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Emperor Modi Juggernaut Rolls On in 2024

NARENDRA MODI IS THE EMPEROR

The elections to the legislative assemblies of four major states- Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana- held in November 2023 (results announced on 3 December) have unquestionably proclaimed Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, the de-facto Emperor of India.

He has also become Hriday-Samrat (Emperor of Hearts) of Hindutvaland, the core central-western part of India where the Hindutva politics rule.

Hindutvaland

The South-Asian landmass- east of Indus and extending to boundaries of China & Myanmar- has been territorially, culturally and historically known as Hind, Hindustan and India. The partition, after the British Raj ended, in 1947 created a new state of Pakistan in two geographically distant parts which are today's Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The moth-eaten India, minus Pakistan and Bangladesh, has four distinctly identifiable geographical parts today- a. big western-central part, including the big states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Uttarakhand, b. deccan plateau, most specifically the states of Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh & Kerala, c. eastern India comprising West Bengal, Assam, Sikkim & other NE states and d. northern part consisting of the states of Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab. The states of Maharashtra, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Jharkhand and Odisha share characteristics of more than one region.

This western-central zone is the core Hindutva-land & Hindu Rashtra, although Narendra Modi and BJP would like everyone to believe that Hindu Rashtra is coterminous with the whole of India.

If a line were to be drawn to connect Kedarnath (in Uttarakhand), Kashi (in UP), Puri (in Odisha), Pune (in Maharashtra), Dwarka (in Gujarat), Kurukshetra (in Haryana) and Kedarnath, the geographical area bound in this hexagon will form roughly the boundary of the Hindutva-land.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP today rules all the states in the Hindutva-land: Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat & Rajasthan & also adjoining states of Haryana, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Bihar (after yet another switch by Nitish Kumar). In contrast, the BJP is out of power in Deccan, after losing Telangana and Karnataka in 2023, though many people are sympathetic to the appeal of Hindutva in these two states. BJP has never been able to win power in the other three states in Deccan- Tamilnadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

Punjab, the key state in North-West has also never voted BJP to power, except when in alliance with Akalis. Jammu & Kashmir is unlikely to vote BJP to power.

Jharkhand and Odisha, adjoining the Hindutvaland have non-BJP parties in power. West Bengal, the state firmly out of the core Hindutvaland, has not favoured BJP ever in state elections.

Small North-Eastern states are so heavily dependent on the centre that the colour of ruling parties mostly change as and when the ruling party in Delhi changes.

There are very deep-rooted reasons, in the cultural, religious, linguistic and racial history of India why the North-West, Deccan and major North-Eastern states, have not fallen for Hindu Rashtra and Hindutva.

Modi's Hindutvaland Empire is incidentally quite similar to the major Empires India has seen in its 2500 years of political history- Ashokan, Gupta, and Mughal.

Emperor Narendra Modi

The November 2023 elections were held for electing people's representatives for the state legislative assemblies, who were to elect respective Chief Ministers.

Yet, no state leader was posited as the chief-ministerial candidate by the BJP. Instead, Narendra Modi was on the ticket as virtual Chief Minister in every assembly constituency of all the states.

The BJP asked for the votes largely in the name of Narendra Modi, his record & policies and welfare programmes, which were presented as Modi Guarantees.

BJP returned with impressive majority in the three Hindutvaland states- Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Only in Telangana, not fully part of Hindutvaland, the people voted the Congress to power.

After the elections, Narendra Modi put the last bunch of state leaders, with their own significant following- Shivraj Chauhan in Madhya Pradesh and Vasundhara Raje in Rajasthan- practically in cold storage. Three mostly light-weight legislatures were nominated as Chief Ministers, who publicly committed to rule in the name of and to implement the Modi guarantees.

December 2023 assembly elections effectively transformed Narendra Modi as the Emperor of Hindutvaland.

Hindutva & Hindu Rashtra

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has developed and mass-sold the winning narrative of Hindutva and Hindu Rashtra, which the BJP and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) are meticulously executing, with tremendous success in the Hindutvaland.

The narrative is centred on transforming India into a super-powerful Hindu Rashtra built on the ideology of political Hindutva.

Hindutva ideology was intellectually articulated by Savarkar in the religious-cultural context of Hinduism, as practised by the people treating Hindustan as their Pitra Bhoomi (the land of their forefathers) and also, more importantly, Punya Bhoomi (their holy land).

