

Strategic Mobilization of Identities by BJP In Uttar Pradesh Assembly Election, 2022

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Abstract

UP State Assembly election, 2022 is the consolidation of a partisanship ideologically oriented towards the cultural nationalism and neoliberal economic development of right wing politics in India. It is also to suggest the electoral design of the BJP not only to consolidate its traditional vote bank but also a design of social engineering by which caste and religious sentiments of identity politics strongly make sense to the electoral politics in plural and diverse country like India

Keywords:UP Assembly Elections, BJP, India

Introduction

The Uttar Pradesh State Assembly election, 2022 is remarkable for the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) to consolidate its dominance not only in the same state but also a stepping stone to 2024 general election in India. The BJP government in UP for the second consecutive term reflects upon the political success of a party which communicates the idea of a stable government for the success and prosperity of the people as a whole. In this paper, it is argued that the electoral success of BJP in the UP State Assembly election, 2022 is the consolidation of a partisanship ideologically oriented towards the cultural nationalism and neoliberal economic development of right wing politics in India. It is also to suggest the electoral design of the BJP not only to consolidate its traditional vote bank but also a design of social engineering by which caste and religious sentiments of identity politics strongly make sense to the electoral politics in plural and diverse country like India. The fact that political equation matters to the extent that it enhances the chances of winning election to consolidate the dominance of traditional partisanship as well as those who are neglected and oppressed within

the caste category have also chances to come up to protect their interests not only in terms of the recognition of identity but also the basic issue of the very ordinary existence as an ascriptive group.

UP State Assembly Election 2022

The important issue here is that the BJP is not only becoming a strong national party but on the other hand steering the decline of Congress party as a national alternative to it. The decline of Congress Party's electoral performance in UP but also in other parts of the country signifies the fact that there is no consolidation of opposition parties against the BJP at the central level. It is very crucial to have a look at the decline of Congress Party in the state of UP from 1952 to 2022.

Sl. No.	Election Year	Seats
1	1951	388
2	1957	286
3	1962	249
4	1967	199
5	1969	211
6	1974	215
7	1977	47
8	1980	309
9	1985	269
10	1989	94
11	1991	46
12	1993	28
13	1996	33
14	2002	25
15	2007	22
16	2012	28
17	2017	7
18	2022	2

The BJP-led alliance registered a spectacular victory by winning 325 of the total 403 seats contested. The BJP alone won 312 seats of the 384 seats contested with a vote share of 39.65 percent. During the State Assembly election of 2022, BJP and its alliance parties received 43.62 percent votes polled with a winning ratio of 67.74 percent. It got 273 seats against the 403 contested seats. The BJP and its allies won 80 percent of the total seats in the Assembly, while the Congress would have been unable to even establish its account. In actuality, the party's overall vote share decreased by 1 percent. With a vote share of 21.8 percent, the SP won 11.7 percent of the seats, or 47 seats. The Congress received only 1.7 percent of the seat share, or seven seats, and 6.25 percent of the vote. The BJP had the highest overall victory ratio (81.25 percent) with a vote share of 39.65 percent, while the BSP had the lowest with a vote share of 22.23 percent. In 2017, Congress's vote share fell to 6.25 percent. The analysis of results of State Assembly elections, 2022, indicated that the vote share of BJP and its alliance parties significantly increased to 43.62 percent while the share of votes polled declined sharply in case of Congress and BSP, however, SP and its alliance parties could manage to improve its share.

The main political agenda of State Assembly elections in 2022 include handling of COVID-19 pandemic, rebuilding Rama Temple in Ayodhya and Kashi Viswanath Corridor in Varanasi, revocation of Article 370 in Kashmir, welfare schemes such as Swachh Bharat Mission, Jal Jeevan Mission, AMRUT, Ujjwala, Prime Minister Housing For All, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Kalyan Yojana, Prime Minister SvaNidhi, corruption free governance; demonetisation; Make in India, Aajadi Ka Amrut Mahotsava, glorification of Indian culture, etc. The State of Uttar Pradesh also introduced new political and administrative models and initiated state missions such as Rojgar Mission, COVID-19 Control Mission, Mission Shakti, besides implementation of State Commission for Migrant Workers.

