

Creating Discourses via Speeches: A study into the Abroad Political Speeches of Narendra Modi

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Abstract: Media with its continuous changing technologies and innovations has also not only changed the way we understand politics but also the way politicians address to the citizens. Before the technological revolution, the sphere of politics, political debates took place in public forums, where crowds were physically present. However in contemporary times, political events are nothing less than organized visual spectacles broadcasted live from multimillion studios right to our homes. The mediatization of politics has turned politics more into politainment- a combination of politics and entertainment.

In this era of Politainment, thus political speeches become one of most powerful communication tools for politicians to drive their point home. Though the impact of political speeches predates the rise of media culture; but in the current mediatised political environment, political speeches are more than just a way of communicating with the citizens. They become symbolic acts of power, a spectacle that creates a sense of awe and aura around the leader which generates cult following.

This paper tries to analyze the political speeches of Mr. Narendra Modi, the current Prime Minister of India during his foreign trips. Right after assuming office on 26th of April 2015, Mr. Modi has undertaken thirty seven (37) foreign trips besides attending various multilateral meetings & conferences. There is a perception that Mr. Modi is using grand stages to further the ideology of Hindutva and is using the carefully chosen destinations to establish himself as the Great leader who will reassert the primacy of India in the world.

The purpose of the study is to understand the embedded meanings in the speeches of Mr. Modi vis-à-vis his foreign tours by delineating the dominant themes of his speeches. It tries to understand and investigate the logic behind the foreign Jaunts of Mr. Narendra Modi by analyzing the content of the speeches. It is an attempt to put into context the speeches and the policies of the government and try to find the relationship between text and context using textual analysis.

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Political communication is the lifeblood of every political entity in particular and political systems in general. The society whether social, political or economic cannot develop and exist without communication. It is a sort of symbolic representation and exercise of the authority and power which the political orator wields. The politics in democracies is dependent on the participation of its citizenry and their participation is made possible only through the effective political communication. To define political communication accurately is very difficult because of the dynamism of the term. The term political communication comprises of two components and both are open to changes which makes it hard to put it in some concrete terms. Some say it is just the exchange of information from those wielding power and influence over the common citizen while others argue it to be an act of influencing the public – their knowledge, beliefs and ideologies – by powerful rhetoric.

Swanson and Nimmo (1990) define it as **“the strategic use of communication to influence public knowledge, beliefs, and action on political matters.”**

This definition enunciates and emphasizes on the nature of the communication and underlines the role of the persuasion in political discourse. This definition is holistic and all encompassing. Brian McNair (2003) more or less follows the same line when he says political communication is *"purposeful communication about politics."* Doris Graber, (1981) suggests that it comprises not only rhetoric but paralinguistic signs such as body language, and political acts such as boycotts and protests. These scholars have narrowed down the scope of political communication by including only those messages which are related to the governing part of the political system leaving the recipients in political communicative events such as the public, the people, citizens and other groups or categories out of the paradigm of political discourse.

Political communication, therefore, in a broader sense includes all forms – verbal, written and visual – communication undertaken by politicians and other political actors for the purpose of achieving specific objectives (political Image/Identity/acceptance). It helps the politicians to shape and garner support for their ideology and public policies envisaged for the greater good of the public.

Speech as a form of Political Communication

Speech as a form communication involves the usage of words for the exchange of information, ideas and feelings between two or more persons with the primary purpose of explaining and persuading each other to either toe their ideology or support their policies in a definite paradigm of mutual welfare. Speech is a tool of communication which helps the orators to establish a bond with the listeners and thus, persuading the

target audience to adopt or reject something by enunciating the pros and cons of the particular thing – idea or way of life.

Speaking is by far the most widely form of communication. People usually prefer oral words for conveying the message across as people spend much more time speaking, listening and discussing than reading or writing.

Speaking is an important medium for getting things done, but it requires the ability of keeping a grip on the audience so that they listen carefully to both act and reflect on what is being conveyed to them. Speaking is much more effective when it is clear, relevant, informative, concise and appropriate in phraseology and tone. The act of speaking is greatly beneficial in case of problem resolution. The conflicts, disputes and many issues/differences can be put to an end by talking them over.

Public speaking can be an effective part of the conflict resolution. It can play a vital part in the dissemination of information and alleviating the misconceptions about each other and help build a just and fair society.

Significance of Political speech

A political speech is a kind of persuasive speech premised on the fact that a politician has to win over the hearts and minds of the audience for the implementation of the policies envisaged for the mutual benefit of the ruler and ruled. It is effective way to directly connect with the voters for the survival in the politics by enunciating the policies undertaken for their betterment.

