Heartland Politics in India: Uttar Pradesh Assembly Election

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ABSTRACT: This paper attempts to make sense the discussed political discourse across media by politicians and others during UP Assembly election 2012. How political discourses discussed and considered UP as heartland of Indian politics and further considered the Assembly election, 2012 as prelude of Parliament election 2014. Politicians and media considered that path towards New Delhi (Capital city of India) came through Lucknow (the capital city of UP) in the country. UP is not only known for political activities (communal politics, caste politics, electoral politics, and centre-state power relations) rather known for agricultural products, cuisine, cultural taboos and cultural etiquette in the country as well. This paper also enquires how media shaped political discourses and portrayed UP as heartland, similarly what Gaynesh Kudaisya called UP as ‘heartland’ of Indian politics through historical evidences.

KEYWORDS: heartland, caste politics, communal politics, electoral space, media space, power relations.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the year 2012, five Indian states\(^1\) went for Assembly elections, including UP but news about other state’s Assembly elections was proportionally less in comparison with the UP elections news in the media. Media knew the political importance of the state and particularly the coalition politics when UPA II survived with the support of the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the major regional political parties in the state. Why did the media show such interest in the politics of UP over other states in the country?

\(^1\) The states was: UP, Punjab, Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand where assembly election was held early 2012.

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The study of UP Assembly elections 2012 is pivotal for various reasons including the fact that it involves a political battle between national and regional political parties and was crucial in shaping and reshaping the national politics as well. The role of UP in national politics is known either for providing maximum number of Prime Ministers or for sending the maximum number of Parliamentarians in the country.

In a democratic set up, elections remain a political event, when people choose a representative, irrespective of political ideology. Hence, election is the only moment when politicians are supposed to dance in the tune of the people and considered a weapon to the peoples who can use during the election to choose his/her political preference in form of political candidates to represents the constituencies as well.

2. THE HEARTLAND: PAST AND PRESENT

Gyanesh Kudaisya [11] points out, ‘UP has came to decisively influence India’s politics and to be constructed as a political ‘heartland’ through much of the twentieth century-both colonial and post colonial.’ The construction of the political heartland started during the early years of the twentieth century and continued till the sixty seven years of independence and the political construction was evident in the UP Assembly elections in 2012 as well. ‘UP can be perceived as heartland in multiple ways and explores five such distinct, though overlapping, constructions through its modern history: UP as a colonial heartland, as a nationalist heartland, as a Hindu heartland, as a Muslim heartland, and finally as a postcolonial heartland.’

The ‘Postcolonial heartland’ discourse shaped UP in the contemporary period when politicians discussed the name of the state and contemplated as ‘Devagiri’, ‘Himalaya Pradesh’, ‘Aryavarta’. But finally in the Constituent Assembly meeting, they came to a consensus and named the state ‘Uttar Pradesh’. In postcolonial UP, the politics of Muslim league either waned or the popular leader left for Pakistan and the rest of the population

2 The study considered the concept of heartland through Gyanesh Kudaisya (2006) to understand the role of UP in Indian politics since Colonial phase in various capacities. However, in geography, M.J Mackinder’s (1904) “heartland theory” is popular where he argues the core spatiality who ruled the space rule over world. The study tried hard to reciprocate the same views to understand the politics and its consequences over period of time in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.


5 Ibid: 351-9., However, political discourses argues in length.

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settled for the Congress Party in terms of their leadership. The issue of mother tongue was discussed amongst politicians variedly and, after long consultation, Hindi was adopted as the mother tongue of the state over Urdu.\(^6\)

