

An Historical Account of Political Sloganeering in India

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ABSTRACT

Political slogans are succinct and notable expressions that intends to communicate a message or set up an agenda. These slogans have significantly influenced the body politic of Indian elections over the years. During the 1970s, Congress used the eye-catching slogan “Garibi Hatao” to promote its vision to eradicate poverty. This slogan became exemplary symbolic of then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi which aided massively in her re-election to the power in 1971. Likewise, Narendra Modi’s slogans “Abki Baar Modi Sarkar” and “Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas” became a catchword during the 2014 election. India has already witnessed multitude of inventive, humorous, and unforgettable slogans throughout elections. The intensity in campaign arises from the slogan warfare, when one faction tries to devise a counter-slogan to ridicule and disparage the other party’s slogan, thereby transforming it into a competitive electoral contest. The efficacy of a slogan is significantly influenced by its framing and agenda-setting capabilities. Framing denotes the concept that a slogan serves as a succinct mode of communication, functioning as a messaging system; while agenda-setting pertains to the identification of public concerns and the influence on public opinion. Certain slogans have had successful outcomes historically while others have failed dismally, noted more for their ostentation or indiscretion. However, the significance of slogans as a prevalent form of political communication is undeniable. This paper explores the degree of interference of political slogans in an electoral discourse of India by trying to map out the historical evolution of political sloganeering in Indian elections. The paper follows historical, archival and discourse analysis method in order to contextualise and decode the linguistic use of slogans.

Keywords: Political Slogans, Elections, Campaign, Lok Sabha, Political party, Discourse

POLITICAL SLOGANS

Slogans are crucial instruments that facilitate the construction of a political narrative (agenda-setting) in every electoral contest. The persuasive

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and tactful use of language through compelling and witty slogans is a critical element in the politics of democratic nations. Political slogan is undeniably seen as a decisive instrument, subtly shaping individuals' perceptions within a socio-political context (Sardoc & Prebilit, 2023). A slogan is an intriguing instrument for evoking emotions in the audience's psyche. In political warfare, a memorable and rhyming slogan may establish a new 'political dimension' in electoral politics and serve as a catalyst for shaping the ideology of electorates (Song & Gee, 2020). The distinguishing element that sets slogans apart from other types of verbal persuasion is their conciseness, just like the Vedic Mantras. Understanding the substance of the phrase needs clarification. The essence is mostly utilitarian, that is to accomplish certain tasks. Its purpose is not to inform or elucidate, but to incite. Conversely, the slogan functions via language; thus, it often includes an instructive component and even a justificatory aspect (LU, 1999). Slogans have consistently served as rallying cries that connect with the populace during elections. These slogans encapsulate the aims and commitments of political parties, evoking emotions and inspiring optimism. Slogans encapsulate history, and history is fundamentally composed of slogans. They are carrier of ideologies which promote collective sentiments and forge aspirations of the times they are contextualised in. All slogans operate on the dual principles of 'communication' and 'representation', engaging with the intricate relationship between subjective goals and objective historical facts (Stacul, 2018). During the pre-Independence period in India, the majority of slogans were motivated by nationalist emotions that resonated with the collective identity and aspirations of the populace, seeking to galvanise a mass movement to dismantle British rule. Although they tended to homogenise the intended audience during this period, few scholars observe that 'political' and 'socio-economic' slogans of the post-Independence era mirrored contemporary reality and often appealed to regional and sub-regional identity ambitions.

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN AND SLOGANS: THROUGH THE HISTORICAL LENSE

The evolutionary journey of India from being a small independent nation to world's largest democracy is a testament to its resilience and adaptability. Over these decades, the socio-political landscape has undergone several changes reflecting shifts in society, technology, and voter expectations. The development of political campaigns in India, from plain slogans of the past to the data-driven tactics of today, provides an intriguing look at how electioneering has changed to suit the demands of an emerging nation (Varughese & Semetkob, 2022). In the early years of independence political campaigns in India were

characterized by their simplicity. The electorates were predominantly rural, with low literacy rates and limited avenues of communication like radio and newspaper were available. Under these conditions political slogans emerged as the mainstay of political communication. These slogans were memorable, emotionally charged, and was reflective of people's aspirations. For instance, the Congress party's slogan, "Garibi Hatao" (Eradicate Poverty), used during the 1971 elections, were inclusive of the aspirations of millions and became synonymous with Indira Gandhi's populist policies (Ashraf, 2000). Similarly, "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" reflected the nation's pride in its defence forces and agrarian roots.

As Indian democracy evolved and matured throughout the period of 1970-1980, the political landscape took a significant turn. The advent of television, along with the extensive proliferation of radio, revolutionised the dissemination of political messages. Leaders such as Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi acknowledged the influence of mass media and adeptly used it to engage with millions of people. Campaigns began the amalgamation of speeches, interviews, and even songs that were disseminated nationally. This marked the start of increasingly advanced campaign tactics. Although slogans remained essential, there was an increasing focus on constructing robust narratives around candidates. The communication grew more unified, with leaders guaranteeing that their fundamental message was reiterated across various media platforms. The 1990's saw a substantial transformation in the evolution of political campaigns due to the emergence of regional parties paving way for the rise of identity politics. With the advent of coalition government, campaign techniques needed to adjust to a more fractured electorate. Although slogans remained important, there was a heightened emphasis on tackling regional and community-specific challenges. Campaigns grew more targeted, addressing the distinct issues of various states, castes, and groups. This era was notable for the emergence of political coalitions and the need for more sophisticated techniques to manage the intricacies of coalition politics. Next in line was the emergence of digital technology, which significantly transformed the demeanour of political campaigns in the country. Data-driven, tailored micro-campaigning and social media involvement became important features of electoral campaigns (Mishra, 2024). The emphasis has shifted from broad slogans to intricate techniques targeting certain voting demographics. The use of big data and artificial intelligence enables campaigns to identify swing voters, forecast election results, and allocate resources with unparalleled accuracy. The notion of a "campaign season" has almost vanished in the current political scene. The emergence of 24/7 news networks, social media,

and real-time communication has made political campaigning a perpetual endeavour. The next section of the article will deal with the different phases of sloganeering in India.