Political speeches are supposed to increase the population's political participation, help them to understand important issues and how a problem is best solved as well as a way for the politicians to persuade others to have the same opinions as them. The speeches usually rest on the discussion and exposure of an issue and, most importantly, the use of persuasion techniques (Irimiea 2010:3)

Communication is a fundamental aspect of politics. In fact, most of the time it can be argued that good communication of a policy is more important than the policy itself. A politician's or governments communicative abilities are vital to their political survival.

The policymakers enact the laws to alleviate the sufferings of general and the downtrodden sections and it is through the communication that the information gets to the people and there is no better way than speaking directly to the people. Election campaigns rely on good communication. The way a candidate speaks to the people is sometimes more important than what he/she is actually saying, especially in the modern era of spin doctors and twenty-four hour news channels.

There are many speeches which have altered the course of history. The impact of the speech is directly proportional to the credibility a speaker holds and the logic with which the speaker conveys the message.

Making speeches is the way leading politicians convey information and opinions to the people, and computers and TV have undoubtedly made it easier for the citizens (and other people across the world) to access those speeches. These days, although the audience is a key part of political speeches, the real audience is the millions of people reading the speeches in the newspapers, listening to them on the radio or watching them on TV (Beard 2000:37). The speeches are usually written in advance for the speakers by professional speechwriters. Not very many political speeches are transmitted as wholes. Instead, only highlights of the speeches are broadcasted; the highlights are sometimes referred to as soundbites. Experts always consciously choose the sound bites in advance (Beard, A. 2000:37). While listening to or reading speeches, we might not reflect on or even notice the use of personal pronouns. Personal pronouns make up a big part of political speeches, because they can give an idea of whom the speaker in question identifies with. The pronominal choices in political speeches are also interesting because they make an important influence to the overall effect (Beard 2000:43). Politicians present themselves as being able to identify with the wants, interests and needs of the audience. They present themselves in that way to be perceived as good politicians i.e. suitable leaders of the nation. The way politicians present themselves in their speeches, by referring to themselves, their audience and also their opposition can successfully be used to persuade the audience to agree with them. When giving speeches, politicians have a tendency to present the positive aspects of themselves and the 5 negative aspects of their opponents. One way of achieving this is by intentionally using specific personal pronouns, which refer to themselves or others (Allen 2007:2).

Narendra Modi and his Speeches:

On 26th May 2014, Mr. Narendra Damodardas Modi, Ex-Chief Minister of Gujarat, was sworn in as the 14th Prime Minister of India from the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic alliance (NDA). Riding the crest of a popular wave of revulsion against the rampant corruption, Mr. Modi promised “*development*” to the young aspirational generation of voters. But most of all, he marshaled a strong army of activists of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and many other organizations, affiliated with Sangh Parivar.

BJP’s star campaigner and Prime Minister elect Narendra Modi’s speeches usually are a medley of chest thumping, flailing arms, sarcasm and wit. Such is the capability of Narendra Modi that he can go on speaking extemporaneously for hours and hours together. With the addition of crowd-pleasing optics, carefully chosen backdrops, his every speech becomes a piece of coffee-shop conversation and an invitation to search for hidden meanings. In contemporary politics he has no equal in the art of oratory. *Nilanjan*

Mukhopadhyay in his book *Narendra Modi: The Man, The Times*, writes that Modi's great oratory skills can be traced to his love for theatre. The writer says that Modi enjoyed playing the role of *Jogidas Khuman*, a Robin-Hood type character popular in Gujarati folklore (*Mukhopadhyay, 2013*)

After assuming the office he has carefully chosen the platforms to remain in media limelight to put his message across to the wider audience. *Mann Ki Baat* is one such platform which helps him to reach the remotest corners of the country. The success of the programme can be gauged by the fact that a survey conducted by All India Radio (AIR) found that 66.7 per cent tuned in to the radio to listen to the show (Das, 2015) Media pundits believe that Modi is the master in communicating his ideas that too on the grand stages unlike his predecessors. He is being termed as the *NRI Prime Minister* by the opposition as he has spent a vast amount of time and money visiting foreign lands and addressing the audience there. His trips cost around Rs.37 crore in the first year itself. (*Dhawan, 2015*).

He is often accused of being a one man show, constantly gleaming in the media limelight but nobody can deny his skills in public presentation which he has mastered over the years. Modi's has undoubtedly put oratory back as the centerpiece of politics and has redefined the art of politicking.