The shape of UP has been moulded at various junctures to bring it to its present shape. In both colonial and postcolonial ‘heartland’ discourse, the role of the Congress Party is evident for political reasons and the Congress Party and its politicians shaped the state to bring it to the present socio-politico stage. However, at present political situation the role of Congress Party is not much influenced rather trying hard to achieve the lost political ground? At present, the legislative strength of the state is 80 Lok Sabha MPs, 31 Rajya Sabha MPs, 404 Ministers of Legislative Assembly (MLA); including one Anglo-Indian person and 100 Member of legislative council (MLC) which have made the state a politically important state in the country.\(^7\) Apart from legislative strength, there are some constituencies which have become very high profile constituencies over period of time due to political reasons viz. Amethi, Rae Barelli, Maipuri and Lucknow. But in 2014 general elections, two constituencies’ for examples Varanasi (Narendra Modi) and Azamgarh (Mulayam Singh Yadav) also became high profile constituencies when both these leaders decided to contest elections from these respective constituencies to expand their political reach amongst people in the region. During the 1999 Parliamentary election, BJP got 29 seats and around 27.64% of the voting share. Therefore, BJP was able to form the NDA government under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The party also put forth a political plan to make Narendra Modi contest from Varanasi (Purvanchal) to make an impact on the voters in the region and expand the base in the adjoining state of Bihar. During 2004 and 2009, in the Parliament elections, the Congress Party, SP and BSP, all did well as compared to BJP, allowed the UPA I and II to remain in power for a decade. While in the 2014 Parliament elections, BJP won 71 seats out of 80 seats in the state. Moreover, the expansion of politics in the region strengthened the hypothesis that until a political party takes control of UP, it is not an easy task to assume power in New Delhi. So, who controlled UP, shall

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\(^7\) “The Legislative Assembly for the United Provinces was constituted for the first time on 1 April, 1937 in accordance with the Government of India Act, 1935. The strength of the Assembly as stipulated under the Act of 1935 was 228 and its term was five years. After Independence, the Legislative Assembly met for the first time on 3 November, 1947. Under the provisions of the new Constitution, the strength of the UP Assembly was fixed at 431 which was later revised to 426. After reorganization of the State on 9 November 2000, the strength of the Legislative Assembly has become 404 (When Uttrakhand become a separate state from UP) including one nominated member to represent the Anglo-Indian community. The term of the Legislative Assembly is five years, unless dissolved earlier” [http://legislativebodiesinindia.nic.in/States/UttarPradesh/upassembly-w.htm, accessed, March 16, 2013].

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control India as well. The electoral politics shaped the politics and made the state, the “heartland” of Indian politics.

3. DALITS POLITICS AND IDENTITY OF HEARTLAND

The identity of the heartland has been shaped and reshaped over time and some issues emerged as bearing the symbolic identity of the heartland viz. caste politics (Dalits politics), communal politics (Babri Masjid-Ram Mandir issue) and legislative or electoral politics. The nature of caste politics was shaped in the form of ‘Dalits Politics’ under the leadership of Kanshi Ram and Mayawati. The nature of Dalits politics was further reshaped after the demise of Kanshi Ram when Mayawati assumed the leadership of BSP and made space for ‘others’ caste people to achieve her political ambition in order to leave a political imprint on national politics. Therefore, she astutely carved a political plan and brought Dalits and Brahmin people onto a single political platform under the ‘social engineering’ plan before UP Assembly election, 2007. However, the same plan could not be revived during the UP Assembly elections, 2012.

The emergence of Dalits politics was shaped around the following Dalits ideologue. Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, Jyotiba Phule, Narayan Guru, E.V. Ramaswamy Periyar, Savitribai Phule and others laid down the ideological foundations of a Dalits-Bahujan movement in India. Charu Gupta examines the Dalits history in northern India and writes,

“The past three decades particularly have seen a flourishing of popular Dalits literature, pamphlets and books, which have emerged as a critical resource for deeper insights into Dalits politics and identity.”

