



Indian National Congress's Marketing Balance Sheet- National Politics

(Based on Kujnish Vashisht's Marketing
Balance Sheet Model)
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Introduction

Indian National Congress is India's Oldest Political Party, has the distinction of being in Power for most number of Years in Indian democratic History, and is at present fighting for its revival in Indian Political System. This document describes Marketing Balance Sheet of Indian National Congress (Mini Version), and is based on Kujnish Vashisht's Marketing Balance Sheet Model.

I am evaluating Indian National Congress on the same marketing parameters as I did for BJP. Like in case of BJP, highest weightage among Key Marketing Parameters has been allocated to Differentiation Quotient. With no evident weakness in BJP's marketing plan and Brand Equity, Indian National Congress's key to revival in next Lok Sabha Elections lies in introducing meaningful differentiators to its Marketing Plan.

(Note: Either Google "BJP's Marketing Balance Sheet" or visit www.chanakyaaneeti.com for BJP's Marketing Balance Sheet)

Defining the Product in Marketing Terms

Indian National Congress Party is one of the two major Political Parties in India. In marketing terms, it's like a product which has been losing its Credibility, Brand Equity and decades of Brand Loyalty, and has been overtaken decisively by its key Competitor BJP. Another key feature is that it is even losing its number 2 Position in Indian Politics to Regional Political Parties. There are Internal revolts within the party, and some of its Key Political Leaders are either Joining their rivals or are dissatisfied with the Party.

Key Marketing Parameters for Evaluating Congress Party

- Clarity of the Product in People's mind as well as to the Party itself
- Brand Equity of the Supreme Leader
- Relevance of Product Parameters in Voter's mind
- Position of the supreme leader within the Party
- Differentiation Quotient

Weightage of Various Marketing Parameters applicable in this Marketing Balance Sheet

- Clarity of the Product in People's mind as well as to the Party itself (10)
- Brand Equity of the Supreme Leader (20)
- Relevance of Product Parameters in Voter's mind (20)
- Position of the supreme leader within the Party (10)
- Differentiation Quotient (40)

Score on “Clarity of Product in People’s mind and to the Party’s itself”

Under Section “Defining the Product in Marketing Terms” I mentioned Congress Party as a product which has been losing its Credibility, Brand Equity and decades of Brand Loyalty, and has been overtaken decisively by its key Competitor BJP. This statement tells it all. Let’s first understand the Product on which Congress remained in Power for 55 plus years, after Independence (With periodic breaks, 1947-2014). They Positioned themselves as a Party whose leaders fought India’s War for Independence, a party which is committed to Secularism, a Party which has presence in every nook and corner of India, and a Party which can work towards fulfilling aspirations of every section of Indian Society, particularly the Poor and downtrodden Contd

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Now let's analyse each of the above product parameters

- **A party whose leaders fought India's War for Independence-** There is a Big difference between Was and Is. We analysed secondary data and also asked a sample size of people about their views on this parameter. The result was that people no longer correlate Current Congress Leadership with India's Freedom Struggle. Also, people no longer see this parameter as the main basis of their Voting decision. Congress Party gets 0.6 out of 2.5 on this parameter
- **A party which is Committed to Secularism-** There are two clear diversions on this parameter. .. Contd

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On one hand are people supporting right wing ideology, who feel that Congress Party , in the disguise of Secularism was indulging in Muslim appeasement. On the other hand is the Muslim Community, majority of which is voting for regional parties. They no longer see Congress as the Counter for Right wing Party BJP. Thus, on secularism front, Congress Party is not the first choice for either of the Communities. On the basis of secondary data available, Congress party gets 0.9 out of 2.5 on this parameter.

- **A party which has presence in every nook and corner of India-** Congress Party is having its Government in Punjab, Rajasthan and Chattisgarh, and is the minority partner in Maharashtra Government. In many states, it is not even the second choice of Voters. Considering the number of seats and percentage of Votes in Lok Sabha and all the States, Congress Party gets 0.95 out of 2.5 on this Parameter.. Contd...