Rationale of the Study

Narendra Modi is being termed as the most effective and domineering communicator India has seen in decades. Mr. Modi, by the sheer dint of his capability of connecting with people, has been successful in grabbing the reigns of the country. He holds a sway over his audience whenever and wherever he speaks. Mr. Modi has used this ability to the maximum not only on the domestic turf but on foreign soil as well. He has held massive rallies in foreign countries and because of their success he is being projected as the "showman" by the certain quarters of the media. Right after assuming office on 26th of April, 2015, Mr. Modi has undertaken thirty seven foreign (37) foreign trips besides attending various multilateral meetings & conferences and has surpassed all his predecessors as far as this aspect of Prime-Ministership is concerned. The objectives of these trips vary – from being state visits aimed at strengthening the bilateral relations to addressing the Diaspora settled in these foreign countries.

Whatever Modi says becomes the part of the coffee shop discussion and newsroom debates. So to study and understand the dominant themes and the impact of his speeches, particularly on the foreign turfs, a study has been undertaken.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant in the sense that after assuming the reigns of this country, Modi has been on a continuous journey and during these trips he has been constantly communicating with his audience. Modi's

speeches are dubbed by various leaders as rhetorical and lacking the will to finally see the words transforming into concrete action.

There is a perception among the audience that Mr. Modi has been using the official machinery to project himself as the great leader who can bring the beleaguered country out of the morass that it is in. There is also a perception that Modi is using grand stages to further the ideology of Hindutva.

Research Objectives

- 1. To discover the dominant themes of his Speeches to foreign audience.*
- 2. To find out whether he is building his image or of his country.*
- 3. To study whether these speeches are meant merely for grabbing domestic prime time media space to be in the news and corner his opposition on this front.*

Reference Period

The study (textual analysis) was carried out on the selected speeches delivered by Mr. Narendra Modi from 28th September 2014 to 13th November 2015. The number of the attendees attending the event where Modi was speaking, magnitude of the event, importance of that place in the context of foreign relations, and the announcements made were the criteria for the selection of the speeches for the study.

Primary Data

Consists of selected speeches delivered abroad by Mr. Modi. The study used the transcripts – some available in English while others have been translated – of the speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Study

The study undertaken has used the Textual Analysis and rhetorical criticism and thematic analysis techniques of content analysis. The study has been done by employing this analysis technique because the study had to understand the relationship between text and context of the speeches of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Textual analysis is suitable for this study because it is a technique to highlight or elucidate the motives behind the rhetoric of the politicians. The textual analysis technique helps the researcher to

make an educated guess or interpretation of the words, phrases, metaphors and contrasts present in the political speeches.

Textual Analysis of Speeches

Speech 1

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

Date: 28th September, 2014

As per estimates there was around 18,500-strong audience at Madison Square Garden to watch Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Madison Square Garden, New York (WSJ, 2014)

Modi's Madison Square Garden was an important part of Modi's tour of America. It was important speech both in terms of the people assembled and the kind of the reception and cultural show that was put on display. Modi entered the venue amid thundering cheers and chanting of Modi's name from the audience. The programme started with singing of India's national anthem. In this speech he relied heavily on the contrast, comparison, metaphors, circumstance, testimonies, allusion and pathos. He made reference to the country's rich history and opportunities that attracted people from across the world to India. The speech was youth oriented as is the case with his other speeches. The speech usually revolves around themes like emotional appeal, youth, development, foreign relations and polarizing ideology.

Theme: Emotional Appeal (Pathos)

It is very essential for a public speaker to establish a bond with the audience during an event. Narendra Modi being a communicator of par excellence chose to employ the emotional technique to connect with his audience. When he started his speech he directly targeted the emotional sense of the people assembled there by painting the images of old and backward India by metaphors and similes –

“There was a time when India was considered a land of snake charmers. If you (NRIs) and the youth had not worked hard in the field of information technology, India would have still been called the land of snake charmers.”

As soon as the audience heard these sentences, they erupted in thunderous cheer. This statement was made to instantly connect with the audience. Modi tries to portray India in positive light and highlights the transformation India has gone through – from being the land of snake charmers & black magic to the hub of information technology. Modi is trying to re-establish and redeem India's image. Modi portrays India as land of many possibilities and opportunities where scientific temper is increasing day by day. By this

statement Modi tried to make a point that the India of snake charmers and black magic is a thing of past. India is heading in the direction of progress and development.

It was a direct attempt at hitting the raw nerve of the Indian-Americans settled in the US. People coming from India were usually termed as snake charmers and backward. By talking about the transformation, Modi was actually assuaging their feelings of inferiority complex and tried to make a point to the world community that India should be reckoned as an important player in the international order given the advancement it has made in the recent past in the field of science and technology.