While in UP, the Dalits politics shaped around Ambedkar (Baba Saheb), Kanshi Ram (Shaheb) and Mayawati (Behenji), who were treated, like deities. The installation of statues of these leaders in both Lucknow and Noida parks (Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Samjik Prema Sthal and Rastrya Dalits Prema Sthal), was an extension of that symbol when these leaders are treated as deities in society. Tiwari and Pandey (2013) argued that “for BSP’s mass-base, the trio symbolized the ideology, vision, hope, leadership, agenda and strategy of the party.” He further infers that BSP was Dalits’s ideological party and the founder leader of BSP was

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Kanshi Ram, who professed the Dalits ideology in quite a ‘dictatorial authority in BSP.’\textsuperscript{10} However, Ghansyam Shah and Sudha Pai argued that; 

‘It is in this changed context of a combination of factors that one has to locate the new agency among Dalits. The new class of political entrepreneurs that has emerged from amongst the ex-untouchable communities used the idea of ‘Dalits identity’ and mobilized the SCs communities as a united block on the promise of development with dignity. Some of them, such as Kanshi Ram and Mayawati, have been quite successful in doing so.’\textsuperscript{11}

Moreover, the identity of these leaders were further associated with rhetoric slogans that became a popular vehicle to carried the Dalits movement further. The conundrum of caste politics can be understood through the discourse in the form of the slogans that shaped the Dalits politics in the state. As Tiwari and Pandey point out, ‘Rhetoric is an important part of politics and nothing captures it more than the slogans of political parties.’\textsuperscript{12} The caste discourse is often expressed through various acts including slogans when supporters preferred to speak during public gatherings or address the caste struggle in society. During the 1980s and 1990s, Dalits politics can be understood through the slogans of the BSPs. For example- Tiwari and Pandey argued that the initial slogans of BSP were highly derogatory towards upper caste peoples, likes “Tilak, Taraju, Aur Talwar Inko Maro Jute Char” (Brahmins, Baniyas and Thakurs should be beaten with shoes).\textsuperscript{13} Tilak is a symbol of Brahmins (practicing priest by caste), as Brahmins use sandalwood/vermillion on their forehead. Taraju (weight balance) is considered the symbol of the Baniya community, whose main occupation is trade. Talwar (the sword) is considered the symbol of Rajputs, a warrior clan. The supporters of BSP often shouted this slogan in public gatherings without any fear. Instead they felt proud to do so. The slogan designates a particular period when the Dalits movement was on a warpath with other ideologies in society.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid: 163.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid: 189.
\textsuperscript{14} Mayawati of Bahujan Samaj Party coined a vitriolic slogan Tilak, Tarazu Aur Talwar Inko Maro Jute Char (The three upper casts should be kicked) [http://www.languageinindia.com/oct2004/fatihiavertising1.html, accessed Feb 11, 2012]. The BSP has come a long way since the days of its previous apolitical avatars the Bahujan and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) and the Dalits Shosit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS4). Its slogans too have evolved along this sojourn. From “Tilak, taraju aur talawar, inko maro joote char” (It called upon the Dalits and backwards to shoe the brahmins, the banias and the thakurs) to “Hathi nahi Ganesh hain, Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh hain.”

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The change of slogans represents a political shift to some extent, as can be seen when people started shouting, “Hathi Nahi Ganesh Hai, Brahma Vishnu aur Mahesh Hai” (the elephant represents Ganesh, and also the trinity, all Brahminical gods, who form the trinity of gods in Hindu mythology) and showing the coalition—the Brahmans and Dalits.\textsuperscript{15} The BSP’s party symbol, the Elephant, was represented in such a manner that it seemed like the Hindu Gods- Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh had to pacify the relationships through symbolic interpretation.