SLOGANEERING IN THE FIRST PHASE (1952-1967)

The Congress adopted “self-reliance” as its motto during India's first election in 1952 (Park, 1952). In 1957, it was the ‘industry’, regarded as the “temples of modern India” while in 1962, the emphasis was laid down more on India’s position within the international community (Guha, 2002). The symbol of the Congress was a ‘pair of bullocks’, carrying a yoke, which was representative of the fact that Indian economy was largely dependent on agriculture. The Congress posters included prominent images of Nehru besides the one-liner statement, “Vote for the Congress if you desire a progressive, robust, and secular state (Park, 1952).” Posters depicting two bulls and yokes were affixed on the sides of tongas, vehicles, local stores, and train compartments (Guha, 2002). In contrast, Opposition parties raised the issues pertaining to socio-economic conditions of people like ‘poverty, food’ and ‘housing’ in their campaign slogans. The issue of rehabilitation of Hindus who came from Pakistan after facing exodus were also highlighted by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee led Jan Sangh. Another kind of campaigning involved the use of processions for carrying out political messages. A notable variant of the procession was the ‘Prabhat Pheris’ which was used in the state of Punjab. In the early morning, they canvassed, singing religious hymns and concluding with “Vote for Jan Sangh” (Weiner, 1954). Congress also organised ‘Prabhat Pheris’ as part of their campaign and the members of party sang bhajans used by Mahatma Gandhi during his morning prayers. Congress party's ‘Prabhat Pheri’ performed “Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram” and “Vaishnav Jan to Tene Kahiye Je” to engage people and solicit their support in the election (Guha, 2002).

Political statements were made through public meetings and slogans being the superlative method of oral propaganda was used to set up a poll agenda. The slogan ‘Kaam Do, Makan Do, Varna Gaddi Chod Do’ (‘Give Work, Give Houses, or Quit the Government Chairs’) and ‘Congress Ne Kya Kiya? Desh Ko Barbad Kiya’ (‘What has the Congress Done? Ruined the Country’) were used by the then Socialist Party against the Congress (Fickett, 1973). On the other hand, Congress in order to garner some votes in the name of Mahatma Gandhi used slogans like “Kharo Rupayo Chandi ko, Raaj Mahatma Gandhi ko”. However, it also faced stern criticism from Communist party

that raised issues of prevailing poverty and unemployment in the country and used witty one-liner “Desh Ki Janata Bhukhi Hai, Yah Azadi Jhuthi Hai” in its campaign trail. Communists argued that political independence will have little significance if the people of the country are not fed properly. Another slogan that gained huge prominence in election was when Ambedkar lost Lok Sabha election to Kajrolkar. P.K. Atre, swiftly formulated a slogan that gained significant popularity throughout the campaign. The slogan was in Marathi: “Kuthe to Ghatnakar Ambedkar, Aani Kuthe ha Lonivikya Kajrolkar,” which translates in English as “Where is the eminent Constitution maker Ambedkar and where is the inconspicuous butter-seller Kajrolkar?” (Ranade, 2019) The election loss of Ambedkar was unexpected, given the disparity in stature and political acumen between the two; nonetheless, Kajrolkar, by his tenacity and will, demonstrated that an ordinary individual had the capacity to yield shocks.

During the early years, the electoral symbol of Congress was a ‘pair of bulls’, while the symbol of Jan Sangh was ‘lamp wick’. Both the parties had a verbal exchange mocking each other’s party symbol. While Jan Sangh gave the slogan- “Dekho Deepak Ka Khel, Jali Jhopri, Bhaag Gaye Bail” (Bhambhri, 1957). Congress countered it with- “Is Deepak Main Tel Nahi, Sarkar Banana Khel Nahi”. The issues of mass level poverty and unemployment caused due to the partition, issue of refugee resettlement was the core agenda of Jan Sangh. Similarly, the issue of Kashmir was at the forefront of political debate as Article 370 was inserted unconstitutionally into the Indian constitution. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee critically questioned Nehru over the exclusion of Jammu and Kashmir from the President’s authority and the Congress’s acquiescence to the need of a special permit for entry into Jammu and Kashmir (Ganguly, 2017). He also questioned why Jammu and Kashmir had a “Sadar-e-Riyasat”. In this backdrop after J&K’s merger into Indian Union was passed, a slogan was coined by Jan Sangh and later adopted by Praja Parishad, “Ek Desh Mein Do Vidhan, Do Pradhan Aur Do Nishan Nahi Chalega” (Ganguly, 2017).

It was during the general elections of 1962 when health emerged as a big political issue. Suitable to the Hindutva politics of Jan Sangh, they came up with slogans that highlighted the need for promotion of health awareness. One popular slogan coined by them was “Jana Sangh Ko Vote Do, Beedi Peena Chhod Do; Beedi Mein Tambaku Hai, Congress Wala Daku Hai” (Vote for Jana Sangh, Stop Smoking Bidi; Bidi has tobacco, Congressmen are Dacoits). The Jana Sangh more than doubled its tally to 35, from 14 in 1962 but was nowhere close to forming a government while the Congress lost 78 seats (Pillai, 1966). Congress managed to form the government for the third time on

its own and maintain its electoral supremacy, however it was plagued by early indication of internal discord within the party. Other developments that shaped the political landscape of India during this period were, emergence of regional parties, successive wars with China and Pakistan and continued allegiance of India towards NAM principles to guide its foreign policy. While Nehru endorsed Panchsheel principles and emphasised cooperative relationship with China, which was embodied in the slogan “Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai”, the preceding event of 1962 Sino-Indian War delivered a massive blow to this type of foreign policy (Madhok, 1967). It became largely clear that Nehruvian principles is no guarantee to safeguard India’s security and that defence and military capabilities needs to be prioritised on an urgent basis. The Nehruvian idealism suffered a massive blow and he was at the receiving end of Jan Sangh who severely criticised and coined the slogan “Wah Re Nehru Teri Mauj, Ghar Me Hamla Bahar Fauj”. Later, in 1965, Pakistan captured Kanajarkot in Kutch and Government of India thought to make peace arrangements with Pakistan (Erdman, 1999). Jan Sangh strongly condemned the act and subsequently planned for countrywide mass demonstration. Demonstrations were held against the Kutch agreement and slogan: ‘Fauj Na Hari, Kaum Na Hari, Haar Gayi Sarkar Hamari’ (Neither our army nor our people were defeated, but the government was defeated) was used to showcase the inefficiency of Indian government (Maxwell, 1999).

In 1965 Lal Bahadur Shastri in his attempt to energise the masses of India made special reference to soldiers and farmers. In his speech at Ramleela Maidan he gave the slogan “Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan” to encourage the soldiers to defend the country and the farmers to do efficient and effective agriculture to relieve India of its import dependence (Kochanek, 1966). This slogan gave a renewed impetus of infantile democracy which was plagued with various issues like the ongoing conflict in Kashmir, failed crops due to poor rain and subsequent food crisis. It was after this slogan that India witnessed major developments like green revolution in states like Punjab and Haryana. This successful campaign returned Congress to power in 1967. The slogan “Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan was later modified by Atal Bihari Vajpayee to “Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan” to emphasise on the importance of science and technology. This was further improved by, Narendra Modi who incorporated research into it and modified it as “Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan” (PTI, 2019).