Theme: Development Agenda

Mr. Modi during the election campaigning choose the theme of development. He used the development *mantra* on vast scale to win the hearts of his voters. Mr. Modi used media machinery to highlight the progress which Gujarat had made under his leadership. His Gujarat model was effectively used by the media to portray him as *Vikas Purush* (Development Man). In this speech Modi also used this *Vikas-Mantra* to appeal to his audience. Modi tried to build his image as a workaholic Prime Minister who would never take any vacation for his own-self. Reassuring the audience about the agenda of development, Modi highlighted schemes like *Skill development, Make in India, Digital India, Jan Dhan Yojana* for poor unbanked people.

Theme: Polarizing words / Ideology

“We all are aware about our history; Britain would govern us. And before them many outsiders governed us for about 1000-1200 years.”

It is a fact that India has grown up as a colony for about 200 years under the British rule. The conditions during British rule were pathetic. During their reign Indian resources were drained out for the betterment of the Britain. During this speech Modi uses the phrase 1000-1200 years. The phrase assumes significance, when we hear it from a person who is a Prime Minister of the country which so diverse in terms of religions, ethnicities, caste, regions etc. The millennium which Modi adds refers to the era when majority of the rulers were Muslims. So when he adds the Muslim rule to the era of “*Servitude*”, he automatically paints the Muslims in bad light. And thus tries to polarize the country on communal terms and with it he also tries to change the perception with which we see the history of India.

Adhering to the calls of RashtriyaSwayam-SevakSangh (RSS) Mr Modi from the start has been saying it all around the world that he is a proud Hindu nationalist notwithstanding the fact that he is a Prime Minister of a country and not of a specific Party.

Theme: Self-aggrandizement / image building (Nation as well as His own)

In his speeches, Modi always tries to cast himself into the mold of a messiah who always yearns for the betterment of the people. Through his grandiose public speech about his achievements, he camouflages himself as the development oriented man, reinforced by the slogan *Sab KaSaath Sab KaVikas (Together will all, Development for all)*.

Modi in his speech talked about the Mahatma Gandhi's contribution to the freedom struggle i.e. making it a mass movement. Mr. Modi subtly tried to reassert himself as the decisive leader which India needed to re-establish itself in the world order. By saying that he is going to make the developmental process a mass movement, he tried build his image like that of Mahatma Gandhi – an all-encompassing political figure who will take along every section of the society on the path of progress and development –

“I am also striving to make developmental process a mass movement. 1.25 billion People of this country should become the participants in this process.”

Modi also took a jibe, by reducing himself to his immediate identity, at the people who criticised him for being a *Chaiwala* (tea seller). This simple statement highlighted the shrewd political mind hiding behind the façade of tea seller. This was an effective handle which was used by Modi to beat his opposition in the general elections. Modi persisted with this campaign to appeal the lower sections of the society towards him. It was a shot in the armory and it acted as a magnet to attract the downtrodden towards his ideology –

“When people say Modiji give us some bigger vision; my reply to them has been that I was a tea seller. I am an average person and that is why I take pleasure in doing small things.”

Theme: Indo-US relations / Investment

“People from outside say that there are many hindrances in doing business in India but today I say that they things of distant past now.”

Mr. Modi had come to the US for forging strong ties with the US both economically and strategically. During his speech tried to build on the relations by invoking concepts like democracy, demand and demography. He tried to encourage foreign investment by highlighting the plus points of the decision of investing in India. Cashing in on the image, Modi made an appeal to the Indian Diaspora settled in America and the American business tycoons to invest in India. Modi knew America was looking for the call by the Indian establishment to invest in their country. He invoked the availability of low cost production, decisive government and the availability of the market to woo them.

Theme: Youth / NRI's

“With your (NRI's) conduct, culture, and potential, you have earned respect in America. It is because of you that a positive image of India has been created through-out the world.”

Modi's elevation to the top post of the country had a great support from the NRI community. The NRI's had supported Modi both financially and physically. Non-residents had spent a lot of time in India planning and strategizing the whole campaigning which was done in both urban and rural areas on a large scale. Political messages according to the nature of the audience were developed so that messages reach the audience effectively and in return they would get favorable response from them. This also signified the role of the NRI's for the positive image India has gained in the recent years in western countries.

“A nation that has the 65% population below 35 years, which has the skilled workforce; the youth which has the ability to connect with the world through computer has no reason to look back. (Has no reason to remain stuck in the past?).”

Modi, during the election campaigning, laid great emphasis on the young voters. It was estimated that around 150 million new voters, a major chunk of whom consisted of first time voters. These statements were, therefore, completely in sync with the agenda of development and the foreign investment. It was a direct appeal towards the young and the restless that they are important element of the economic wellbeing of the country. It was also an indication that they are high in his priority list. The statements like making new Skill universities and Make in India campaign were things which showed where youth is in the Modis scheme of things.