Successful Mobilization and Strategic Achievement

The electoral politics in India is vivacious and it happens to be the space for inclusion and exclusion of individuals and groups for which political parties adopt various strategies. The challenge lies with gaining majority of seats in elections to form the government. During political campaigns, the media becomes a pivotal medium to follow the nature of politics and political debates. Social media, often called social networking sites, are gradually penetrating areas beyond the urban to the peripheral localities in India. Social media, which works through

Internet connectivity, has resulted in urban people having an edge over the rural population in terms of usage.

The electoral strategies are developed to mobilize people at the times of election. The BJP's mobilization of Dalit and OBC communities in UP election 2022 has been enormously successful. It is observed that the party has adopted multiple strategies to "reconfigure the notion of identity, once nurtured by the Bahujan parties for most backward and the Dalits." (Singh, 2022). The BJP has effectively explored the social engineering among the dissenting groups within Dalit and OBC communities. The state of UP is truly a big state having multiple identities aligned with caste and communities having structural political alliance. Jaffrelot (2003) has pointed out that the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) effectively challenged the upper-caste political dominance in the state to a varying degree, employing identity politics. The BJP now follows the same language of identity politics that the Dalit and backward movement once applied to construct a new assimilative politics that seem to override the upper-caste–lower-caste divide." It is important to mention that the success of BJP was largely dependent on the mobilization of these OBC and Dalit communities in its Hindutva fold by redefining their history, reinterpreting their local traditions/customs and reshaping their communal identity." (Singh, 2022). It is again asserted that "they had so far remained outside the saffron fold of BJP or were at best on the borderline in terms of political allegiance. They were part of the larger regional Dalit and OBC bloc and had aligned with Muslim voters for ensuring community representation. The Sangh and its affiliates have been successful in breaking these local alliances of Dalit and OBC communities with the Muslim minority and the dominant Dalit caste by tweaking the cultural politics of Bahujan mobilization." (Ibid.).

Culture, Caste, and Community

Cultural interventions help to establish a direct connection with the people. The everydayness of the culture facilitates quick transmission of ideas, the abstract becomes the local and ideologies are easily anchored. Such 'cultural appropriations have been effectively done by BJP by reshaping the folklores and legends and introducing new community practices.' The intervention in their folklore is an important mode to reconstruct their history. The orality of folklore ensures relevance and accommodates change with each retelling (Kirin, 1989, p. 245). Again, since these myths and stories are out of sync with time, it creates space for cultural innovation (Chatterji, 2007).

A continuous attempt is being made by the Sangh to create such cultural innovations in the social realm for building the political base of BJP. They have effectively manipulated and accommodated even spontaneous cultural changes into their fold. As a result, many traditions that were started by individuals or groups that had no established linkage with BJP, the Sangh or its other associates were later used by BJP to mobilize communities in its favour.

Appealing Legends

The use of legends for political mobilization is an old strategy and was once effectively employed by the backward caste leaders (Kanshiram and Mulayam Singh Yadav) to challenge the upper-caste hold over the politics of the state. Now the same legends are being used not to challenge the social order per se, but to consolidate specific community identity. Their linkage to issues of social justice is fragile and much more localized, compelling one community to compete with the other for political recognition.