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- **A Party which can work towards fulfilling aspirations of every section of Indian Society, particularly the Poor and downtrodden :** Are the Poor voting for Congress? There is definitely a shift towards BJP because of various schemes for Poor by the Government. Are the Dalits and OBC's Voting for Congress? This was the traditional vote bank of Congress, but now there is clear shift towards BJP and Regional Parties. On the basis of Secondary data, Congress Party gets 0.8 out of 2.5 on this Parameter.

While awarding scores, Congress Party's understanding of its own parameters was also taken into account. The worrying part for Congress is that they are unable to come out of their past legacy. They still believe that the above 4 parameters will win them elections. Overall Score of Congress Party on "Clarity of Product in People's mind and to the Party's itself" is 3.25 out of 10. This goes towards Liabilities side of Congress Party's Marketing Balance Sheet.

Score on “Brand Equity of the Supreme Leader”

Who is the Supreme leader of Congress Party? They projected Rahul Gandhi as PM in last elections, and under present circumstances, this is likely to be the scenario in next Elections. Thus, for the purpose of this Marketing Balance Sheet, Rahul Gandhi is being analysed. Following parameters were used to measure Mr Rahul Gandhi's Brand Equity:

- a) Brand Awareness
- b) Preference Metrics
- c) Conversion Metrics
- d) Competition Metrics
- e) Future Potential Metrics

Brand Equity was allocated a total weightage of 20 out of 100, and 4 points each were allocated to the above 5 parameters. It has been explained in next few slides.... Contd...

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- a) Brand Awareness: In-depth scanning of Secondary Data (Newspapers, Electronic media reports ...) suggests that Brand Rahul Gandhi enjoys satisfactory levels of awareness in most parts of the Country . Though he may not be the preferred Choice of a majority of Voters, but being the Supreme Leader of One of the two major Political Parties of India, and being the Political heir of Nehru-Gandhi dynasty which still enjoys strong clout in Congress Party , he gets **3.1 out of 4** on this parameter.
- b) Preference Metrics: Main parameters considered for evaluation were the extent to which voters feel impacted by Mr Gandhi's Personality /Speeches/ Actions, extent and degree of reaction of People on Social Media (for or against) related to Mr Gandhi, Ability of Mr Gandhi to evoke People's response and action through his Statements/Appeals. Present Position of Congress Party was also considered while evaluating Mr Gandhi on this Parameter. Brand Rahul Gandhi gets **2.65** out of 4 on this Parameter. ...Contd

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c) Conversion Metrics: This parameter deals with how the feelings about Brand Rahul Gandhi are converted into Votes. This includes Votes both for and against Congress. This also includes how strong feelings against Rahul Gandhi **prompt BJP's voters to go out and vote for BJP and against him**. Brand Rahul Gandhi gets **1.8 out of 4** on this. This also suggests that if Congress Party Projects some other Leader as PM to take on Brand Modi, it has a comparatively better Chance in next Lok Sabha Elections.

d) Competition Metrics: This parameter deals with comparative aspects of Brand Equity of supreme leader of Congress Party with Supreme Leaders of other major Political Parties. Brand Modi had scored a perfect 4 on this aspect in BJP's Marketing Balance Sheet. Considering his position with respect to Mr Modi and other leaders like Nitish Kumar, Kejriwal, Akhilesh Yadav, Mayawati, Naveen Patnayak and Mamata Bannerji, Brand Rahul Gandhi gets **1.7 out of 4**. Contd.....

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e) Future Potential Metrics: This deals with future projections of Brand Equity of Brand Rahul Gandhi (Next 5 years). We are living in an era where even a single day or event can tumble or improve Brand Equities of Strongest of Leaders. If we leave this aspect aside, Brand Rahul Gandhi scores **2.1 on future Potential Metrics** (Considering his present day personality, his hold over his party, his popularity among his followers, his communication skills, his leadership skills and his age).