Speech 2

San Jose California (Digital India Summit).

Date: 1st July, 2015

The Digital India initiative launched by Narendra Modi Government has the prime purpose of making available all the services to citizens electronically by improving Digital literacy, online infrastructure and increasing Internet connectivity. The initiative was launched by the government on 1st July 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. His US tour had in its itinerary a Digital Summit where top honchos of the digital world would hold an interaction with the Prime Minister of India regarding his ambitious project of connecting the rural as well as the urban areas through high-speed network for easy service delivery and help India achieve overall growth. Prime minister, Narendra Modi, undertook a trip to San Jose, the capital of the Silicon Valley, and met the Tech Giants regarding his dream of digital India.

Mr. Modi in his introduction lauded the role of the I-T in the transformation of the world. He talked about the changes which the technological advancement has been able to usher in the lives of the people. It was a carefully drafted speech full of allegory, then deliberately slowing through serious turns of argument before gracefully finishing on a note of optimism and thunderous applause from a full house. The Prime Minister during his speech struck a chord with the I-T community and the Diaspora present there. He highlighted the transformation that had ushered with the help of the technological advancement and entrepreneurship – which are the heartbeat of the Silicon Valley.

“The status that now matters is not whether you are awake or asleep, but whether you are online or offline.”

Mr. Modi used the zingers and highlighted the transformation in a lighter vein. He highlighted how rural India has coped with the technology and what has been the end result of this intervention. He subtly made a point that the technology is reaching the poorest and the weakest sections of the society and how it has changed the outlook of their life.

Narendra Modi in the same breath turned towards the technological bigwigs and addressed them in the words which were cloaked in humor –

“Google today has made teachers less awe-inspiring and grandparents more idle.”

Theme: A call to action / Digital India

Modi in his speech asked the tech giants to enter into the untapped Indian market and help the Indian government to realise its dreams of making India a digital country. Modi enunciated the decisions his government has taken to make the business hassle free something which was his favorite slogan during the election campaigning. The campaign goes in complete sync with the agenda of development –

Modi heaps praise on the technological valley and says it is the place where sun hardly sets and innovative ideas are born every day. In a sense he tried to invite the IT companies to implement their ideas in India and with the establishment of the new government, the atmosphere has started to become conducive and business friendly –

“We have set up Ebiz portal to make approvals for businesses and citizens easy and efficient so that they concentrate their energy on their goals, not on government processes.”

Theme: Image / Goodwill

Narendra Modi cashes in every opportunity available to enumerate the achievements of the government under his leadership. During digital India summit he also cashed in on the opportunity. In a carefully chosen words laced with the praise for the technology, he praised himself for the development during his tenure –

“Since my government came to office last year, we have attacked poverty by using the power of networks and mobile phones to launch a new era of empowerment and inclusion: 180 million new bank accounts in a few months; direct transfer of benefits to the poor; funds for the unbanked; insurance within the reach of the poorest; and, pension for the sunset years for all.”

Theme: India – US relations

Narendra Modi in his speech pitched for partnership between India and the US, a partnership based on mutual benefit and sustainability. Modi tried to woo the tech giants of America who happen to be headed by the Indian origin people to strengthen the ties between the countries by joining his ambition of Digital India. He tried to build his case by saying that this partnership will better the lives of one sixth population of the world. He made a promise to take India up to the next stage of its development, a vision that he intended to achieve through policy campaigns such as Digital India and Make in India –

“Our relationship is also defined by the power of youth, technology and innovation. These can ignite a partnership that will advance and sustain prosperity in our two countries.”

Speech 3**All-phones Sydney**

Date: 17th November 2015

Introduction

Mr. Narendra Modi in his introduction heaps praise on the people of Australia and on Indian diaspora settled in Australia for the grand reception which he was accorded after landing in Australia. The visit was the first by any sitting Prime Minister in 28 years.

Theme: Against communalism

In an apparent reference to recent incidents of violence in some parts of the country, the Prime Minister warned the Indian community of the repercussions of the violence based on communalism and casteism. The agenda of development on which Modi had assumed the reigns of the country was getting waylaid and it was getting difficult for the Modi led government to save itself from the brickbats of the opposition. The

divisions in the polity were also hampering the country's progress. Invoking Vivekananda, which in a way seemed glorification of Hindutva Ideology as he is being revered by BJP and RSS, Modi said –

“What Swami Vivekananda said carried so much foresight. He said 50 years before India's Independence that for the next fifty years, they should forget their gods and goddesses. It was surprisingly coming from a sanyasi. A spiritual person was saying this. He said, if you want to pray, then pray only for Mother India.”