Tiwari and Pandey also examine this slogan and say, ‘This slogan signified a shift in the politics of BSP as earlier it had always taken a hostile stance towards the Brahmans who they had termed as the upholders of the discriminatory caste system.’\textsuperscript{16} This was constructed to pay respect to Brahmans for political reason and was a part of politics as well. Interestingly, they argued, ‘Terrified of BSP’s moves aimed at poaching its upper-caste vote base, the BJP resorted to a counter-attack. Playing on the caste ego of the Brahmans, it bounced back with “Pandit Nahi Chamar Hai, haathi Par Swar Hai” (the one who rides an elephant i.e. supporters of BSP is not a Brahmin-priest, but a Chamar-down trodden) - the slogan however failed to make much difference to the Brahmans who continued to flock towards the BSP.’\textsuperscript{17}

The discourse of Dalits politics changed over time and symbolized an era of politics where the Dalits leadership emerged as forerunner in UP politics. Surendra S Jodhka discussed this, ‘the electoral victory of BSP in UP in 2007 also pointed to the role of the political leadership, and their ability to build viable cross-caste alliances.’ Jodhka further added that ‘according to some commentators, it is the leaders and media experts who presented/analyzed electoral politics in caste terms, and made caste appeared to be the single determining sociological variable in electoral politics. While the BSP is popularly seen as political party of the Dalits and is led by a Dalits woman, in its electoral mobilizations ‘it did not pay too much attention to caste arithmetic and it did very well by imaginatively bringing a coalition of interest between different groups.’\textsuperscript{18} However, Vivek Prahladan finds that during 2012 UP election, ‘BSP given a higher number of seats to the Brahmin-Rajput

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. 189.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid: 190.
combine than Dalits underscores the plausibility of the idea that such regional ethnic parties cannot intuitively rely upon their core constituencies. 19

In UP politics, all these castes played an important role and in some constituencies, they even decide the candidate’s future. ‘Thakurs’ and ‘Brahmins’ comprise a significant number in some constituencies and somehow decide the fate of the candidates. The Muslim population constitutes around 18.5 percent in the state and in some constituencies; it is more than 30 percent and considered a deciding factor in the Assembly election. 20 However, the OBCs (Other Backward Class) vote bank politics is also considered pivotal during elections. Therefore, BJP promoted Uma Bharti (CM candidates of BJP in the election, 2012) to attract OBCs and women voters and therefore, Uma Bharti has been said to file her nomination from Charkhari constituency (Bundelkhand) wherein more than fifty thousand people of Lodh community live in the constituency and got sympathy of Lodh community because Uma Bharti too belongs to same community. Moreover, the caste conundrum can understood through the narrative of a villager who openly addressed the social apathy prevalent in the state and said that Putti Lal, a Dalits, lost his job as a cook in the primary school in Harak block in Zaidpur (SC) constituency in Barabanki district as the children from the upper castes refused to eat the food cooked by him. 21 Thus, caste is inherent in the social structure and society is expected to behave accordingly. The subject of politics is never the same; rather it changed and varies over space but caste remained inevitable in the politics.

4. MAPPING COMMUNAL POLITICS AND THE HEARTLAND

Communal politics is not new to UP politics rather Babri Masjid-Ram Mandir (BM-RM) dispute politicized the issue further and considered breeding centre for communal clashes in the state. This study is not intended to relive the past to discover the reasons for these clashes; rather it explores the reasons why the state is vulnerable to such frequent communal clashes and communalisation of state politics and polarisation of the society. 22

20 See, Census of Uttar Pradesh, 2011.

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The communal clashes of UP have been looked through various dimensions (Rajagopal 2001; Hasan 1996; Punyani 2003). But this issue has played an important role in polarising the society, particularly during election time. These communal clashes are usually as being political acts, which are deliberately organised to win political edge over the opposition political parties. The communal politics did not stop even in 2012, after the new political regime. NDTV 24*7 telecast a news piece on September 18, 2012, about such communal clashes and concluded that in barely six months after Akhilesh Yadav was sworn in as the youngest Chief Minister of the state, six communal clashes took place in various parts of the state.

