

Why the Tide Is Turning in Favor of the BJP

The increasing popularity of India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi among the masses has now become the chief factor that would shape the political destiny of India.

As in every sphere, mass behavior is an ever changing variable. None more so than in the case of the Indian electorate.

Earlier: The only thing predictable about Indian elections is that they are unpredictable.

Now: The writing is on the wall. Its BJP, the PM Modi all the way.

The increasing popularity of PM Modi and sharply decreasing acceptability of the Modi opponents among the masses are all helping in a big way to shape the future of India. The opposition have been creeping slowly towards innovation and are simply out of pace with the ever agile PM Modi dominating the current scene. Over the next 2 months or so, India is likely to change dramatically from what it is today in almost all spheres of public life.

The Impact: Post Feb 26

Consider the Rs. 95,000-crore scam in the IL&FS group. Government entities like the LIC, the Central Bank of India and the SBI are major shareholders in IL&FS. This scam did happen and the government cannot wash its hands of the responsibility as the stakeholders are government companies. But, the fact of the matter is that such a subject along with issues with the RBI and the CBI and many others have swiftly gone into oblivion.

Moreover, the earlier trending topics of unemployment, farm-

loan waive off, Ayodhya, agrarian distress and graft allegations on the BJP-led government are now fully off the electoral discourse.

These and many other issues are of no importance now. The only thing that now matters is: 'the PM Modi did teach Pak a lesson, others could not have done it.'

Such has been the impact post Feb 26 operations!

So, what has been the key factor which brought a sudden upsurge in BJP poll prospects? What will be the key areas for innovation that political parties need to focus on hereinafter?

Patriotism, the new found zeal

While minority appeasement, divide-and-rule policies have dominated Indian political contests since the '70s, post Feb 26, 2019 patriotism is set to be the chief sentiment to influence the mind of an electorate. This is now a new found zeal among the Indian masses, it cuts across all socio-economic lines, it raises the bar above the lines of religion, caste and gender. Political groups who used to run their offices on these lines now cut sorry figures. Whenever they are confronted with questions like 'would you have done it (teach Pak a lesson)', they become inarticulate.

For over four decades, India has been the victim of terrorist activities. Several governments (most of their leaders in opposition now) have come and gone, the situation only worsened. It only took a sequence of recent incidents-starting from Pulwama Feb 14 and culminating in a swift 19-minute IAF operation on Feb 26- which generated the huge pro-Modi invincible tsunami wave which engulfed the whole of India.

The First-timers.

Adding one more level of strength is the young electorate, the 18-19-year-olds, the 10 crore first-time voters. These voters – born between 1997 and 2001 – were not eligible to vote in the 2014 elections. In 2019 election, however, they will be the main factors in almost 282 seats in 29 states. Here the number of fresh voters is more than the victory margins in 2014.

First-time voters vote with little political baggage, may drift to any direction but could become steadfast loyalists of one particular party. They behave differently. They are often better informed, more educated and tech-savvy than the rest of their family, and they can take a stand that may not be in sync with the family's well set political preferences. They can also have an effect on elections by acting as influencers and opinion-generators in their sphere of relatives and friends. Young Muslims, for instance, are getting attracted to the BJP as they see some real organic growth and dignity to all. (*Read triple talaq*) Partition phobia is long over.

With the big battle of 2019 approaching, political parties are on an overdrive to engage with the young electorate. The BJP, say, has been holding booth-level functions for making updated data on fresh voters and to convert them into members for life.

The big question, thus, is which political party will succeed in establishing the correct narrative ahead of the 2019 LS elections to attract the first-time voter. With the spread of 4G connectivity to interiors of India and cheaper smartphones, the 2019 battle is likely to be fought as much on phones as in the streets. Maybe, the younger lot will find phones more handy.

Simultaneous development projects.

In the meantime, the PM Modi kept himself busy with numerous

project launches everywhere in India.

All these, being official functions, the PM Modi makes full use of such occasions and effectively does his electioneering at the government's expense. The Prime Minister does not waste a moment to target opposition leaders and label their actions as "anti-national" or pro "Pak activities".

In one fell swoop, the opposition fell into the trap the PM Modi set for them. This, so far, has been his way of setting the agenda for the 2019 LS elections.

Hats off to the statesmanship of the PM Modi. He does deserve a nomination for the Nobel Peace prize. Indeed, a second term for Team Modi at office seems more assured now.

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