All along his foreign tours, Mr. Modi has been the purveyor of his ideology and the talks about the nationalism by invoking the sayings of leaders affiliated with the Rightwing Parties. Modi tried to associate the sentiment of nationalism with the right wing leaders. During his speech, Modi continuously invoked Swami Vivekananda to forcefully make his point. Thus achieving two main objectives; showing the world community that he cares for everyone irrespective of religion and at the same time preaching his ideology.

Theme: Indo-Australia relations

“...History and culture has strengthened this unbroken partnership. Both countries are democracies”

Modi during his speech compared the two countries in terms of democracy and cricket and made it a point to establish that the two countries are culturally intertwined. Modi was pitching for a mutually beneficial partnership because Australian resources like coal, LNG and uranium will help provide for India's energy security for decades to come. It is also a fact that half of Australia's universities have a presence in India.

Theme: Pro poor / image buildup

“I have to work on small issues; I want to do the small jobs for the small people and want to strive to make these small people big!”

Modi brought forward the achievements of his governments by listing the schemes he has launched for the welfare of the poor and the downtrodden. He highlighted the role of financial inclusion of the poorest of the poor for the overall development of the country. He highlighted how it will reduce corruption and circulation of black money and put the money related crimes on a check.

It has been felt, in certain quarters of the society, that Modi is pro-corporate and doesn't care for the poor of the country. The statement there was meant to assuage the feelings of poor and in turn help him in projecting himself as pro-poor. He also tried to gloss his image by highlighting the dedication with which he is working on his close-to-heart schemes.

“I said it has to be completed in 150 days. It was for the first time in 68 years, that 10 million bank accounts opened in a year. In 10 weeks 71 million bank accounts were opened.”

Theme: Developmental agenda (Make in India / Skill Development, Human resource development / investment)

Pitching for the investment, Modi invited the investors from all across the world to invest in the country by availing the *Make in India* initiative. Understanding the situation, Modi highlighted the role of *Make in India* campaign and talented youth for the development of the country. The biggest challenge India faces is not the employment but the talented people not having an opportunity to improve their quality of life.

Going by the government estimates India has 65% population below 35 years. India has the capacity to meet the demands of work force of the world. But capacity does not give India upper hand. Modi pitched for their skill upgradation so that they become employable.

Speech 4

Wembley Stadium

Date: 13th November, 2015

Introduction

The visit to Britain was the 28th destination on the list of foreign visits undertaken by Narendra Modi after assuming power in the general elections of 2014. This was only the second visit, in the whole career as a politician, of Narendra Modi to Britain because of the denial of travelling documents by the concerning country for his “dubious past”. Around 60,157 were part of the event. The event was an unofficial one and had been organized by the Europe India Forum (EIF).

The Speech revolved around the themes of politics, culture and economics.

Theme: Economics and Development

Mr. Modi in this speech delved over the economic issues, the country is faced with. This was the main issue during the election campaigning. During the speeches abroad Mr. Modi delved over the economic issues in detail and highlighted the resourcefulness of the country and how the ruling parties mainly Congress has been responsible for the economic degradation of the country. This has been the main theme of Modi’s speeches. He usually makes it a point to sideline and corner the opposition on foreign turfs. For this he has been criticized by the congress and other parties as well for defaming them and the country

This rhetoric about the economic degradation and how the erstwhile ruling parties were responsible for this mess achieves two ends. First it projects Modi as a kind of *messiah* to take India out of the mess, thereby presenting him in a good light.

Secondly, it presents the previous parties in a bad light and thus achieves the end of promoting BJP as a party and ideology. The continuous ranting about the economic mess and projection of Gujarat Model discredits the previous ruling parties. It gives a notion that he is in continuous campaigning mode and acting as BJP's Prime Minister rather than the whole country, something for which he has been criticized vehemently by his critiques.

The raising of economic issues also helps Modi to counter the narrative of being anti minorities and pro-corporate. Criticizing the earlier governments for mishandling and politicizing the Railways sector, Modi announced that the government is going to allow 100% FDI in the railways for its betterment. This announcement goes in sync with the earlier campaigning about the modernization of railways during the campaigning for general elections.

“We have a very old railway and we have allowed a 100% FDI in the rail sector to develop it on modern lines and provide services to the faraway areas where rail has not reached.”

Theme: Security and terrorism

Security and terrorism has been an important part of the speeches of Prime Minister. During this speech Modi also talked about it in detail. This was a great opportunity for the Modi led government to pitch for the permanent Security Council seat by highlighting the traditions of liberalism and secularism and the rich traditions of the multi-religiosity and cultural diversity.