The redefined identity is neither anti-class nor anti-caste, and, therefore, it is easily woven in the desired Sanskritization mode of the Hindu Right. One can see many idols of Ashoka on the road crossings of Purvanchal along with big gates on the entrances of villages that are named after Ashoka. All of these are either done by the community on its own or by some local leader of the community, who acts as a free radical for various parties to be appropriated. Similar is the case of the Nishad community. The mythical stories of the Nishad community give a prominent place to Nishad Raj and Eklavya. Following the *Ramcharitmanas*, Nishad Raj who rowed Lord Rama across the river Ganges is considered a community pride. The community symbol of 'Eklavya' is pitted against the Yadav community. The legends narrate how Krishna killed him through deceit. So, while the link with Rama ensures their co-option in the Hindu fold, the story of Eklavya plays a dual role. On the one hand, it creates space for the community in the second most popular ancient scripture of Mahabharat and, on the other hand, it pits a Dalit community against a dominant OBC community.

Invoking Gods and Saints

From the mid-1980s to the 1990s, BJP used the symbol of 'Rama' for expanding its support base. This support base was inclusive of Dalit and middle-caste communities. The protagonist of *Ramcharitmanas*, Rama, was a revered figure in North India. After the telecast of the

Ramayan serial on the national television during 1987–1988, which received an enthusiastic popular response, BJP resolved to capitalize on it. Lord Rama was projected as the hero of all Hindus of the country. In the Valmiki temples of western Uttar Pradesh, one can see Valmiki holding Ramayana (text) in one hand.

Advent of New Practices

During election times it is observed that several new cultural practices have come into play, and they are essentially driving communities in the Hindutva fold. The purpose of these practices is general and is not explicitly linked with any religious group, but they are so much linked with the day-to-day struggles of the community that they easily relate to it, and they are later co-opted in the fold of right-winged Hindutva by appropriating the symbols marking these practices. Most significant amongst them is the appropriation of 'Shiva'.

There is a serious limitation of using the icon of 'Rama' in mobilizing backward/Dalit community, as Rama symbolizes typical upper-caste Brahminical identity. Scholars have noted that Rama ceased to be of much emotional value that would provide a political advantage to Hindu communal forces (Panikkar, 2007). A liberalized interpretation of Hindu religion necessitated the adoption of another symbol that relates to the life-worlds of the backward castes. 'Shiva', the lord with rustic imagery, has emerged as such an all-encompassing religious symbol. This is reflected in the popularity of Shiv Charcha and reverence for Shiva temples across communities.

Shiv Charcha or the discussion on Shiva is one such emerging practice amongst the Maurya community of eastern Uttar Pradesh. It began in Purvanchal a few years back and just before the 2014 elections it picked pace. The old temples of the village started organizing it on Mondays and Saturdays. While mostly women attend it, the lead singers are always men, who are called 'Shiv gurus'. Shiv Charcha is most popular in the backward and non-Chamar Dalit communities. The event starts with the narration of individual sufferings of the participants and ends with devotional songs of Shiva sung by the Shiv gurus. The process of getting involved in this whole phenomenon is very unique. Community service is another mode through which Dalits are being mobilized. The cadres of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its associates organize 'Samrasta Bhoj' in the Dalit hamlets at the festival of Makar Sankranti. Sharing food and water is an important mode to counter untouchability.

Similarly, for co-opting Jats, the Sangh and BJP are building on the work of the Arya Samaj movement which is now interpreted as essentially a Hindu movement. The old Arya Samaji trend of not worshipping idols now seems to be increasingly replaced with idol worship. Idols of various gods and goddesses have found their place in the old Arya Samaji Temple compound as well. In each Jat village, there is a special place where they worship village ancestors.

Targeted Groups

Dealing multiple identities together is a challenging task, and it is found here that the Bahujan and Backward political experiment stumbled. Identity politics has always been a double-edged sword; it can thwart the coherence of a group and it can also increase the democratic participation of the silent margins. What is happening at present in the state is only the first, no new groups/communities are entering into active politics. Again, the coherence of these smaller communities into the Rightist fold might become challenging later. But this is the phase of ascendance; it only requires a larger logic to minimize friction. The Sangh's argument of community and development serves this purpose well.