It was converted into a political ideology by the RSS Guru Golwalkar, positing on making Hindus the proud owners of India with non-Hindus, most particularly Muslims, permitted to

live as second-class citizens.

Hindutva is now being translated into the instrument of ruling doctrine by Prime Minister Narendra Modi using the levers of political power, very openly after winning the second term in 2019.

Hindutva narrative, and also Hindu Rashtra project, is all about making India a nation of proud Sanatan Hindus where living ethos are dictated by the 'Hindu culture', loosely defined as the way Hindus have lived in India forever with Hinduism, the best and the oldest surviving and thriving religion, at its core.

Hindutva ideology have been strongly reinforced by the consecration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Ram Rajya is now the Hindu Rashtra.

This narrative also emphasises that India would become strong only if it is ruled by a centralised authority (as opposed to a federal structure) with the states merging their authority in it as part of a single set-up- referred as double engine sarkar.

This construct works well for the BJP states with both engines (PM & CM) of a single brand (BJP). The states, ruled by a different brand political engine, are made to fall in line with partisan use of governors, central agencies, central funds and other instruments.

NARRATIVE TURNED INTO A WINNING FORMULA

Winning elections in India require a three-dimensional winning formula, comprising a mass-appealing narrative, co-option/allegiance of the constituents of power politics and the votes of the people- the hoi polloi.

Narendra Modi and BJP has turned the narrative of Hindutva and a powerful Hindu Rashtra into a powerful formula to win a majority in Lok Sabha and state assemblies in Hindutvaland. The narrative has successfully won over the three principal constituents of power politics- the mind-guys who create, control and spread the narrative (the narrative peddlers), the money bags who own businesses and wealth required to finance the elections (the moneyed) and the politicians from the other backward castes (OBCs), who fight for and pre-dominantly occupy positions of power in Delhi and the states now.

The narrative peddlers

Narendra Modi has won over a huge share of fertile Indian brains to work up and push the Hindutva and Hindu Rashtra narrative. BJP's IT Cell, retired civil servants, including many foreign service officers and military personnel, form a veritable army of 'intellectuals' and theme setters who contribute massively in conjuring up and pushing this narrative.

The hyper-active and creative 'IT Cell' devises powerful and impactful memes, stories and campaigns on themes of Hindutva, Hindu-Rashtra, Hindu resurgence and the like to influence the media, especially the social media and to bash other political parties/personalities and all those who don't agree with its view-point.⁴

The narratives, campaigns and association of so many 'intellectuals' provide many Hindus, particularly the richer and educated sections, a powerful identity to associate with and to feel proud of. These people, turn into colloquially referred as 'bhaktas', become very happy

soldiers and agents to mass-peddle the narrative dominating the social media- WhatsApp, Facebook, X and others.

This narrative of a militarily strong superpower India, in a position to pound Pakistan by conducting surgical and other strikes, swells the breasts of common people to convert them into fawning Hindu and faithful voters.

The talk of making India the third largest economy, growing at the highest rate in the world, also makes many Indians feel truly proud. These narratives emotionally charges up the Hindus and converts the narrative into votes. Many who don't necessarily subscribe to such viewpoints also get swayed to cast their lot with Narendra Modi.

The moneyed

Most industrialists and businessmen in India make a good part of their money using cosy relationship with the politicians in power by cornering budgetary and public sector resources. Most businessmen, weakened by this crony-capitalism, have no spine or intention to stand up to the government. Those who don't, can be easily cowed down by the use of law, tax and anti-money laundering agencies.

Many of these laws permit arrests at will and presume the arrested guilty unless otherwise proven by the arrested. Narendra Modi government has used all these instruments to make the moneyed sing in its tune and contribute enormous resources through electoral bonds or otherwise.

Narendra Modi's economic growth strategy has been built around three principal components- make massive capital investment from the budget, benefit the industrialists and businessmen and dazzle the bhaktas to feel proud of Indian economy.

Massive budgetary capital investment is being made in physical infrastructure, through public sector enterprises like Railways and NHAI. These investments turn out glistening & wide roads and European style speedier trains like Vande-Bharat which dazzle Indians. Programmes like PLI and Semi-conductor Mission (part of Make in India narrative) co-opt large industrialists, domestic as well as foreign, with the help of large subsidies- many times in multiples of total investment made by the industrialists. These benefit big businessmen and dazzle common people.

