold beyond northern and western states in the run-up to 2024 elections.

## Advantage BJP

HOWEVER, THE Opposition space is fragmented on this question. Many Congress supporters (40%) still show faith in a revitalized version of the party. AAP supporters want a new national alternative, while supporters of other parties are split.

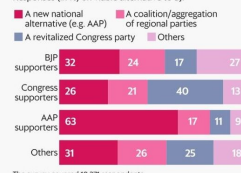
This fragmentation and the Congress' slide spell advantage for the BJP, which remains considerably ahead of any viable alternatives. Perhaps that explains why more BJP voters prefer an alternative like the AAP. With the AAP dreaming of being the prime opposition party and various other parties cultivating their own presence, the electoral ground remains fertile for controversy such as current one in Delhi involving a central investigation against AAP leader Manish Sisodia.

Major findings of the survey, related to economic and political outlook of respondents, were released last week (<https://bit.ly/3c3GNLJ>).

The authors are with CPR, New Delhi.

## What's the counter to BJP? The responses are fragmented

Responses (in %) on viable alternative to BJP



The survey covered 10,271 respondents

Source: YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey (Jun-Jul 2022)