SLOGANEERING IN THE SECOND PHASE (1967-1984)

The General election of 1967 is an important landmark in Indian electoral polity as it marked the beginning of post Nehruvian era. The election witnessed exceptionally weak political campaigning from Congress which brought down its tally to 283 seats from 361. Congress projected itself as a necessity and prerequisite for development of the country and pronounced slogan: “Progress through Congress”. It was courageously countered by communists who reversed it to mean choose between either “Congress or Progress”. Another major slogan of the time was built around the issue of Cow Protection which was also picked by Congress to avoid any Hindu polarisation by Jan Sangh who at that time was leading this issue to corner Congress in upcoming elections. Jan Sangh’s slogan “Gau Hamari Mata Hai, Desh-Dharm Ka Nata Hai (The Cow is our mother, The Bond of Nation and Religion)” fuelled the cow protection movement. Indira Gandhi hit back with her slogan “Vote for Calf and Cow, Forget all others now” (Front Matter, 1971). Interestingly the actual symbol of Congress, pair of bullocks, was dropped by Indira Gandhi when she made her separate faction away from Congress. Jan Sangh continued its opposition and popularised its slogan: “Har Hath Mein Kaam, Har Khet Mein Pani” (Job for Every Hand, Water for Every Farm). At the same time, Atal Bihari Vajpayee was gaining popularity among the cadres of Jan Sangh. In 1968, he was elected as the party’s president. Thereafter, in one of the conferences, popularising the leadership credentials of him, the party workers began chanting during his election rallies: “Pradhan Mantri Ki Agali Bari, Atal Bihari, Atal Bihari”. Jan Sangh from the very beginning had apprehensions against the ill-nexus of ‘Congress, Communist and Muslim League’ as they worked together in trio. Jan Sangh sarcastically jibed at the trio and coined the slogan- “Tin Tilange, Karte Dange” which meant that these parties hamper the social fabric of the country by inciting violence and riots.

In 1971, Jan Sangh’s manifesto’s tagline was- ‘Declaration of War against Poverty’. The party promoted this idea through popular slogans like “Jan Sangh ka Arthik Program- Har Muh Ko Roti, Har Haath Ko Kaam” (Manifesto, 1971). Later they popularised the ideograph “Indira Hatao” (Remove Indira) which was later reworked and rephrased to “Indira Hatao, Desh Bachao”, which meant remove Indira and save the country (Narain, 1971). Congress on the contrary went along with its all-time popular narrative of “Garibi Hatao”. The slogan “Garibi Hatao” instantly became popular as it was able to make inroads among the masses and Congress was able to gain a lot of political dividends out of it. The issue of poverty and hunger was politically significant

as is evidenced from the fact that statistically 55% of India's population was reeling below the poverty line at that point of time. Further to counter attack the opposition's poll narrative the slogan was remodelled to "Garibi Hatao, Indira Lao, Desh Bachao" and "Vo Kehte Hai Indira Hatao, Mai Kehti Hoon Garibi Hatao" (Prashad, 1996). Indira Gandhi was politically aware about the ground reality; therefore, she deliberately took upon herself, trusted her charismatic leadership skills and encased on her mass popularity. It was for the first time that a personality-based slogan was used coercively in an Indian election. Another significant achievement which defined Indira Gandhi's tenure was disintegration of Pakistan. The Indo-Pak war in 1975 led to the carving out of independent Bangladesh. Soon afterwards, one of the most controversial yet spectacular slogan emerged which is: "India is Indira and Indira is India" (Jones, 1985). The slogan equated the personality of Indira Gandhi to the nation's image and identity at large. Autocratic, imperious and populist are the few adjectives which could possibly define the slogan. Apart from such sloganeering, the socialist discourse remained at the political helm of affairs. Meanwhile, Ram Manohar Lohia, considered as a staunch socialist, advocated for 60% reservation in education and employment for women, Adivasis, Shudras, and Dalits in his campaign. The slogan "Sansapa Ne Bandhi Gaanth, Pichda Pave Sau Me Sath" created by Karpoori Thakur, continues to resound throughout elections in majority areas of the Hindi heartland states (Yadav, 2010).

The Bangladesh Liberation war elevated Indira Gandhi's political clout and power within and outside Congress. The dynamics of Congress also changed, sycophancy became the norm and every opinion was put to scrutiny against the larger cause of consolidating Indiras' status within the Congress. The "authoritarian streak" within Indiras' India became obvious however, she could not rein in political dissent growing within the country. It was during this period that Jayaprakash Narayan, steered a student led agitation against the Bihar government and gave call for "Total Revolution". The electoral malpractices and Indira Gandhi's disqualification led to the imposition of emergency, suspending all civil and constitutional rights of the people. This completely paralysed the democratic functioning of institutions, political opponents were put behind bars without any trial, tens and thousands of people were harassed in the preceding months, compulsory sterilisation program was launched on the pretext of family planning and population control (Kaviraj, 1986).

The sloganeering during this period was greatly influenced by these political developments. As opposition gathered momentum post emergency,

anti-Indira slogans were popularised and exhortations were made like- “Indira Hatao, Desh Bachao”. Later on, the sterilization campaign launched by the Congress in a bid to control population growth were targeted by the opposition by coining slogans like- “Zameen Gaye Chakbandi Mein, Makan Gaya Hadbandi Me, Dwar Khadi Aurat Chillaye, Mera Mard Gaye Nasbandee Mein” (Land was lost in Consolidation, House was lost in Demarcation, the Woman standing at the Door shouted, My Husband was lost in Sterilization)” and “Nasbandee Ke Teen Dalal, Indira, Sanjay aur Bansilal” that echoed the streets of towns and villages across the country (AsianetNews, 2020). These slogans charged the political atmosphere against the Congress and Indira Gandhi had to eventually lose power.

The post emergency election held in 1977 witnessed slew of slogans that directly targeted the credentials of Indira Gandhi. Here are few of the slogans- “San Satattar Ki Lalkaar, Delhi Mein Janata Sarkar” (The call of 1977, Janata Party government in Delhi); “Sampoorn Kranti Ka Nara Hai, Bhavi Itihaas Hamara Hai” (Total Revolution is the Slogan, The Future History is Ours); “Faansi Ka Phanda Tootega, George Hamara Chhootega” (The noose will break, our George will be released) (Shukla, 2014). It was accompanied by slogans like- “Yeh Dekho Indira Ka Khel, Kha Gayi Shakkar, Pee Gayi Tel”, “Jali Jhopdi, Bhage Bail, Yeh Dekho Deepak Ka Khel” (Ved, 2019). The Congress party countered it with coining the slogan- “Is Deepak Mein Tel Nahin, Sarkar Chalana Khel Nahin” (Shukla, 2014).