The government has abandoned the privatisation and disinvestment policy and is now actually sustaining the public sector, both the real- BSNLs, Railways e.g. and the financial-banks and insurance companies- with large budgetary capitalisation, ignoring of the losses and inefficient use of capital.

The capitalism of Narendra Modi and BJP is actually a kind of trophy capitalism. Big projects and massive expenditures create many trophies- infrastructure, temples, new parliament building and so on. Though this strategy is fiscally unsustainable, it creates illusion of growth and grandeur and make hearts of many people swell with pride, translating into votes.

Co-option of powerful OBCs

Hinduism has long suffered from the ills of varna & caste system, though initially designed to promote specialisation. There are about 10-15% Hindus, usually identified as brahmins, rajputs and vaishis who make up predominantly the elites, haves and 'upper castes' of India. The remaining 85-90 percent of people are traditionally identified as shudras (OBCs), dalits/achhoots (untouchables, now SCs) and adivasis (tribals/STs).

Other Backward Classes (OBC) constitute more than 50-60% of the total population. Within OBCs, there are powerful castes in every state. They are large landowners who have also been rulers of many kingdoms in India. This landed & ex-rulers castes, currently classified as OBCs, should actually be classified as Other Forward Castes (OFCs).

There is a much larger segment in OBCs (about 80%), which is actually economically and educationally backward. These groups/castes have begun to be separately identified now in many states as Extreme Backward Classes (EBC). These castes should only be classified as the OBCs.

In India, the political and administrative positions are being increasingly occupied by the OBCs. Prime Minister Modi himself is an OBC. Most state chief ministers, irrespective of the party formations, are OBCs. The opposition has many self-made powerful politicians from the OBCs as well.

Narendra Modi, being the obsessive centraliser of political power, has ensured that most chief ministers/ deputy chief ministers in BJP ruled states are OBCs albeit without any real power base of their own. He wins the loyalty of the OBCs without shedding real political power. Bihar, headed by an OBC CM, conducted the first caste census which revealed, as was always suspected, that OBC population was higher at about 65% against previously assumed 52%. The INDIA alliance (currently tottering) parties, most particularly the Congress ruled states, have announced conducting caste censuses believing that this will lure OBCs into their camp.

BJP got greater share of OBC votes in the four state assembly elections and has developed a good hold over the OBCs.

Labharthi as vote-banks

Indian Constitution provides one vote to every citizen- no discrimination on the basis of education, income, gender, caste or belief. The EBCs, dalits and tribals (the common people) constitute the majority of voters in India. Their votes have to be won.

The common people are also poor. They are too busy in their lives eking-out living to have time for bothering too much about the political narratives. The notion of strong Hindu Rashtra and Hindutva impress them but don't really earn the bread for them. Consequently, the Hindutva narrative is not enough to win them over fully.

In India, the EBCs, SCs and tribals, have been hugely influenced by the caste considerations while voting in elections. The Sanatana Hindu/ Hindutva narrative has weakened caste preferences in the Hindutvaland but not adequate enough to transfer their votes en-bloc.

In the non-Hindutva regions of India, there is still strong resentment against older Brahminical order and curse of rigid caste-hierarchies. The national parties, including the BJP are not very strong players in the non-Hindutva regions. The EBCs and dalits have not shifted their allegiance to the Hindutva brigade in these regions.

The trick to win allegiance of EBCs and Dalits is to provide them economic and financial support- for food, homes, energy and other assets. Narendra Modi had perfected this art and craft in the first term.

He implemented Housing for All, both in rural and urban areas, to provide financial support for constructing houses, which carries enormous emotional appeal to the poor across the OBCs, SCs and STs. Day to day necessities of electricity, gas connection, toilets etc. were met by bringing highly successful and efficiently delivered programmes of SAUBHAGYA, UJAVALA and SWACCHA BHARAT. The emergency health crises, enough to ruin the budgets of most of the poor families, was taken care by the AYUSHMAN BHARAT programme.

Narendra Modi began expanding the welfare programmes to include freebies as well before the 2019 elections. About 100 million farm families were supported with cash handouts under the PM KISAN scheme. Other programmes- wage employment programme MGNREGA to about 100 million rural households and almost-free 5 kg cereals to 800 million people- started by the Manmohan Singh government were also continued.