Influencing Community Sentiments

Many communities were brought to the Hindu fold by exploring their community sentiments through Hindu gods and goddess. In the polarizing politics it helps to arouse the sentiments of these against other communities especially Muslim rulers. The Muslim rulers are depicted as intruders of the community's ancestral regions and establishment. The mobilization of Chauhan/Noniyas, Sainies and Valmikies and Pasies are momentous in recent election times. Other communal issues of Love jihad and cow slaughter are also profusely used to supplement the mobilizational thrust especially amongst the dominant OBC communities of Jat and Yadavs.

The BJP mobilized Chauhan/Noniyas of purvanchal. They claim to be the descendants of Prithviraj Chauhan, who was the ruler of Ajmer and Delhi in the second half of the twelfth century (1149–1192). During his rule, Muhamad Ghori invaded Delhi. Prithviraj Chauhan won the first battle with Ghori, but in his second confrontation in 1192 with Ghori, he was killed. The popular folklores among the Noniya community reinvents the tradition of heroism and glory.

The Sainies of western Uttar Pradesh recently started asserting their

Hindu character. They are one of the significant foot soldiers of the communal brigade in the area. By profession, they are vegetable growers. The Sainies describe themselves as a Rajput caste and their legends use the term *Shoor Saini* (brave Saini). The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) mobilized the Saini youths and enrolled them as members of the Bajrang Dal. Saini youths have been given preference for leadership positions in Bajrang Dal.

Further, the most explicit mobilization of the Jats in western Uttar Pradesh has been on the issue of Love Jihad. Love Jihad is a phenomenon termed by the Sangh as a conspiracy by Muslims to seduce Hindu girls and turn India into an Islamic state. Gupta (2014), a historian from Delhi, traces the origin of this present movement to the campaign launched by the Arya Samaj and other Hindu revivalist bodies in the 1920s in Uttar Pradesh to draw sharper lines between Hindus and Muslims. The responsibility to run the campaign against Love Jihad in Muzaffarnagar and adjoining areas like Meerut lies with Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and Hindu Jagran Manch. An active member of the Sangh admitted, "It is not love marriage, it is only an attempt to convert Hindu girls... they make them Muslims and then send them to some other places ... in some cases girls have been later sold to brothels ... they are sexually exploited... the explosion (referring to riots) was the result of such mentality." The rhetoric of Love Jihad worked, as the Jat community is known for its sensitiveness and orthodox stance on issues related to women. The Muzaffarnagar riots pulled the last string and decisively pushed the Jats in the Hindu fold. More recently, we heard the call by the Rightist groups in the area for boycotting the mehendi artists, who are usually Muslims.

Community mobilization also touches upon the Dalit community of western Uttar Pradesh. In western Uttar Pradesh, the popular Dalit icons are Raidas and Valmiki. This is in sharp contrast to eastern Uttar Pradesh where Ambedkar is still the icon. In western Uttar Pradesh, the RSS started propagating Dalits as the saviours of the Hindu religion, the foot soldiers who contributed significantly in preserving the Hindutva traditions. An article published in *Panchjanya* (BJP's mouth organ) in 2003 mentioned that Dalits became untouchable due to Muslim invaders. It emphasized that whenever the Hindu religion was assaulted, Dalits gave their lives to save it. Hence, Dalits not only belong to the Hindu religion but they also enjoy a special status. While addressing a rally of Virat Hindu Sammelan on 9 February 2015 in Allahabad, Ashok Singhal said, 'Many centuries ago Islamic invaders forced a section of Hindus to do manual scavenging because this section

refused to convert to Islam even after a lot of exploitation. I give a call to Hindus for giving due respect to Dalits, they deserve it'. This interpretation of Dalits and their struggle is very popular amongst Valmikies of Western Uttar Pradesh.