“The words of Kabir and Rahim deeply inspire us. Sometimes I feel that if Sufi traditions are strengthened we wouldn't have seen the different manifestations of terrorism which we see today. Had there been a deeper influence of Sufism on the Islam, people would not have thought of picking up the guns.”

The mention comes in the backdrop of the Paris Attacks in November 2015. Denouncing extremism, Modi pitched for Sufi Islam and it is in this context that India hosted World Sufi Forum 2016 from 17 to 20 March. The touching of this issue bordered on two moot points – pitching for Security Council Seat and propping up the image of the India in the western world by highlighting accommodative traditions. The aim was to impress upon the audience and the global leaders to acknowledge India as a force to reckon with in security and economy related affairs of the world.

Theme: Image Buildup

“Clean India, Skilled India, Digital India are the areas where we are working to take India towards taking on new heights.”

During the Speech Modi also made a mention about the Clean India Initiative, rural electrification and banking the unbanked. These are the pet issues of Narendra Modi and it was through these issues that Modi won the Elections of 2014. And it is through these Mr. Modi has been able to cast himself in a different mold and portrayed himself as someone who can take India forward. Highlighting the achievements Modi invoked better ranking as far as ease of doing business is concerned thereby heaped praise on his own self for this achievement –

“For the first time, we are better placed than china. On the scale of ease of doing business we have also made some progress by the steps that we have taken.”

Research Findings & Conclusion:

The study was undertaken to explore the various nuances of the speeches of the 12th Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi delivered abroad from 28th September 2014 to 13th November 2015. The aim of the study was to establish, enunciate and highlight the dominant themes of the speeches of Narendra Modi. The study also tried to understand whether or not Mr. Modi's speeches border on self-applause aimed at bettering his image by projecting himself as the chosen one who can take India out of the economic morass. The study was also an attempt to understand whether the speeches were an avenue for grabbing the prime time space to corner his opponents on foreign turf.

Like any communicator of par excellence, Mr. Modi during his speeches tried to connect with people emotionally (Pathos) by touching the raw nerves of the audience. He invoked the past images of India – poor, backward and snake charmers – aimed at assuaging the feeling of the people residing in these foreign countries and those residing back in India. People from India were always considered backward without any technical and scientific know how; good for only snake charming. They had no social standing and were being looked down upon by the westerners and lived on the margins of the society.

Modi by highlighting the insults and discrimination tried to make them remember their past laden with insecurities, discrimination and low social status. As a good communicator, he follows it up with the words of comfort by highlighting the achievements of the youth in the field of Information technology and tries to win over the hearts of youth who form the bulk of the Indian population (65 percent of the population is below 35 years of age – Modi at Madison and Wembley).

In his Madison Square Garden Speech, Mr. Modi stated –

“Our ancestors used to play with snakes but now we play with mouse. Now our youth make this world working with a little tinkering with mouse (computer)”.

These statements pep up the morale of his target audience. During the study it was found that the speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi revolved around the themes which can be broadly categorized into –

1. Economics (Development)
2. Goodwill (Image building)
3. Youth and NRI's
4. Promoting Hindutva Ideology
5. Security and Terrorism

The dominant theme that runs along all the foreign journeys of Modi is the Economics. Modi during his election campaigning projected and marketed the *'development'* he had made in the State of Gujarat during his tenure as chief minister. All the news channels were constantly beaming the images of “Prosperous” Gujarat. It was a strategy effectively utilized by the BJP to win the hearts and minds of the people and Modi kept reinforcing that image through his speeches. This is something for which opposition used to criticize him for using the grand stages even after elections were over to portray himself as the “VikasPurush” (Development Man).

The speeches revolved around the new policies being unveiled by the Modi led Government to cash in foreign investment to boost economy. This was aimed at showing himself as the representative of the land of vast opportunities and possibilities. He presented India in a positive light and asks the investors to be a part of the success story. Modi, thereby, promotes India as a better investment destination –

The speeches were crafted in such a way that they acted as Government's communication link between the corporates and the common man. Modi hardly spoke about the issues whether economic or social in the parliament when the house was in session. He usually took these tours as an opportunity to speak what he had envisaged for India. These stages usually got more eyeballs and newspaper space than what he would have gotten in the domestic media landscape as someone representing the Government. He unveiled his new policies during these tours. Modi did a complete somersault by giving green signal to the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Defense, Retail and Insurance through his speech at Wembley stadium.

Staying true to his Idea of Digital India, which has somewhat defined him after becoming Prime Minister, Modi visited Silicon Valley in San Jose, California to pitch for investment in the digital sector. After Rajiv Gandhi, he is the only politician who gave much importance to the IT sector. This visit goes in sync with the

image of a techno-savvy politician which he has created over the years. Heaping praise on his government for the E-governance initiatives related to Business and commerce. The invocation of these initiatives was aimed at making an impression that the current Government was thinking out-of-box because of him and therefore, subtly hinting that he is the person who can take India forward by holding both rich and poor together.