“In Bareilly district, some localities were under curfew for days. In Ghaziabad, the most recent, six people died in police firing after a mob turned violent hearing rumours about a copy of the Quran being desecrated. So far, 14 people have died in the violence across the state. Many more have been injured and property destroyed by angry mobs. Most of the riots have taken place in the last three and a half months. In June, violence broke out in Kosi Kalan near Mathura over a place of worship. Four people died and several vehicles were destroyed. In Partapgarh, houses of Muslims were burnt down after a Dalits girl was raped and murdered. Local villagers began rioting to protest police inaction. Bareilly district saw rioting twice in two months, both times over communal issues and curfew that extended for over a month. Moreover, the latest was in capital Lucknow and Allahabad, this time protests against the “atrocities” against Muslims in Assam and Myanmar.”

The recently held Muzaffarnagar communal clashes (July-August 2013) again raised questions about his ability to run the state, as more than 40 people died in the clashes. After these clashes, the political parties started mounting allegations at each other and the SP accused BJP for creating disturbances in the districts, while BJP hit back and placed the onus on SP and termed it as a complete failure of the government to check such incidents. The Hindu-Muslim clash in UP is not new as the genesis of this hostility lies in the Babri Masjid-Ram Mandir disputes where both communities claimed the site on grounds of religion. On several occasions both communities clashed with each other and supported the

issue for political gain. Meanwhile, the communal clashes of Muzaffarnagar exposed the contentious role of politicians who played a suspicious role in the episode.²⁴

Many communal clashes have taken place in the state over the years but it is not necessary that each communal clash has direct association with the Babri Masjid and Ram Mandir issue. Rather in most communal clashes, local issues have played an instrumental role. The Hindu-Muslim unity consequently, has widened over a period of time in the state and shaped the heartland as breeding ground for communal clash.

5. POST COLONIAL POLITICS AND THE ‘HEARTLAND’

Media often discusses the political strength of UP in terms of Centre-State power correlation. The proposition of media is based on the development of political pattern since the first Assembly elections that were held in 1952 in the State. The Congress Party emerged as being victorious and Govind Ballabh Pant assumed the charge by becoming the first Chief Minister of the state in independent India. Subsequently, in the central government, Congress Party assumed the office under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Prime Minister of independent India. At both the Centre and in the state, the Congress Party was in power till April 3, 1967 when Charan Singh became the first non-Congress Chief Minister of the state and assumed the office for ten months and again for eight months from February 18, 1970 to October 1, 1970. This period was considered an exception when Congress Party was not in the power in the state but was in power in the central government. Post emergency when elections were held, the Congress Party lost the elections and remained out of power for nearly three years. During that period, Ram Naresh Yadav and Banarsi Das of Janta Party ruled in the state. While at the Centre Morarji Desai and Charan Singh of the Janta Party ruled during that period.

During the 1990s, the emergence of regional political parties was witnessed and coalition government was formed when Mulayam Singh Yadav assumed office in UP and at the Centre, the National Front came to power under the leadership of V.P Singh with the support of BJP. But the government fell in both places – in the State and at the Centre.

Thereafter, the United Front, NDA, and UPA I & II formed different coalition governments backed by the support of political parties in power at the state level.

However, media emphasizes some constituencies and considered as power centers in Indian politics as they are mostly associated with prospective Prime Ministerial candidates. Out of 13 Prime Ministers the country has seen so far, 8 of them belong to UP. The following constituencies are; Amethi, Rae Bareilly, Mainpuri, Rampur, and Varanasi, last added in the lists, have all became key constituencies during Lok Sabha elections, 2014. It also demonstrates how media in particular has transformed these regional constituencies into major constituencies through its wide coverage. Why only few of the Lok Sabha/Legislative Assembly seats are popular across the nation and, even within the state. Why is this? How has this happened and who is responsible for it? The answer rests somewhere out of the state. How has an electoral space or constituency become pivotal over time and why? For example, people are more interested to know about what is going in Amethi, Rae Bareilly, Mainpuri, Azamgarh, Rampur and Varanasi even more than their own constituencies. The reason is simple. These constituencies belong to powerful party leaders or they are considered the face of the political party in the elections (Table 1).