The Janata Party used the catchphrase “Sinhasan Chhodo, Ki Janta Aati Hai” (Abandon the Throne, the Public is Coming) warning the Congress government about the anguish of general public. Further battle cry such as “Gaai Ko Chara Nahi, Uske Bacche Ko Doodh Nahi Aur Congress Ko Vote Nahi” and “Congress Ki Kya Pehchan, Bhookha Nanga Hindustan” were prominently used to put allegation regarding corruption and state of hunger during Indira’s regime. Another appealing slogan used by Jan Sangh was “Deep se Deep Jale, Vote se Desh Bane” which suggests that India’s hope is only its people because they are sovereign and powerful entity. The slogan “Save Democracy” was used by Janata Party to make people conscious about their democratic right and liberties. As one can observe that Dictatorship, fear of the future, public violence and Murder of democracy related slogans were used in a sarcastic manner during the poll rallies to expose the authoritarian functioning style of Indira Gandhi.

Indira Gandhi fresh from her electoral defeat contested from Chikmagalur (in Karnataka) Lok Sabha constituency in 1978. The slogan “Ek Sherni,

Sau Langur; Chikmagalur, Chikmagalur” (One Tigress versus Hundreds of Chimpanzees) was chanted across the region that aimed to take a jibe at the infighting that had become public between the various constituent parties of the Janata coalition. Other slogans such as “Jaat Par Na Paat Par, Indira Jee Kee Baat Par, Muhar Lagegi Haath Par” and “Indira is India and India is Indira” also rose to popularity. The Janata Party experiment miserably failed and it imploded from infighting. Then in 1980, Congress came up with the slogan “Sarkar Vo Chune Jo Chal Sake” (Elect only that government which holds the capacity to properly function and govern). This phase can be summed as a period of personalised political campaign in which nationalist sentiments were evoked through the use of sarcastic yet articulative issue-based sloganeering.

SLOGANEERING IN THE THIRD PHASE (1984-1999)

The electoral landscape of India during this period was marked by uncertainty following Indira Gandhi’s assassination in 1984. Waves of sympathy that followed her assassination brought resounding support for her heir, Rajiv Gandhi. During this period, a poignant slogan emerged: “Jab Tak Suraj Chand Rahega, Indira Ji Ka Naam Rahega” (Brass, 1986). The slogan played a crucial role in Congress securing a resounding victory by securing 404 seats out of 514 Lok Sabha seats. Rajiv’s political journey began with Congress karyakartas extending their support to his Prime Ministerial candidature by chanting “Utha Kar Dono Hath Hai, Rajiv Ji Ke Sath Hain”. However, soon later he faced severe opposition during his first tenure besides allegations of kickbacks in a defence deal. In 1989 election, Congress used generic slogans that were centred around developmental issues and leadership style. Catchphrases like- “Rajiv Gandhi Ka Elan Sabko Roti, Kapda aur Makan (Rajiv Gandhi has pledged food, clothing and housing for all)”, “Toofan Me, Aandhi Me, Vishwas Rajiv Gandhi Mein” (Be it a Hurricane, be it a Storm, our faith is in Rajiv Gandhi), “Sthayi Sarkar, Majboot Hai Desh, Sabhi ki Pragati Hamara Uddesh” (Stable Government, Strong Nation, Everybody’s Prosperity our Mission) were used in a very assertive manner during the campaign trail.

While VP Singh led National Front used slogans like “Rajiv Bhai, Rajiv Bhai, Tope Dalale Kisne Khayi” which translates to Rajiv please tell who swallowed the commission in the gun deal making an indirect reference to kickbacks in the infamous Bofors Deal. The opposition was adamant on targeting the ruling government stating that Rajiv Gandhi took a bribe of Rs. 64 crores. More such slogans like “VP Singh Ka Ek Sawal, Paisa Khaya Kaun Dalal”, “Galon Me Jo Lali Hai, Topon Ki Dalali Hai”, “Rajiv Gandhi Kaun Hai,

Moresco Ka Chor Hai” and “Naani Yaad Aane Lagi Hai, Kursi Ab Jaane Lagi Hai” were used to the tooth and nail by the opposition parties. On the contrary “Raja Nahi Fakir Hai, Desh Ki Taqdeer Hai” were coined by his supporters to showcase VP Singh as a common man who can change the destiny of India.

VP Singh then became the Prime Minister in 1989 with the support of BJP and other regional parties. The first project which he undertook was the implementation of the Mandal Commission report giving reservations to OBC's. This decision witnessed a lot of criticism and VP Singh- a royal scion of the Manda estate became a villain for the unreserved category. The slogan “Goli Maro Mandal Ko, Is Raja ko Kamandal Do” was popular during the agitation in the early 90s. Implementation of Mandal commission benefitted regional leaders and it paved way for the emergence of backward caste politics in the country. Mulayam Singh in Uttar Pradesh and Lalu Yadav in Bihar became the face of it. Mulayam Singh joined hand with Kanshiram to overpower Kalyan Singh in Uttar Pradesh. Mocking the populist narrative of BJP which was centre around RamJanambhoomi movement, a very famous slogan “Mile Mulayam Kanshi Ram- Hawa Mein Udd Gye Jai Siya Raam,” was coined by SP-BSP alliance (Duncan, 1997). The saffron party countered it with, “Mit Gaye Mulayam Kanshi Ram- Sada Rahenge Prabhu Shri Ram.” While for Lalu Prasad Yadav, his supporters popularised the slogan- “Jab Tak Rahega Samosa Mein Aalo, Tab Tak Rahega Bihar Mein Lalu”.

Electoral Campaign in 1991 soared to another level because of the several burning issues that arose from ‘Mandal-Masjid and Market’. Congress therefore contextualising the whole situation came up with slogans that ranged from diverse subjects of ‘sacrifice’, ‘stability’, ‘future of India’, ‘unity’, ‘inflation’. Here are some of slogans that were disseminated by the party: “Aadhi Roti Khayenge, Rajiv Ko Layenge”, “Maa Bete Ka Balidan, Yaad Kareng Hindustan”, “Vote Stability, Vote Congress-I”, “Samay Ki Pukar, Sthayi Sarkar”, “Bharat Ka Bhavishya Hai Dao Par, Mohar Lagao Hath Par”, “Rajiv Ka Sandesh Ek Rahega Bharat Desh”, “Ye Kaisi Sarkar Aayi, Kamar Tod Mehangayi Laye”, “Vapas Lao Congress-I, Na Jaat Par Na Paat Par, Sthirtha Ki Baat Par, Mohar Lagegi Hath Par”.