To reinforce – the new image carved by the effective usage of Media machinery – Modi in his speeches talks about the Mahatma Gandhi's contribution to the freedom struggle i.e. making it a mass movement. Mr. Modi subtly tries to reassert himself as the decisive leader which India needed to re-establish in the world order. By stressing upon developmental process, he tries build his image like that of Mahatma Gandhi – an all-encompassing political figure who will take along every section of the society on the path of progress and development. This is a kind of smokescreen used by the Modi to show the world that he can take along all the sections of the society without any bias or prejudice. This was apparent appeasing of the world leaders, trying to put across that the past is past, and now he concerns himself with only development .

Modi is a skilled politician adept at latching on to every opportunity. Modi used the jibe by Senior Congress leader to further build his image in the lower sections of the society through his speeches. He continuously invoked *Chaiwala* jibe during most of his speeches to his advantage. He reduced himself to immediate identity of *Chaiwala* with an aim to build a rapport with lower sections of the society.

Throughout his speeches, he makes a mention of vast youth potential, his decisive government and new policies. This has earned goodwill for himself as well as for his country by associating the development process with the youth. He invoked 3D's – Democracy, Demography and Demand to push other countries towards selecting India as the chosen business destination. He therefore, often projected India as a land of many opportunities with a decisive leader at the helm of its affairs –

During all these speeches, Modi subtly propagates the ideology of Hindutva propounded by BJP's parent organization and ideological fountainhead. He constantly chants *Bharat Mata Ki Jai*, which has become the ultimate certifier of being a nationalist. The RSS headed by Mohan Bhagwat issued the dictate that the younger generation should be made to chant the slogan.

From the study findings it can be concluded that Mr. Narendra Modi is a staunch follower of the Hindutva ideology and usually wears it on his sleeve. Narendra Modi and Hindutva are two synonymous things and can be used interchangeably. Wherever Modi goes, he makes a mention of his ideology and tries to promote it.

The foreign jaunts of Narendra Modi also signify how much Modi loves the grand stages. During the first year in office, Modi spent around **37 crores** on his foreign jaunts. In the first year of office, he was overseas

for 53 of 365 days, traveling to 17 countries which resulted in him getting dubbed as “NRI Prime Minister”. But Modi continued with his foreign jaunts despite hearing a mouthful from the opposition. These grand stages, actually, help Modi to be in news and create a liking among the audience – both active and passive by constantly beaming a certain message on a continuous loop through media. He also makes these an opportunity to corner the opposition on the corruption front and bad governance by highlighting the recent achievements and the policies being unveiled by the current dispensation headed by him. His rhetoric has an underlying motive of degrading and disgracing opposition over what he terms *mis-governance*.

The study also concludes that Narendra Modi has been striving hard to give a flip to his image which he has been successful to some extent by the adroit usage of conventional, social and alternate media. The impressive usage of social media helped him attract the youth towards him and his ideology. These impressive shows also proved as a means to hog the media limelight for a greater amount of time.

The images of Modi talking development and good governance on foreign lands seem to have been chosen as an antidote to ideological aggression over the option of harsh reprimand. This strategy of dovetailing development with ultra-nationalism is a carefully calibrated move to counter the growing cry of socio-religious majoritarian aggression. The strategy, as it appears, achieves two ends. Firstly, whenever there’s uproar of *development agenda* getting derailed by the communal rhetoric as well as action by the right wing cohorts, these jaunts and the ensuing speeches will keep on diverting and bringing back the attention on the much touted development agenda. It will comfort the pro-development and those liberals who got swayed by the Modi’s rhetoric during the Election campaigning. Secondly, it will keep on boasting the image of Modi and the ideology he so vehemently represents in national as well as international political fora’s.

This constant travelling and then coverage by the prying media also seems to have long-term motive of creating an atmosphere of acceptance for the hitherto widely opposed ideology of ultra-nationalism propounded by the BJP’s ideological fountainhead. This ideological altering will be same to what was evident during the 2014 election where people were made to believe that past is past and the only thing that holds relevance is economy and good governance which was possible only through the implementation of *Gujarat Model* at national level. Media is a powerful tool. Whatever people see – whether glorification or rejection of some idea on various media platforms – alters the perception with which people look at things. Same is true with the coverage of political discourses. As people keep on seeing images and content regarding a particular political idea or ideology, the seeds of that ideology will ultimately take roots and start to sprout and that is the ultimate motive of the forces behind this whole media driven ideological juggernaut.

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