Thus, overall, Congress Scores **11.35 out of 20** on this parameter, and it goes towards the Assets side of Marketing Balance Sheet

Score on “Relevance of Product Parameters in Voter’s mind”

BJP is the party in Power, and enjoys a comprehensive Majority in Lok Sabha. It also rules majority of States in India. In BJP’s Marketing Balance Sheet. I evaluated it on three parameters, Hindu Pride, Nationalism and Development. Weighted Scores of 4, 8 and 8 were allocated to these parameters respectively. I am evaluating Congress Party also on these Parameters. This has been done to maintain uniformity in Marketing Balance Sheet Model, while also considering that these are presently the top 3 Parameters in Voter’s (For or against). Following are the details:

a) Hindu Pride: Soon after 2014 Lok Sabha elections defeat , senior Congress Leader A.K Antony commented that Congress’s Proximity to minorities has led people to doubt its secularism credentials. In an Interview to ET on May 22nd, 2014, senior Congress Leader Digvijay Singh said “Large sections of Hindus felt they were getting a raw deal and they must unite to defeat all those secular parties. The word secularism is, unfortunately, being identified with Muslim appeasement”.
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These statements indicate that there was an awareness even within the party that a large chunk of Hindus have moved away from it on the parameters being discussed, i.e., Hindu Pride. It should be remembered that UPA's Home Minister Sushil Shinde's usage of word "Hindu Terrorism" had not gone well with Hindu Community. There was also a statement by then P.M Manmohan Singh that Muslims have first claim over National Resources. Kapil Sibbal is a senior Congress Leader, and his representation of opposing faction as a Lawyer on Ram Mandir also creates a negative score. Salman Khurshid's comments on Batla House Encounter, and actions of Digvijay Singh related to the same event also add to the negative. There have been several attempts by Congress Party to improve their score on this parameter. For instance. Rahul Gandhi's visit to various temples during Gujarat Elections. However, Score of Congress Party on Hindu Pride is awfully low, and a complete repositioning based on strong marketing insights is required for meaningful improvement. A big limitation of Congress Party is

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that they don't want to antagonise minority communities in doing so. What's more worrying is that even minority communities no longer do en-masse voting for Congress to counter BJP (Considering that it's the usual pattern of minorities in Lok Sabha Elections). Considering all these facts, and based on Voting patterns and previous election results, Congress Party gets **1.1 out of 4** on Hindu Pride.

b) Nationalism: While BJP gained because of Surgical Strikes/ Air Strikes on Pakistan, Congress leaders scored some negative points when they demanded proofs of such strikes. On Article 370 also there were dissenting voices from within the Congress on Party's stand. Nation achieved some decisive victories over Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 under Congress Leadership, and that goes in Congress Party's favour. However, public memory is short and BJP has a decisive edge over Congress on Nationalism parameter. PM Narendra Modi's growing stature as a World Leader and his bonhomie with World's top Leaders is also working in BJP's favour. Considering all facts and Secondary data available, Congress Party gets **4.2 out of 8** on Nationalism

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c) Development: This is one parameter on which BJP scored 6 out of 8. Is there a window of hope for Congress Party for taking on BJP on this front? There are two angles to it. First is the capacity of Congress party to make this a bigger election issue, so that this parameter gains weightage in the overall Marketing Balance Sheet Concept . 2014 Lok Sabha Elections were fought on Change and 2019 on Nationalism. In light of current Corona Epidemic, India is likely to face extreme challenges on the Economic front. (A side-track here is that weightage of parameters, and even the marketing parameters in Marketing Balance Sheet Model can change with change in Political and Societal Environment). Second is whether Congress Party is perceived as a better option than BJP by the electorate? Scores have been awarded on both these basis. In light of looming Economic Crisis, Congress party has a strong opportunity to make it a major Political issue. However, whether electorate sees Congress Party as an alternative to solve India's Economic Problems? Congress needs to present a clear and believable Economic Plan. There is no such proposed plan till date. On the basis of available information. Congress Party gets current score is **5 out of 8** on this parameter.