Conversely, BJP portrayed itself as a cultural nationalist party and embarked the electoral journey from Rath Yatra that took place between Somnath to Ayodhya under the leadership of Advani. BJP stood for ‘Ram, Roti aur Sthirta’ while Congress countered it with “Ram, Rahim, Rozi aur Roti”. Slogans such as “Sabko Parkha, Humko Parkho” were developed but the larger poll narrative and sloganeering revolved around the issue of Ram Mandir. Several slogans

were used during the entire course of campaign which helped to mobilize and polarize the Hindu community. ‘Jo Hindu Hit Ki Baat Karega, Vahi Desh Par Raaj Karega’, ‘Ram Rajya Ki Oar, BJP Ki Oar’, ‘Jai Siya Ram’, ‘Pet Me Roti, Mann Me Ram, Tabhi Jagegi Rashtra Shakti’, ‘Kasam Ram Ki Khate Hai, Mandir Vahi Banayenge’, ‘Baccha Baccha Ram ka Janambhoomi Ke Kaam Ka’, ‘Raj Tilak Ki Karo Tayari Aa Rahe Hai Bhagwadhari’, ‘Ek Hi Nara Ek Hi Naam, Jai Shree Ram Jai Shree Ram’. Slogans had an emotive appeal that apparently helped BJP in consolidating Hindu vote bank.

In 1984, upon the establishment of BSP, the party’s founder, Kanshiram, formulated the slogan- “BSP Ki Kya Pehchan, Neela Jhanda Hathi Nishan.” The ‘elephant’ symbolised the ‘Dalit community’, while the ‘blue flag’ represents the ‘blue sky beneath which all individuals are equal’ (Kumar, 1999). “Vote Hamara, Raaj Tumhara Nahin Chalega” and “Jiski Jitni Sankhya Bhari-Uski Utmi Bhagidari” were among the slogans that were floated extensively to socially unify and politically assert as a community. Another slogan “Baba (Ambedkar) Tera Kaam Adhura, Kanshiram (BSP founder) Karenge Poora” was coined when party was in a nascent stage. The endeavour was to present Kanshiram as the legitimate successor of Ambedkar. In pursuit of building strong Dalit base, a controversial slogan was pronounced: “Tilak, Tarazu Aur Talwar, Inko Maro Joote Chaar” (Gupta, 2009). The slogan urged Dalits to dismantle upper caste supremacy. The party established its presence in the state politics and it gradually started efforts to broaden its support base. And to do so, the party had to reach out to the other communities. BSP then repudiated and completely disowned the slogan ‘Tilak, Taraju aur Talwar’, asserting that it was not an official party slogan but rather the creation of few miscreants.

BSP also coined the slogan “Brahmin, Thakur, Bania Chhor, Baki Sub Hain DS-4”, which called upon the Muslims and other socially backward castes to come under one umbrella (TeltuMbde, 2014). Inevitably, BSP softened its stringent anti-upper caste position, and in 2002, it devised the casteist slogan- “Brahmin Saaf, Thakur Half, Bania Maaf (Baniyas have been pardoned, Thakurs can be forgiven but Brahmins would be finished)”. Mayawati lately adopted politics of social engineering thereby coined several catchphrases like- “Hathi Nahi Ganesh Hai, Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh Hai (BSP’s election symbol also represents Hindu god Ganesh)”; “Brahman Shankh Bajayega, Hathi Badhta Jayega” (TeltuMbde, 2014). Subsequently, later on Mayawati also coined slogans “Jiski Jitni Sankhya Bhaari, Uski Utmi Bhagidari” and ‘Jiski Jitni Hai Taiyari, Uski Utmi Hissedari” which translates to representation in ticket distribution and sharing of power will be as per the support of the particular

caste in terms of number of votes (Gundimeda, 2014). However, the slogans created by the BSP prior to elections, ranging from a purely casteist “Tilak, Tarazu aur Talwar, Inko Maro Joote Char” to the all-encompassing “Sarva Samaj Ke Samman Mein Behenji Maidan Mein,” not only highlights the transformation in the party’s ideology but have consistently played a crucial role in mobilising its support base.

SLOGANEERING IN THE FOURTH PHASE (1996-2014)

The election campaign in 1996 was a two-way contest between P.V. Narsimha Rao’s economic reforms vs BJP’s Hindutva Politics where BJP coined the slogan ‘Bari Bari Sabki Bari, Abki Bari Atal Bihari’, whereas Congress slogan was ‘Jaat par na paat par, Mohar Lagegi Hath Par’, BJP managed to form the government but it sustained for 13 days. In 1999 election, Atal Bihari led campaign against Congress used his corruption free and statesman image to full effect, coining the slogan ‘Jancha, Parkha, Khara’, subsequently copying and remodelling the slogan of Lal Bahadur Shastri’s ‘Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan’, Vajpayee added a word to the phrase making it ‘Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan and Jai Vigyan’ (Nayar, 2005). The 1999 election also saw a ruthless face-off between two opposite personalities. The debate of ‘Videsi’ (Sonia Gandhi) vs ‘Swadeshi’ (Vajpayee) gained huge momentum. The supporters of BJP started coining new slogans in late 90’s such as “Party ke Teen Dharohar, Atal, Advani Aur Murli Manohar”. Further the developmental model of BJP’s rule was reflected through the slogan “Atal, Advani Kamal Nishan, Maan Raha Hai Hindustan”.

However, in the 2004 election, BJP used the slogan “India Shining” that miserably failed to yield favourable political outcomes for the party. The assurances of a dynamic and progressive India failed to resonate with the populace. Conversely, Congress vigorously contested the election and formulated- “Congress Ka Hath, Aam Admi Ke Sath” as its election motto. The election campaign, centred on the middle class, targeted urban India, which was the BJP’s core support base. The campaign aimed to portray “development” and “growth” as the hallmark characteristics of a burgeoning India (Rangarajan, 2005). This was notably endorsed by the business elite, urban residents, working individuals, and other ambitious segments of Indian society seeking to instill confidence in the Indian economy (Sáez, 2004). Nevertheless, significant portions of the rural populace and those grappling with livelihood challenges saw little significance in the “shining” motto. Agrarian misery and escalating inequities negatively impacted the rural

economy and its buying power; “development” had overlooked them, and the gleaming image of India advancing did not inspire much excitement among them (Yadav, 2004). This was apparent in their voting decisions. Contrary to all predictions, NDA was ousted from power in 2004, leading to the ascendance of the UPA government. The 2009 general elections were fiercely fought in which Congress-led UPA concentrated on its accomplishments of its five-year rule, that included “Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme” and the “Right to Information Act” (Suri, 2008). UPA’s campaign was largely built on the notion that the election is a battle between “secular and liberal nationalism” versus “narrow communalism” of BJP.