Several stories attempt to portray the Pasi community against the Muslims, by drawing on the stories of battle with the Muslim rulers. The Pasies themselves draw upon many of these mythical and legendary stories in search for identity and status. The Pasies are portrayed as the warrior caste. It is assumed that they fought with the Turks but were defeated by them. After the defeat, they refused to accept Islam and instead opted for pig rearing so that a distance from the Muslims may be maintained. Pig rearing in this sense is looked upon as a mode of safeguarding the Hindu religion. The popular heroes of the community include names such as Suheldev from Bahraich, Bijali Pasi of Awadh and Dal Dev of Raibareli. One significant thing highlighted in all these fables is that the Pasi community has always remained against the Muslim rulers. During the earlier phase of Bahujan mobilization, the same icons were projected as heroes of the community who either fought against the British rulers or feudal lords. Once declared a criminal tribe, the community now attempts to establish itself as the great warrior caste.

The historical plunder of temples and towns by Muslim rulers is yet another issue that helps in consolidating the Hindutva wave in Uttar Pradesh. The Sangh has prepared a list of 400 sites in Uttar Pradesh where temples were demolished to build Mazars or Masjids.¹⁶ Each site has been given a detailed history that is popularized through various meetings to let people know what was lost and why it is to be reclaimed.

Discourse of Development

It has been highlighted above that there seems to be an emerging preference of the non-dominant communities to break away from their past political positions, issues and party choices. It is also clear that it is through the cultural route that BJP has been able to make inroads into the political life of these communities. However, it would be pertinent to highlight here that the cultural and communal mobilization of BJP essentially hinges on its rhetoric of development. The swift pull of communities towards BJP is also due to the developmental predicament that they face. Developmental gains have remained elusive for these small communities who joined the bandwagon of Bahujan politics.

The re-distributional politics of BSP that once caught the imagination

of the lower caste failed to fulfil the emerging social and economic consciousness of the non-dominant Dalit and OBC communities. The Yadavs and the Chamars have been the prime gainers in the earlier phase of identity politics. This was not just because they were seen as the core vote banks of SP and BSP but also because within their blocks they were the most articulate and educated. The Chamars got the most fertile lands in the pattas distributed from the Gram Sabha land. They could also take advantage of reservations in a better way as they were not first-generation learners unlike many other Dalit communities like Musahars. Similarly, the Yadavs got contracts and jobs in various government departments during the regime of SP as they were articulate and politically active for a very long time in the state. What did the other communities gain in this entire process when they backed the SP and BSP as loyal voters? They indeed participated as a silent actor, but certain minimum quid pro quo cannot be overlooked. Many other smaller OBC and Dalit communities have essentially gained their political consciousness through their tacit or vocal participation in the rallies of SP and BSP. The taste of political, the ability to desire and the belief in the possibility of reaching the helm of power came through their initial involvement in the anti-caste Dalit-Bahujan political alliance. Recognition first is the demand that flows down from their previous political experience.

What marks a break from the past is the increasing realization of these communities that they have been left behind by dominant groups. The common perception about Yadav community by the intra caste people is that it has been a cheater from the very beginning. The game of reservation is all about giving advantage to the Yadav community. It is felt that SP's promise of including 17 new communities in the OBC list has never been fulfilled and non-Yadavs have been cheated.

BJP has recently begun Nishad Kranti Rath that received an enthusiastic response from the community. It is significant to note that this idea of being 'left behind' originated from their own experience but was buttressed and sealed by BJP. The party not only mobilized them around the issue of their non-inclusion but also squarely pitted them against the dominant communities, who were blamed for discriminating against them. So now they want to take revenge, even if it means a similar position within BJP.

Again, BJP has successfully highlighted what these communities have not gained so far and weaved it with its narrative of development. BJP's imagination of new India emphasizes opportunity and achievement replacing key reference points of welfare and redistribution (Palshikar,

2019, p. 107). This development has been uniformly superimposed upon communities with one solution for all highlighting issues of highways, toilets, gas connections, etc. Development like Hindutva is part of the grand narrative of nationalism (Palshikar, 2019, p. 107), giving BJP leverage to manage divergent pulls of multiple demands that might generate friction across communities.