Thus overall score of Congress Party on this Marketing Parameter is **10.3 out of 20**. This goes towards Assets side of its Marketing Balance Sheet.

Score on “Position of the supreme leader within the Party”

Why are some senior Congress Leaders leaving Congress Party? Many have openly blamed senior leadership for this. Many have left doubting leadership capabilities of Rahul Gandhi. There is an evident weakening process for Rahul Gandhi within the party. There are also reports of differences between Rahul Gandhi and the current party President, his mother Mrs Sonia Gandhi. Some within the party are demanding a higher role for his sister Priyanka Gandhi. Argument on the other side is that Rahul Gandhi has worked hard for the party and is a Political heir of Nehru-Gandhi Political Legacy. There is also no suggestion of an alternative Power centre (other than Gandhi Family) within Congress Party. Considering all the Pros and Cons, and the available information, Rahul Gandhi gets **5.9 out of 10** on this Parameter.

Score on “Differentiation Quotient”

If Congress Party intends to take on BJP in the next Lok Sabha Elections, it can only do that with a strong differentiation quotient. And the Differentiators it chooses for Reposition itself should be perceived as meaningful, and which should project it as a better alternative than the party in Power. For the sake of standardisation and effective comparison, we have kept the parameters and procedures same as those used in BJP's Marketing Balance Sheet.

Differentiation Quotient can be defined as the capacity of an Organization to keep rolling meaningful differentiators in a persistent manner. Meaningful differentiators mean differentiators in terms of those parameters which are perceived higher in relevance hierarchy by the voters (*Relevance parameters were discussed earlier in this balance sheet*). Three relevance parameters discussed earlier were Hindu Pride, Nationalism and Development. 20%, 40% and 40% were the respective weights. Differentiation Quotient was also bifurcated in the same proportion (out of the total 40 marks)..... Contd

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a) Hindu Pride: How can it create a meaningful differentiator on a parameter on which it is scoring badly? This is a parameter on which BJP has been able to create a strong foothold. Hindu Pride has become kind of generic with BJP (Like Surf is to detergent Powder, and LIC is to insurance in India). As described before, the reason for low score is because of Statements of some of its leaders. In addition to stopping such statements, Congress Party needs to reposition its strategy on this parameter in such a fashion that it heals the pride of majority community, and it also doesn't antagonise minority community. In the current scenario, no such strategy is visible which heals Hindu Pride. Thus, even on the differentiation quotient, Congress Party gets the same proportionate **2.2 out of 8** (exactly the same under previous section because we don't see any visible change in their Policy on this Parameter)Contd

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b) Nationalism: Dissentions within Congress Party were visible on article 370. Pakistan is an extremely sensitive issue with Indians when it comes to Nationalism, but people like Mani Shankar Aiyar, who are perceived by a majority as Pro-Pakistani still enjoy favours with Congress Party. Pakistan Wars of 1965/71 and Bangladesh are things of the past, and people don't perceive current leadership of Congress to be as strong as the Iron Lady Mrs Indira Gandhi. Congress party needs a new Vision and Policy on Nationalism. Future Projections suggest that in light of current Corona Pandemic, Nationalism and Development are going to merge in the coming years. Congress Party can consider this as an Opportunity and can play the role of a constructive opposition on to improve its score. Current Pandemic may also tilt Nationalism more towards India's rebuilding process. Congress Party has a better chance on this parameter. Considering the present circumstances and future projections of Nationalism, Congress party gets **10 out of 16** on this parameter. ... Contd...