“Sonia Nahi Ye Aandhi Hai, Dusri Indira Gandhi Hai” was the slogan of the Congress, whereas BJP’s slogan was “Majboot Neta, Nirnayak Sarkar” (Strong Leader, Decisive Government). The campaign of BJP focused on weak leadership of Congress and termed Manmohan Singh as the weakest and most inefficient Prime Minister of India. The issue of Pakistan sponsored terrorism and threat to India’s National security were also raised by BJP. However, the entire campaign was subdued and cautious in many ways as there were no major issues and controversy in the election. Even though we do not see a “wave” of support in favour of Congress, neither was it met with resounding resistance in the poll battlefield. The 2014 election was preceded by the “India Against Corruption” movement, spearheaded by Anna Hazare in 2011. The problem of corruption emerged and subsequently became a prominent factor in determining the country’s electoral polity. The campaign initiated in Delhi had a profound and enduring influence on the perceptions of individuals, particularly among middle-class urban voters. The corruption charges were already levelled against Congress in the ‘allocation of Coalgate’, ‘2G scam’ and ‘Commonwealth Games’. Several slogans such as ‘Anna Hazare Nahi Aandhi Hai, Vartman Ka Mahatma Gandhi Hai’, ‘Sonia Jiski Mummy Hai, Vo Sarkar Nikkami Hai’, ‘Kyu Paisa Paisa Karti Hai, Lokpal Se Darti Hai’ gained huge momentum through the movement.

SLOGANEERING IN THE FIFTH PHASE (2014-2024)

The 2014 Lok Sabha election is considered as a watershed moment in India’s electoral history. The emergence of Narendra Modi, supported by a revitalised BJP, dismantled several power structures in Delhi, resulting in a significant political transformation as the saffron party swept the nation. NDA secured an impressive 336 seats in the Lok Sabha. In 2014, the BJP secured electoral victory with a series of compelling slogans that criticised Congress

while simultaneously promising the nation a new age of “Vikas” and “Acche Din”.

Modi’s “Abki Baar Modi Sarkar” came with catchphrases such as “Bahut Hua Kisaano Pe Atyachar, Abki Baar Modi Sarkar”, “Bahut Hui Mehangai Ki Maar, Abki Baar Modi Sarkar”, “Bahut Hua Rozgar Ka Intezar, Abki Baar Modi Sarkar”, “Bahut Hua Naari Par Vaar, Abki Baar Modi Sarkar”, “Bina Captain Ki Team Khayegi Maar- Isliye Abki Baar Modi Sarkar”, “No Corruption, No Bhrastachar- Isliye Abki Baar Modi Sarkar”, “No Gundagardi, No Maaramaar- Isliye Abki Modi Sarkar” (Chatterjee, 2019).

The chants inundated city billboards, newspapers, television advertisements, and several other venues, with Narendra Modi and other BJP leaders such as Advani and Amit Shah also appearing on certain posters. The Congress slogan “Har Hath Shakti, Har Hath Tarakki” failed to resonate with people and did not attain the same level of popularity as the BJP ones. Congress resorted to its established strategy of appealing to the common citizen, however they remained dissatisfied. Economic Growth, Corruption and Inflation were the central theme of BJP’s campaign in the election. This was the first instance of BJP advocating for a “Congress-Mukt Bharat”, pledging to electorally wipe out Congress party from the country. The saffron party diminished Congress to just 44 seats in the elections, marking a historic low for the nation’s grand old party. Modi devised the phrase “Acche Din Aane Wale Hai” as a key campaign initiative, promising favourable days to India’s aspiring electorate.

Modi also used metaphoric analogies like “56 Inch Ki Chati”, “Na Khaunga Na Khane Dunga”, “Unki Soch Hai Vansvaad, Hamari Soch Hai Rashtravaad”, “Maa Bete Ki Sarkar (Government of Mother and Son)”, “Desh Ko Shashak Nahi Sevak Ki Zaroorat”, “Ve Naamdar Hai Aur Mai KaamDaar Hu”, “Vikas Bhi, Imaan Bhi Aur Garib Ka Samman Bhi”, “Mamooli Chai Vala, Garib Maa Ka Beta”, “Unke Liye Ganga Ek Nadi Hai, Mere Liye Ganga Maa Hai” to boast about his strong credentials of being a staunch nationalist whose political life is meant only to serve the people (Sinha, 2017). Modi deliberately chose to contest from Varanasi primarily because he wanted to engage in Hindutva politics by consolidating the core Hindu voters in the Hindi heartland states of India and eventually it paid political dividend for the party. However, the campaign of BJP was a mixture of Hindutva and developmental politics. Modi eloquently described and delivered his developmental model by using bit-sized slogans while using phrases such as: “2 Z: Zero Defect, Zero Effect”; “3D: Development, Demography, Dividend”; “3S: Skill, Scale, Speed”; “3W: Roadways, Railways, I’ways”; “4P: People, Public, Private, Partnership”; “4T:

Technology, Transport, Tourism, Travel”; “5F: Farm, Factory, Fiber, Fashion, Foreign”; “Minimum Government, Maximum Governance” (Sinha, 2017). All this one liner had a synchronising impact on the mass populace.

Besides emphasising on the failures and misrule of Congress led UPA government, BJP’s slogans portrayed Modi as a possible remedy for all the existing problems. Some slogans such as “Modi Lao Desh Bachao”, “Desh Mein Mehangai, Bhrashtachar Mitana Hai to Modi Ko Jitana Hai” were straightforward while others like “Jitega Yuva, Badlega Bharat” were designed to galvanise young voters (Tripathi, 2013). Modi’s campaign rallies were usually met with people chanting “Dekho, Dekho Kaun Aaya, Bharat ka Sher Aaya”, while delivering his speech slogan renting the air was- “BJP ko Jitayenge! Jitayenge, Jitayenge. Modiji ko Pradhan Mantri Banayenge, Banayenge Banayenge” (Tripathi, 2013). One of the rallies were named as “Vijay Shankanaad” (victory bugle) in Uttar Pradesh which depicted the confidence and enthusiasm among the karyakartas of saffron party. This rally was held much prior to Modi being designated as the BJP’s Prime Ministerial Candidate. While during Faizabad riots, one heard the provocative slogan- “UP Bhi Gujarat Banega, Faizabad Shuruwat karega”, while Muzaffarnagar riots saw the clarion call- “Desh, Bahu Aur Gay Ko Bachana Hai to Narendra Modi ko lana hai” (Tripathi, 2013).