Again, BJP's promise of development generates faith in the mind of people as the party's campaign links it strongly with the persona of Modi, who is projected as the ablest administrator. In this sense, the promise of development is more of an individual commitment of a man of values. To generate faith in the institutions is much harder than generating faith in the individuals. The communities that have remained outside the patron–client relationship now find this connection attractive and compelling.

Reinventing Identity Politics

The increasing acceptance of the cultural discourse of the Sangh or the Hindu discourse, at the level of community, exposes the gaps of identity politics championed by BSP and SP in the state. The mobilization of Dalits and other backward communities in the state largely remained a political phenomenon. Both these mobilizations were against the upper caste and attempted to resolve the question of representation. The identities that they constructed were that of Dalit, Bahujan and backward caste. All community heroes were essentially Dalit heroes first. The exploiters were the upper caste, Hindus—the Brahmans and Thakurs. These identities were overarching and had an ideological content. These were caste as well as class identities.

During the initial phase of mobilization in the state, Kanshiram stated in a rally that historically Dalits were the ruling class. The local units of the cultural wing of the party were then instructed to carry forward this message. BSP went on to construct three kinds of myths to build a dignified, strong and nationalistic identity of Dalits. The first category myths were of the ruling class of Dalits that was situated in the medieval period, and they were shown to fight against the Muslim invaders like the stories of Suheldev, Bijali Pasi, etc. The second was the category of local chieftains, who fought against the feudal lord to emancipate the labouring population like legends of churamal and badai. The third was the group of legends whose protagonists made a significant contribution in the first war of independence against the Britishers, the revolt of 1857 such as Jhalkaribai, Udadevi and Baladeen (Narayan, 2006). The emphasis here was to construct an image of a heroic, loyal

and justice-loving Dalit native. When the Sangh and its associates employed myth-making, they remained quite selective. Among the older myths, they highlighted only those that had some anti-Muslim content like the Dalit ruler fighting against the Muslim invaders, and then went on to construct its caste myth that had some religious linkages. The core strategy to mobilize communities has been to trace/link their origin, with some established Hindu saint or God. Such linkages were further solidified by necessarily posing them against some Muslim rulers, who are portrayed as invaders of their ancestral regions/establishment. BJP skilfully sidelined other myths of the BSP period that challenged the feudal order or had some potential to construct an anti-Hindu social identity.

It is important to note that BJP never attempted to counter the myths of BSP, it only sidelined some of its myths, detailed some of the earlier myths and constructed new myths. This continuity was essential as it enabled them to penetrate the Dalit masses without any resistance. Again, the myths of BSP were community-specific but local in nature, as the purpose was to enable quick identification of the population with the legendary figures. The myths constructed by the Sangh and its associates were again community-specific, but they were not locally anchored. They were addressed to the community irrespective of its location, as they were anchored in religious texts like Ramayana. The protagonists of these legends have the god-like character or are the incarnation of some Hindu God. In the legends, the Dalit hero essentially remains religious and has some mystical powers. The ordinariness of the Dalit is seldom emphasized here.

The kinds of identity that the Sangh and its associates are building are essentially community-centric. They are carving out layers from the previously overarching identity of Bahujan, Dalit and backward by exploiting the organizational weaknesses of their parties. It is not only a question of representation alone but a step further. These multiple community-specific identities are no more against the upper caste/class, their immediate enemy is the dominant community within their group. Now the relative disadvantage argument is aggressively used by BJP to attract these smaller Dalit and backward communities in its fold. BSP and SP both ensured political representation of these smaller communities, but their leaders always remained the party leaders more than the community leaders. BJP has been successful in retaining the community identity of the leaders coming from these communities. Again, through its politics of culture, BJP has been successful in constructing distinct social identities of respective communities that were often collapsed by BSP and SP in their pursuit of collective

politicalmission. They too used culture as means to include more and more people in their camp, to communicate their political message, but they failed to construct an anti-Hindu, alternative social identity. The Sanghand its associates tactfully utilized this space at its own pace, as and when required.

