

'TBF, we got the election dates spot on'



*Poll pundits hit back sharply at critics

*Scientists say in a parallel universe Rahul is winning

New Delhi, Mar 15: Pollsters and political pundits (journalists) in India, to this day, seem to have got not even one election right. This is a track record that is worse than even, well, Rahul Gandhi's.

At least in the case of Rahul Gandhi there is the very logical and valid excuse that he is Rahul Gandhi. But the pollsters have no such grounds for escape. They have the experience. They have the resources. They have the people. Yet, time and again, they go spectacularly wrong. Even by their illustrious low standards, the Bihar Assembly elections of 2106 is a true hall-of-famer. The famed pollster-political journo team of Prannoy Roy and Barkha Dutt -- don't let anyone tell you that this is not a great country --- got the election results wrong after the election results were actually out. We will wait while you may want to re-read the previous sentence.

That Prannoy and Barkha goof-up will, like Bradman's miracle Test batting average, will never be beaten.

Be that as it may, the beleaguered pollsters and political pundits, after being the butt of snarky jokes and put-downers when they were once again way off the mark in the recent Assembly elections to five States, have now chosen to hit back at their critics. "It is very unfair to say that we didn't get anything right in the polls to the five State Assemblies. For starters, we got right all the dates of the elections. You have to grant it to us, we were spot on with that one. In a long-drawn poll process, it in itself is an achievement. And considering what our general standards are, it is a bigger achievement," said a spokesperson for the pollsters. "Using sophisticated tools of psephology, we also figured out precisely the day of election results."

"One baby step at a time. Next time around, we will go further up and try to get one digit right in our victory predictions," added the spokesperson.

Meanwhile, top researchers and scientists have backed the pollsters to get right their predictions right in the next elections provided the elections are held at some parallel universe, which scientists are not sure whether it exists or not.

Writing in *The New Scientist*, the researchers said that on planet Earth Rahul Gandhi and pollsters getting things right is as much as possible as Virat Kohli becoming the president of Graceful Speakers Club. "But in a parallel universe, it is in the realm of actual possibility that Rahul Gandhi and pollsters are bang on and also Kamal Haasan speaking in a manner that the larger populace understands."

Reacting to this finding by researchers, Congress leader Digvijay Singh said it is now clear that Rahul Gandhi's approach is finding resonance among the public, both here and elsewhere.

"His continuing campaign for equity for the poor and his commitment to reforms in political and social structure of this country is clearly beginning to strike a chord with many voters," said Digvijay, "even though it may be with voters who only exist in a hypothetical alternate reality. But that's still better than we thought."

In their finding, the researchers stated that in a parallel universe, the Aam Admi Party supporters splashed the media with their own surveys that the AAP was set to sweep the elections and celebrated wildly even though the actual poll results were exactly the opposite. "Just because it is a parallel universe, there is no guarantee that the AAP party and its supporters will be sensible and realistic at least there."

"AAP being anything else than what it is now is well beyond all scientific possibility," said the researchers.

Pollsters, for their part, said that they were happy that things are finally going right for them in a parallel universe. "It is certainly good news for us. We will enjoy it while it lasts before reality catches up with parallel universe too."

PS: While pollsters have at least understood that there is need for them to be right at least once in a while, elsewhere, there is no such compulsion for political journalists in this country. They can continue to be totally wrong without having to explain their failures or feel remorseful about them. Political journalism, like friendship, is never having to say sorry. Most newspaper Editors and TV channel heads are, for the record, essentially political journalists. And we still wonder why journalism enjoys bleak future in this country.