The campaign also included slogans with casteist connotations. During the beginning of the “Samajik Nyay Yatra” (Social Justice for OBC’s), Samajwadi Party resurrected a historical slogan formulated by socialist thinker Ram Manohar Lohia: “Samajwadiyon Ne Bandhi Ganth, Pichhde Pawein Sau Mein Saath” (Socialists have committed to securing 60% quota for OBCs). SP also focused on slogans like “Desh Bachao, Desh Banao” to underscore Hindu-Muslim solidarity. Conversely, Mayawati coined- “Jiski Jitni Bhagedari, Uski Utni Hissedari”, advocating for the allocation of power and electoral seats proportional to population of the community. She also evoked BSP founder “Kanshiram Teri Nek Kamai, Tu Ne Soti Qaum Jagai” (Kanshiram’s accomplishment is that he enlightened the Dalit community). Supporters and karyakartas of BSP equated her to the Hindu deities and chanted “Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kumari Mayawati Kumari Mayawati” in few of the rallies. From “Tilak Tarazu aur Talwar, Inko Maro Joote Char” to “Hathi Nahi Ganesh Hai Brahma Vishnu Mahesh Hai,”. It is noteworthy of the fact that BSP has always been recognised for developing impactful slogans that not only facilitates electoral victories and expands its voter base but also mirrors its political ideology.

On the other hand, Congress used slogans to promote its transformative and landmark legislative enactments such as the “Food Security Act” and the “Land Acquisition Law”. During the “Dhanyawad Rally” (thanksgiving) Rahul Gandhi urged the populace to commit to “Bhar-Pet Roti Khayenge, Congress Ko Vaapas Laayenge” (vote for the Congress and eat to your stomach's content). A faction of Congress sought Priyanka's leadership. A billboard in Allahabad stated: “Maiya Ab Rehti Bimar, Bhaiya Par Badh Gaya Bhaar, Priyanka Karo Prachaar, Congress ki Sarkar Banao Teesri Baar”, which translates to “Mother is unwell, Brother is overburdened, Priyanka, campaign for Congress to secure a third term.” Congress also responded to the BJP's nationalist discourse with “Kattar Soch Nahi, Yuva Josh” (not extreme ideology but youth empowerment). Despite being visible across several platforms, the campaign did not attain the success that the BJP's slogans experienced during the lead-up to the Lok Sabha elections. During Lok Sabha election in Bihar, various slogans were used both by JDU and BJP to project Nitish Kumar as an effective mass leader who had remarkably worked for the development of the region. Slogans like- “Jhaanse Mein Na Aaye, Nitish Ko Jitaye”, “Bihar Me Bahar Ho, Nitishe Kumar Ho”, “BJP Karegi Pehla Kaam, Jungle Raj Pe Poorna Viram”, “Janta Hai Tayar, Parivartan Lega Bihar, Abki Baar Bhajpa Sarkar” were used in the campaign. While, RJD took a dig at the NDA by coining “Apradh, Bhrashtachar aur Ahankar, Kya is Gathbandhan se Badhega Bihar”.

Modi stormed the national stage with the promise of ‘Acche Din’ and ‘Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas’, these phrases resonated and grasped the minds of voters who ached for leader with the will to provide good governance and fight corruption which was the major issue and challenge at that time. Although in his re-election in 2019, the poll narrative and sloganeering entirely changed and got shifted to National security. Upon the completion of its first year in power, Modi government promulgated the motto “Saal Ek, Shuruaat Anek (One year but many beginnings).” In the second year, the slogan was “Mera Desh Badal Raha Hai, Aage Badh Raha Hai (My country is changing and progressing),” which continues to be one of the most favoured mantras among the BJP's organizational cadre and leaders. The conclusion of the government's third year was commemorated with the slogan “Saath Hai, Vishwas Hai, Ho Raha Vikas Hai (We are together and have faith, development is taking place)”, whereas the conclusion of the fourth year saw Modi unveil a video concluding with the tagline, “Saaf Niyat, Sahi Vikas (Clean Intentions, Good governance)”. Prior to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, two slogans predominated the BJP's campaign: “Phir Ek Baar, Modi Sarkar” (A Modi government once again) and

“Namumkin Ab Mumkin Hai” (Jenkins, 2019). The former derives from the BJP's successful 2014 slogan, which the party believes bolstered its position and resonated with the electorate.

Rahul Gandhi targeted Modi government ferociously during the course of campaign by referring it to be “A Suit Boot Ki Sarkar”, which translates to “Government of the rich and Government for the rich”. There was a constant attempt to paint Modi as a friend of big corporates and enemy of the poor farmers. BJP cautiously reacted by calling itself not as a ‘Suit Boot ki Sarkar’ but as a “Soojh-Boojh ki Sarkar” which translates to a “Sensible and Matured Government”. Congress then launched “Chowkidar Chor Hai” campaign to target Modi. But the political acumen of Modi eventually turned the “Chowkidar Chor Hai” pitch of the Congress on its head. Modi the challenger had given himself the tag of “Chowkidar” in 2014, promising voters that he would neither take bribes nor allow others to do so (PTI, 2019). “Chowkidar Chor Hai” was a direct attack on that promise by Gandhi as he alleged crony capitalism and corruption in the Rafale Jet deal. The agenda of Congress was to tarnish the image of corrupt free Modi government. Congress had ill-intentions to make Rafael issue as big as Bofors scam, but it failed miserably in succeeding it. Supreme Court’s clean chit to the government in Rafael deal dented the campaign of Congress party. Meanwhile, Modi used this as an opportunity to establish counter narrative to galvanize party’s cadre. In this regard, Modi added ‘Chowkidar’ before his name on all the social media platforms, after which his entire cabinet colleagues Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj, Nirmala Sitharaman, Rajnath Singh and dozens of other ministers adopted the prefix to their social media handles. In the first fortnight, an estimated two million Indians followed suit. Then there were the songs and ads on the Chowkidar theme which rejuvenated the entire campaign discourse.