In fact, the anti-Hindu politics of Dalits and backward runs parallel to smaller experiments of Hinduism at the community level. This keeps the aspiration to become a Hindu alive at the level of culture and society, especially within the OBC community. The sacred thread (Janeu) and cow protection movement are examples of such association. Arya Samaj in its initial phase mobilized Yadavs as its foot soldiers in large numbers, in the name of cow protection. The communal riot of 1893 in Azamgarh and Mau started in the name of cow protection and spread in areas dominated by backward communities.

The political benefits that BJP is reaping on the pretext of its cultural identity politics are primarily on the base prepared by the Dalit and backward politics. BJP is not creating any new democratic platform for Dalits and backward communities, the credit for awakening them, for ensuring their political participation goes to their parties. BJP is only manipulating a politically conscious group. In this sense, the identity politics of the Sangh is not creating a new democratic space. They, on the contrary, are taking away the ideological basis of their long political struggle against the upper caste. The process of mythmaking for building identity was started by BSP, and it turned into a community-centric organic process. Soon BJP co-opted it by creating a new myth, augmenting the old one and sidelining some others. The use of Valmiki, Ravidas, Eklavya, Parshuram, Prithviraj Chauhan Chandragupta Maurya are all either creations or appropriations by the Sangh for increasing the support base of BJP.

The nationalist argument of the Sangh could not be countered by the Bahujan, due to its limited vision. The seeds of egalitarian Dalit-Bahujan nationalism (Ilaiyah, 1998) in Ambedkar's writing were never practically translated into an action plan or counter argument against the Sangh's nationalism. Christophe Jaffrelot has argued that the lower caste movements in north India functioned within the ambit of Sanskritization, unlike the emancipatory strain of the lower caste movements in south and west India. Therefore, social emancipation ends up occurring within the acceptable values of an upper-caste-driven order, thus protecting the Hindu way of life (Jaffrelot, 2000, p. 763). The absence of any register outside the caste and religious framework left space for turning the wheel of identity politics upside down.

Where is the Limit?

The political connotation of the Bahujan is different from the notion of 'Sarvajan' and identity has the potential to penetrate both. The parties have successfully used 'identity' to expand and mobilize their vote base. While caste remains the centre around which it is woven, the way in which caste entities are captured to form alignments has changed over time. The Sangh and its associate organizations play an indirect role in constructing specific community identity. Their political discontents and desires are used as inputs, as and when required, for the construction of specific community identity by BJP, and the mode is usually local leadership creation. These leaders are essentially caste leaders as opposed to Dalit or OBC leaders. This rootedness of caste in the new identity politics is different from the older caste consciousness that pledged for emancipatory politics of BSP or SP. It has limited community boundaries and is, therefore, easier to control individually. But with the awakened consciousness, their leaders demand greater participation. The new community identities demand independent space and unique recognition. Giving these smaller OBC and Dalit communities' leadership role in the associate organizations of the Sangh is an attempt to accommodate their desire for a share in the power structure. But sustainable accommodation of smaller communities would require greater power-sharing within the party, which may or may not fit well with its core support base of the upper caste. It would be interesting to see how BJP manages the diverse identities it is crystalizing at the level of communities and what place come to occupy, within the identity discourse, in the times to come.

Conclusion

The ultimate consolidation of partisan and ideological mobilization reaches its limit by forces of anti-incumbency and contradictions. As it happened in the Congress Party's decline of vote percentage and finally losing elections for decades now in UP symbolizes the fact that a break is created with a fault line. Situations are created out of political context to explore the unexplored. How long would it work is never known because politics is the game of uncertainty and with growing complexities of the dynamics of political impossibilities become possible. The BJP would continue to grow to an optimum level to a particular point weaving all kinds of threads that could strengthen the popular support. The success of the BJP would continue so long as the opposition parties are not united concretely. It is not immediate on the horizon.

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