Table 1: Electoral Spaces of UP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prime Minister of India</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Prospective Prime Ministerial Candidates</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jawaharlal Nehru</td>
<td>Phulpur</td>
<td>Sonia Gandhi</td>
<td>Rae Braelli</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lal Bhadur Shastri</td>
<td>Allahabad</td>
<td>Rahul Gandhi</td>
<td>Amethi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indira Gandhi</td>
<td>Rae Braelli</td>
<td>Mayawati</td>
<td>Akabarpur</td>
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<td>Charan Singh</td>
<td>Bagpat</td>
<td>Mulayam Singh Yadav</td>
<td>Mainpuri/Azamgarh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rajiv Gandhi</td>
<td>Amethi</td>
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<td>V.P Singh</td>
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<td>Atal Bihari Vajpayee</td>
<td>Lucknow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narendra Damodar</td>
<td>Varanasi</td>
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These constituencies have been developed very carefully to reflect the party’s views, statements, symbol over time. Both Amethi and Rae Bareilly constituencies have been given extra care by the Congress Party and the association of the Nehru-Gandhi legacy has remained intact with these constituencies and has been transferred to the next generation of leadership with a sense of attachment and care. Over time, these constituencies have provided a sense of comfort to their leaders and thus, these constituencies have been given to the leaders of the political party so that they may be elected without any political obstacles.

Media brings everyday news from these constituencies to highlight the spatial perspective at myriad levels to make people aware of what is going in the concerned space. Media gives a lot of focus to these so called pivotal constituencies and reports about this space through various programmes about what people are thinking about their leaders as compared to the opponents. Media being an institution circulates a political discourse and ignites the people’s thought either by carrying out their institutional responsibility or to provide support to the concerned political party.

6. NEGOATIATING HEARTLAND IN MEDIA SPACES

This section discusses the initial public and political discourses appeared in the media along with political rally, the election manifesto, the political campaign and exit poll are considered towards shaping heartland during election. The political rallies are also considered important ‘public’ gatherings where political parties are supposed to address political manifestos. Moreover, political rallies are often known for two things in the state; a helicopter and a Bollywood celebrity at the venue. Politicians astutely use both these (Helicopter and Bollywood celebrity) to ensure maximum crowds to attends the rally.25

Political leaders have learnt the mind-set of the people and try to bring both a helicopter and a Bollywood celebrity at least once in their constituency to ensure huge crowds at the venue. However, around the village Chaupal-Chabutra, dhaba, saloon and other such public spaces where people usually discuss the political permutation and combination.26

26 Read in context to, Habermas (1989). The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, (translated by Burger T.). Cambridge: Polity Press: 31-8, 41-3. As Habermas points out, the early public, then, comprised both court and ‘town’. The shape of the court and town were further restructured and by the 17th century

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Political rallies serve as one of the mediums to inform people about political issues and are considered a medium wherein people and leaders have direct links with each other and allow the space to discuss issues in close interaction. During elections, politicians use various methods to lure voters and to convey his/her political message and political parties often describe political manifestoes in detail. During the election campaigns, every political party organizes nukad natak (street play) and dance party. In an interview, a bar dancer from Mumbai, Chandni (name changed) said, ‘candidates book us for dance shows to lure voters and keep the morale of party workers high.’ Chandni is not alone. One of the co-ordinators of such bar dancers’ group from Mumbai said, ‘In the past few days, there has been a huge increase in calls being made to us by the clients (read politicians), who want bar dancers to entertain gatherings at their shows.’ ‘We have been provided good accommodation besides other perks’, he added. Bar dancers are in demand all over the state. It is mostly small-time leaders who are splurging to make a killing in the polls, he said. Shiva, who arranges these shows, said, ‘I have 23 dancers, including local girls and few from Mumbai. They are booked as of now by political candidates. I have diaries with details of advance amounts paid by political parties keen on such shows.’ 27 Moreover, the political manifesto is considered an important political activity and politicians prepare it before the election. In a democracy, elections are considered as being crucial for political parties and people to elect their representative through electoral franchise. However, SP won the election and Akhilesh Yadav became the youngest Chief Minister of the state in 2012. Every election witnesses a set of election issues and draws politicians across political parties to address the issues earnestly. During the UP Assembly elections, media found some issue which was pertinent and reasonable in the state.

