

Journal of Management & Public Policy

Vol. 16, No. 1, Sept 2024 Pp. 4-7

ISSN 0976-0148 (Online) 0976-013X (Print)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47914/jmpp.2024.v16i1.001>

**Perspectives**

## **Debunking Opposition Propaganda on Indian Constitution, Castes, and Friendly Capitalists**

**Srirang K Jha\***

### **ABSTRACT**

Slugfest is a scenario in which the opponents indulge in uncivilized and rude argumentations, at times using falsehood as a weapon. Unfortunately, Indian political leaders in the opposition camp often instigate the ruling dispensation with untrue and unfounded accusations which catch the popular imagination. The ruling dispensation then reacts even more vigorously, leading political discourse towards the lowest ebb. However, at times, opposition propaganda succeeds beyond measure. This editorial piece examines the political slugfest in India in recent times, especially after PM Modi took charge of the country for the second time in 2019 and its fallout for various stakeholders. This write-up provides food for thought for all political leaders, political activists and their followers to watch out for falsehood in the propagandist communication in the interest of the common people.

**KEYWORDS:** Slugfest, Political Discourse, Propaganda, Political Communication, Democracy, India

---

\*Associate Professor, Apeejay School of Management, New Delhi (Views are personal)

**E-mail:** [jha.srirang@gmail.com](mailto:jha.srirang@gmail.com)

It is sad but true that political discourse in India is touching its lowest ebb in recent times. We are witnessing intense political slugfest in the holy democratic arena of Bharat known for its core spirit of '*Vasudav Kutumbkam*'. The opposition parties leave no stone unturned to raise propaganda pitch based on falsehood. Likewise, the ruling dispensation also tries their best to react in a befitting manner –making the canvas murkier.

Indian National Congress has successfully raised the fear of 'Constitution at Risk' in the minds of the electorate through their smart communication capabilities. And they have made significant gains in the bargain in the recently concluded general elections. Another Congress pitch regarding Adani-Ambani being the largest beneficiaries of Modi government is also gaining ground. The spokespersons of the ruling dispensation have failed to address the issues raised in opposition propaganda, instead, they have indulged more vigorously in personal attacks and retaliatory raids by enforcement agencies, giving credence to the false narratives of the opposition leaders.

First, the narrative of 'Constitution being at Risk'. The opposition leaders have been able to convince the masses that the Bhartiya Janata Party would change the Constitution authored by Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar. Interestingly, nature of Indian constitution is dynamic. It has been framed in a manner that amendments can be made from time to time to keep it relevant. The very first amendment in Indian constitution was carried out in 1951 during the tenure of Dr Ambedkar as Law Minister of the country. During the Congress regime, Indian constitution have been amended for 75 times, while the non-Congress governments have been able to make 31 amendments out of which eight is credited to PM Modi. Atal Behari Vajpayee whose tenure as PM was shorter than PM Modi, carried out 14 amendments to the constitution.

Severest blow to the Indian constitution was engineered by Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister who imposed emergency during the peace time in country just to safeguard her own interest. Many of the opposition leaders who were oppressed during emergency, or their descendants are now siding with the Indian National Congress. Hence, the Bhartiya Janata Party is the only non-

Congress political formation that is isolated on the pretext of its majoritarian outlook. Hence falsehood in the propaganda regarding constitution at risk sounds louder. Can the ruling party do something about it? Of course, counter-propaganda by the Bhartiya Janata Party can reassure the masses that the Indian constitution is safe and changes in the same can be brought about for the benefit of people as per the due processes. The Modi government did not engineer any drastic change in the constitution during the first ten years despite having an absolute majority on its own. The government has a more forward-looking agenda like Viksit Bharat by 2047, 5-trillion economy and a strong image in world politics. Unfortunately, people tend to believe more in the artificially created scary future due to possible changes in constitution including its replacement with new one rather than the golden days ahead based on better infrastructure, improved education and technology-driven industrial ecosystems with new-age job opportunities.

Another narrative put forth by the Congress is that the Bhartiya Janata Party overlooks the interests on non-Brahmin and non-Baniya communities. And hence, the ruling party is not agreeing to the Caste Census. The truth is that the Bhartiya Janata Party is more inclusive both in terms of party bureaucracy as well as the government so far as the communities within the larger Hindu fold in line with its nature as a majoritarian party. It also accommodates Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, tribals, and to some extent other backward castes among the Muslims like Pasmandas. On the contrary, for long, Congress neglected the intermediate castes as their main voters came from amongst the Brahmins, Dalits and Muslims who were also their largest beneficiaries.

One can do quick research to find out how many non-Brahmin, non-Muslim and non-Dalits were the Central Ministers, Chief Ministers, state Ministers, Governors, Vice-Chancellors, and members as well as chairpersons of various autonomous institutions of the government were there during the various Congress regimes under Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, P V Narsimha Rao, and Manmohan Singh. The Bhartiya Janata Party needs to call out the bluff of the Congress by counter-propagand backed by fresh research.

Most alarming propaganda of the Congress is that the Bhartiya Janata Party is working for Adanis and Ambanis and dolling out tax-payers money in their pockets. Absolute rubbish. It is true that the current government is trying its best to augment ease of doing business for all by investing heavily on infrastructure, improving processes, bringing in more transparency in approval and compliances and attracting both foreign direct investments and foreign institutional investments. But how all these initiatives are filling the pockets of Adanis and Ambanis with tax-payers money? In the post-Covid phase, government liberally doled out taxpayers' money to enable the MSME sector survive. How that would have helped Adanis and Ambani. Further, Global Capability Centres are now new growth engines of Indian economy. One should check what are the stakes of Adanis and Ambanis in the fast-emerging Global Capability Centres flourishing in various technological parks in the country to give an appropriate rebuttal to the Congress leaders.

Now the functionaries of the Bhartiya Janata Party need to re-examine their strategies while taking on the opposition parties, especially the Indian National Congress. Besides, more broad-based debates in academic and non-academic circles (community organizations) on the three issues viz. constitution at risk, caste census and friendly capitalists are required instead of indulging in personal attack on the opposition leaders or exposing their weak spots. Merely calling out someone as Shahzade (privileged/entitled) has lost its appeal. Propaganda needs counter-propaganda and not rhetoric. Also, propaganda is not a bad word –it was widely used by the Indian National Congress to raise its mass appeal. Hence, the Bhartiya Janata Party needs to tread a bit cautiously. It has worked for Congress now. It might as well work in future.