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c) Development: This is projected to be a major Marketing Parameter for next General Elections, and the weightage may also increase in the overall Marketing Balance Sheet. We will incorporate the increased weightage as and when applicable. GDP is projected to grow slowly and Unemployment rate is projected to increase sharply after Corona impact. Trouble for Micro, Small and Medium enterprises is also projected. The advantage for Congress is that it can cause anti-incumbency for the current BJP Government. The warning is that Prime Minister Mr Modi still enjoys huge following, and is known to turn difficult situations into his advantages. Assuming that Mr Modi will lead BJP into 2024 elections, assuming that the bad projections for Economy hold true, and considering Congress Party's previous performance, Congress Party gets **10.5 out of 16** on this parameter.

Overall score of Congress Party on Differentiation Quotient is **22.7 out of 40**, and this goes towards Assets side of its Marketing Balance Sheet

Adjustment of Liabilities Score

According to Kujnish Vashisht's Marketing Balance Sheet model, since Liabilities score is a negative score, it should be subtracted from the par score (50% of maximum score of that Marketing Parameter) to get the adjusted Liabilities score. After making this adjustment, the total adjusted Liabilities score of Congress Party is 1.75

Overall Marketing Balance Sheet Score for Congress Party

Asset Score of Congress Party is 50.25 and his adjusted Liabilities Score is 1.75. Net Marketing Balance Sheet Score for Congress Party is **48.5 out of 100**.

Note: Since this is a Mini version of Marketing Balance Sheet, results may vary when the comprehensive version of this Balance Sheet is constructed. In comprehensive version, Marketing Parameters, their weightage, and the scores on Marketing Parameters are all based on comprehensive Market Research, which includes collection of Primary data. Mini Version is mainly based on Secondary data sources.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

- Congress Party's Marketing Balance Sheet Score of 48.5 is an average score and nowhere near BJP's score of 77.85. However, as stated before, it should be noted that Marketing Balance sheet scores keep changing with change in Political and Societal Environment. I shall keep posting the periodic changes in scores on my Blog www.chanakyaaneeti.com
- Congress Party's score was on the liabilities side on "Clarity of Product in People's mind and to the Party's itself". In marketing terms, we name this phenomenon as Positioning Error. It's a basic fundamental Marketing flaw. While Congress party is trying to market its same old product, Electorate's demands and preferences have changed.Contd

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- On “Brand Equity of supreme Leader” while PM Modi scores 19.05 out of 20, Rahul Gandhi’s score is 11.35. Even on the future potential metrics under Brand Equity, Rahul Gandhi has a poor score. A clear message for Congress Party from this is that they should Project a different leader as PM Candidate for next elections. Rahul Gandhi can continue in his present role as a Senior Party leader or a Coordinator. This should become a key parameter of Congress Party’s Repositioning strategy. This will also to some extent improve Congress Party’s score on many other Marketing Parameters and may close down the gap between Congress and BJP.
- Congress Party needs to comprehensively revisit its policies on the Majority community, Hindu Religion, Surgical Strikes and Pakistan. The leaders who gave damaging statements should be side-lined , and some prominent faces of moderate Hinduism should be encouraged and welcomed in the party.Contd...

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- In light of Corona Virus Pandemic, which have brought both Indian and World Economies to a standstill, there is a higher probability of merging of two key marketing parameters “Nationalism” and “Development”. Congress party stands a good chance of revival under these circumstances. Congress’s Differentiation strategy should be based on revival of India’s Economy and Rebuilding India. To seek full benefit from this, they should pick an individual with proven credentials in Economy and Development as their PM Candidate for next elections. Continuation of Rahul Gandhi as PM face is likely to hurt Congress’s Repositioning efforts.

Future Assignments

I am in the process of preparing Marketing Balance Sheets of Interesting Public Personalities, Politicians, Political Parties. Any Organization/Individuals interested in their Customized Marketing Balance Sheets can contact me at 91-9878904347, expedient33@gmail.com.

Keep Visiting my Blog www.chanakyaaneeti.com

Thanks and Regards

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