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- ❖ **Politics Behind Demonetization**
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- ❖ **Trump Presidency**
- ❖ **Regionalism in India**
- ❖ **Textile Industry in India**



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Third Concept aims at providing a platform where a meaningful exchange of ideas can take place among the people of the Third World. The attempt will be to communicate, debate and disseminate information, ideas and alternatives for the resolution of the common problems facing humankind. We welcome contributions from academics, journalists and even from those who may never have published anything before. The only requirement is a concern for and desire to understand and take the issue of our time. Contributions may be descriptive, analytical or theoretical. They may be in the form of original articles, reactions to previous contributions, or even a comment on a prevailing situation. All contributions, neatly typed in double space, may be addressed to:

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Declining Electoral Ethos

Electoral ethos is witnessing a high rate of decline after each election – either General Elections or state assembly polls. The recently held polls to five state assemblies, apart from vast array of other issues, will also be remembered for the low and steadily deteriorating standards of electioneering. The terms of discourse and debate in these assembly polls, especially in Uttar Pradesh (UP) have been foul, even abusive, more often than not. All parties are guilty, but the Congress, the BJP, SP and BSP must share the bulk of the blame in the context of UP. Unless the rot is stemmed and reversed, what is going on today might magnify manifold in April-May 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

In the aftermath of the humiliating defeats of Delhi and Bihar, these ongoing assembly polls have become a prestige issue for the BJP in general and for PM Modi in particular. Modi's demonetization policy has become a decisive factor and not in the way that he had imagined it would be. Some experts opine that with more than half his term over, the fact is that Modi's government has failed on key fronts and his ambitious policies have turned out to be so vague that they do not find a place in the budget and have been pushed to the margins. Thus in the absence of showcasing some positive achievements, the BJP election campaigners have indulged in raking up issues veering round caste, religion and other extraneous issues which have evoked similar response from the rival parties, especially in UP and the resultant outcome is discernible in political slugfest.

An old adage that 'public discourse becomes the worst casualty when election campaigns move into the top gear', finds its perfect articulation in UP, where it is just over halfway through electioneering, but the acrimonious and abusive exchange of barbs and epithets by the campaigners has so vitiated the atmosphere that the right issues that should engage the electorate have become clouded and unclear. The deterioration in the quality of campaigning, which had set some low standards in the 2015 Bihar elections, has seemingly exceeded in UP. One expert has opined that ironically PM Modi has led this ignominious campaign from the front. Modi introduced a divisive and communal element into his party's campaign when he said at Fatehpur that there should be electricity on Diwali too, not just on Ramzan and there should be more cremation grounds for Hindus, not just burial grounds for Muslims. Undoubtedly, Modi was accusing the ruling Samajwadi Party dispensation of discrimination but he gave the impression that he was speaking for the Hindus.

Some experts feel that Modi's use of religion and caste as counters is an attempt to polarize the electorate on communal lines. The BJP's manifesto and the poll themes of many of its leaders are communal and divisive, and the prime minister sharpened the communal campaign with his unedifying statement. Modi also went personal when he described the BSP as Behenji Sampatti Party. Low wordplays like SCAM (Samajwadi Party, Congress, Akhilesh and Mayawati) were used. Responses were equally poor, as seen by Akhilesh Yadav's reference to the "donkeys of Gujarat" and Mayawati's description of Modi as "Negative Dalit Man" and a statement that she "didn't get married, nor deserted anyone after marrying." In the wake of such negative campaigning, some experts lament that when language and the idea conveyed through it are so debased and degraded, how there can be respect for public life and public personalities and such machinations also reduce elections to slanging matches and low-level personal contests. The BJP president, Amit Shah had used the acronym 'Kasab' (denoting Pakistan terrorist, who was arrested during the 26/11 Mumbai attack and hanged in 2012) saying 'Ka' (in Hindi) stands for Congress, 'Sa' for Samajwadi Party and 'Ba' for BSP and further added that till 'Kasab' is laid to rest, UP will not have development. The BSP supremo Mayawati, while lambasting Amit Shah for his 'Kasab' remark said, 'there cannot be a bigger Kasab, meaning a terrorist, than Amit Shah in our country now.' When language and the idea become so debased and degraded, they also reduce elections to slanging matches and low-level personal contests.

— BK