The campaigning in 2019 election can be classified in two distinct phases- Pre and Post Pulwama attack in Kashmir. Pre-Pulwama attack had completely different tone of the campaign where BJP was focusing more on its achievements of past five years; whereas post-Pulwama attack BJP’s poll strategy solely focused on the national security. Post surgical strikes, BJP took upon the mantle of aggressive nationalism by coining several slogans such as-

“Mai Desh Nahi Rukne Dunga, Mai Desh Nahi Jhukne Dunga”,

“Jitega Desh, Harega Aatankwad”,

“Dushman Ke Ghar Me Ghuskar Aatankiyo Par Prahar, Phir Ek Baar Modi Sarkar”,

“Jhuk Gaya Pakistan, Laut Aaya Desh Ka Veer Jawan”,

*“Aatankvadiyo ko Muhtod Jawab, Phir Ek Baar Modi Sarkar”,
 “Har Har Modi, Ghar Ghar Modi, Bam Bam Modi”,
 “Surgical Strike Kar Dia Hai Chaar, Abki Baar Chowkidar”,
 “Lahar Nahi Lalkar Hai Phir Ek Baar Modi Sarkar Hai”,
 ‘Rahul Ka Aatanki Hai Yaar, Abki Baar Modi Chowkidar’,
 “Daagdar Nahi, Damdar Sarkar, Phir Ek Baar Modi Sarkar”,
 “Sava Sa Crore Hai Uska Parivar, Phir Ek Baar Chowkidar” (Thakur, 2020)*

BJP saw political opportunity in using Balakot airstrikes to its electoral advantage. The politicisation of Pulwama significantly influenced popular sentiment, contributing to its electoral triumph in the 2019 election. Modi's rhetoric statement “Pakistan Ko Ghus Ke Mara” (We entered Pakistan and took revenge) emerged as the dominant discourse, eclipsing all other campaign issues. By the time the ballots were cast, Rahul Gandhi's prior comments about Modi, notably “Chowkidar Chor”, had diminished and became electorally inconsequential. The ‘Brand Modi’ triumphed, with the BJP securing 303 seats of its own in the election.

Then came the Parliamentary elections of 2024 where BJP set an ambitious target of more than 400 seats and thereby coining the slogan “Teesri Baar Modi Sarkar, Ab Ki Baar 400 Paar”. Although there is a primary tagline, parties such as BJP and Congress use additional slogans to enhance their poll campaign. The BJP emphasised “400 Paar” and “Modi ki Guarantee”, whilst the Congress underscores its “Nyay” and guarantee initiatives, including the “Ghar Ghar Guarantee”. BJP just like before approached the election by emphasising Modi-centric personalised campaign, promoting Hindu nationalism (with the building of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya), and depicting India as a nation destined for a more prosperous future. The INDIA coalition, spearheaded by the Congress, aimed to frame the election as a referendum on India's democratic destiny, highlighting concerns of fairness and redistribution within a more unequal society. The electoral competition between both the parties intensified significantly when Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that, if elected, the Congress would allocate public assets to Muslims. Lalu Yadav in his campaign speech made a personalised remark on Modi and said that “Modi had no family, to which Modi replied that the ‘whole country is his family. BJP leaders promptly appended the prefix “Modi Ka Pariwar” to their social media profiles, which rapidly garnered extensive popularity. However, it did not create the same buzz and lacked clarity as “Mai Bhi Chowkidar” campaign of 2019. In an election characterised by unforeseen developments and notable setbacks, BJP had one of its most humiliating defeats in Uttar Pradesh,

conceding the Faizabad Lok Sabha seat to the SP. The loss in Ayodhya, a seat of significant symbolic and political relevance to the BJP, indicates a change in the region's political dynamics and perhaps conveys a larger message from the people. Ayodhya has historically served as a stronghold of the BJP's political narrative, intricately linked to the party's socio-cultural identity since the Ram Janmabhoomi agitation. The slogan "Jo Ram ko Laye Hain, Hum Unko Layenge, UP Me Fir Se Hum Bhagwa Lehayenge" succinctly embodied the BJP's campaign. The populist slogan fell flat and did not convert into the votes. The culmination and sanctification of the Ram Temple were pivotal to this storyline, with Modi personally participating in the consecration ceremony. BJP used this event to enhance its electoral chances, anticipating a substantial advantage from the temple's symbolism and the developmental measures it undertook in the region. BJP's slogan "Mandir Vahi Banayenge" was always countered by opposition with the rhetorical war-cry: "Mandir Wahin Banayenge, Lekin Tareekh Nahin Batayenge." The Opposition parties continued to mock the BJP, which vowed to build the Ram Temple in every election manifesto but failed to do so. Finally with the construction of Ram Temple, the poll narrative around it came to an end. Samajwadi Party's slogan "Is Baar, PDA Sarkar (Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak)" significantly influenced the consolidation of Muslims, Dalits and Yadavs in the Hindi heartland state of Uttar Pradesh. Although, BJP became the single biggest party, their campaign in 2024 proved counterproductive. BJP's over-ambitious slogan "Ab Ki Baar, 400 Paar", which sought over 400 seats for NDA coalition, adversely affected voters, as they thought that such a substantial majority would facilitate unlawful alterations in the Constitution of India. The opposition's entire campaign focused on creating false perception that if voted to power Modi will change the constitution and stop the reservation policy. To some extent, they achieved electoral dividend by creating such narrative. In contrast, BJP's campaign aimed to secure a third term by emphasising on issues like good governance, dynamic foreign policy and effective social welfare programs. Moreover, Modi fulfilled several campaign commitments, including the abolition of Article 370, the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, and the enactment of Citizenship Amendment Act.

CONCLUSION

Slogans can primarily be categorised into four types- Political slogans, Identity based slogans, Issue-based slogans and Personality based Slogans. The first phase can be seen as a phase of politico-social-economic sloganeering in which maximum impetus was laid down on the basic social needs and

requirements of the general populace. While in the second phase we see more of a personalised campaign that were based on the doctrine of individual identity assertion. It was the period when Indira Gandhi rose to power and tried to project herself as “India is Indira and Indira is India”. Similarly, during the emergency period, issue-based slogans were created to safeguard the constitutional rights of the citizens. The third phase of sloganeering paved way for socio-cultural-religious proclamation of identity politics in India where Mandal-Masjid and Market phenomenon emerged in the political scene. The fourth phase largely depicted the economic slogans of the time by focusing on the achievements of the respective governments. From wilted slogan of “India Shining” that brought disappointment to the BJP to Congress’s slogan of “Congress ka Hath Aam Aadmi ke Sath” this phase was marked with simple yet impactful slogans. Finally with the rise of BJP in 2014, we are again witnessing a slew of slogans that have spiced up the campaign communication. From ‘Abki Baar Modi Sarkar’ to ‘Acche Din Aane vale Hai’ slogans reverberated the minds and captured the imagination of electorates. Modi’s phase of sloganeering can thus be labelled as a blend of Nationalism fused Leadership centric slogans.

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