Media set “agenda” 28 of eight issues (images) 29 which were considered potential issues to represent the state where media, the state and politicians/political parties followed these issues at best and these issues became contentious across political parties during the 2012 election. One of the oldest national Hindi daily news TV channels, Zee News, had outlined  

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29 It was first time when media did something so called election project where media prepared election manifesto for UP election and set eight issues in the political domain.
eight potential issues and the study made the issue as base to understand the mediated political discourse of UP Assembly elections 2012. These eight issues were included from all possible sections of different political shades. The mediated issues are:\[30\]

1. Statues, Memorials, Parks and Elephants
2. Reservation for Minorities
3. Division of UP
4. Land acquisition stir on Bhatta Parasual agitation
5. NRHM scam and Khuswaha fiasco
6. Rahul Gandhi-A tireless Campaigner
7. The anti-incumbency wave against BSP
8. UP: The nerve centre of politics

These issues covered almost all significant subjects and discussed across the state and media together. News regarding the UP Assembly elections 2012 appeared across media spaces in different ways. The news item UP: The nerve centre of politics, comprised the maximum number of news and followed by other news items- Rahul Gandhi: A tireless Campaigner; Reservation for Minorities; NRHM Scam/Kushwaha Fiasco; Statues, Memorials, Parks and, Elephants; Division of UP; Anti-incumbency wave against Mayawati and Land Acquisition stir in Bhatta Prasual. During UP election two news issues UP: The nerve centre of politics and Rahul Gandhi: A tireless Campaigner was quite popular and discussed in the media and comprised 70% of total media discourse on UP Assembly election, 2012. While rest of six issues discussed across media was least in comparison to issue UP: The nerve centre of politics and Rahul Gandhi: A tireless Campaigner issue and comprised 30% of total news content discussed during UP Assembly election. The other three popular story discussed during the election was Reservation for Minorities; NRHM Scam/Kushwaha Fiasco and; Statues, Memorials, Parks and Elephants and each story comprised more than 5% of total news contents which appeared in both TV news channels and newspapers. Moreover, the following issues- Reservation for Minorities; Statues, Memorials, Parks and Elephants; and Division of UP, appeared in English language based media and rest of the other issues appeared in Hindi language media at maximum length. Overall the news regarding UP election was out numbered the other news during the election particularly the news of UP election wherein media considered UP as heartland of Indian Politics as well.

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7. CONCLUSION

In both Colonial and Post-colonial UP, the role of the Congress Party was instrumental in shaping the political discourse of the state- whether it was the issue of naming the state or deciding the mother tongue of the state. The political clock changed after the 1990s, when regional parties, primarily SP and BSP replaced the Congress Party and subsequently, the emergence of Dalits politics in the state and shaped the country’s caste politics during the 1990s and 2000s. The communal politics flare the issue of BM-RM further; during 1990s the issue again surfaced in the national politics and emerged as one of contentious issue that shaped the state and pave the ways for BJP to emerged as national political party in the country. Media discussed the politics and legacy of constituencies in the state and considered an important political discourse that shaped the heartland politics as well. Media represented the election issues through political discourse and images that constructed the politics of the state as heartland variedly with the help of caste, communal, political, and electoral. Media was instrumental to carve the image of heartland apart from legislative strength of the state and used political bites and political permutation and combination of regional political parties that overshadowed the national parties in the state. Indeed, UP was the major politically important state, but media made the story differently in contested ways and shaped as heartland-those will rule UP, shall rule in the country.

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