These schemes met the real needs of people and eased their living constraints. These were not freebies in any sense these met the felt needs of the people but were not able to consumer for want of income.

Without doubt, a great majority of the EBC, dalits and tribal families (and also better-off OBCs/OFCs and poor amongst general category people) received benefits under these programme. These crores of benefits-receiving people, called the Labharthis, did turn out in large numbers to vote for Narendra Modi in 2019 elections.

Freebies to win state elections

The appeal of the above mentioned schemes slowly waned in the second term. In the second term, Modi Government initiated only one major new poor people oriented programme- the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). Unlike the programmes in the first term, the JJM has not been delivered quite successfully.

Modi Government seemed to be losing the grip over the EBCs, dalits and tribals- the Labharthis- after Covid-19 epidemic. The opposition parties, on the other hand, began getting their act together and launched numerous direct benefit programmes promising and delivering cash and in-kind hand-outs.

The loyalties of poor had begun shifting to Congress and other opposition parties, most evidently witnessed in the non-Hindutvaland states. BJP suffered electoral defeat in West Bengal, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and later, in Telangana.

Sensing this shift, Narendra Modi designed its own package of cash and in-kind handouts. In

line with the objective of building the image of benevolent emperor, these schemes were termed as Modi Guarantees and launched with big propaganda in the November 2023 assembly elections.

This strategy did work. Combined with the appeal of Hindu Rashtra, the Modi guarantees won the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan for Narendra Modi handsomely.

AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE

There are five principal constituents of the Narendra Modi's narrative and strategy- religion (Hindutva), nationalism (Hindu Rashtra), trophy capitalism, winning over OBCs and the poor (Labharthis).

The elements of this narrative and strategy have combined to form a deadly winning formula and queered the pitch for the opposition in India, still strong in the non-Hindutvaland states. The opposition attempted to form an Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA). The alliance has been breaking up after the December assembly elections. There is an alternative narrative for India, which can meet Modi narrative effectively.

Humanism in place of Hindutva

Hindutva narrative is heavily focussed on serving the interests of the upper-caste Hindus. It openly excludes about one-fourth of Indian population- Muslims, Christians & Sikhs. Excluding such large sections of Indian society and capturing power on the basis of polarising majority is not justifiable. Is it also not in the real national interest.

Dalits (untouchables), and many castes within the EBC fold, who had severely suffered the excesses of Brahmanism until the untouchability was abolished and they captured political power on their own rule in some states (most spectacularly in Tamilnadu).

These people don't have any real sympathy with the Hindutva narrative. These people would prefer a non-strident Hindu and a more equality promoting narrative, empathetic to their social and economic status and needs.

The Hindutva also does not appeal to a large section of people, including many upper-caste Hindus, who have more modern liberal education and orientation. The transgenders suffer when heterosexual marriages/ companionships are allowed as the only legitimate system of living as family and deciding property rights. There are many Hindus who don't want to treat marriage as a non-dilutable sacrament. Many Hindus feel suffocated under the majoritarian insistence on Hindu Code as the common civil code.

All these exclusions and contradictions can be addressed if Humanism, which treats every individual person, irrespective of his/her religion, caste and sexual orientation, equal in all civil matters, is offered as the narrative to counter the narrow Hindutva ideology.

The Humanism narrative is much more liberal, modern, wider and inclusive. It can, if effectively presented with conviction, can context the narrow Hindutva ideology. It is also quite a natural choice for India with its diversity of religions and faiths.

Hindustan in place of Hindu Rashtra

Nationalism is still quite an emotive issue in India and in many countries of the world. Hindu Rashtra builds on the emotion of nationalism.

The notion of nationalism, however, is not very old. It became mainstream and prominent only after the onset of industrial revolution. The Europeans first got organised into nations. Indians never had all the lands of present day India even under any single Empire. Mostly in last 1200 years, barring the Mughal period, India was fragmented into many small kingdoms. The Mughals also could not win Deccan and North-East as part of their Empire.

The British also left more than 550 small and big princely states when they left in 1947 besides the big British India. The appeal of Indian nationalism became most powerful in the 20th century.

Globalisation, integration of capital and technology markets, trade of goods and services, recognition that the climate of our planet is one integrated one, population stagnation in large parts of the world, increasing immigration etc. have weakened the need and the notion of nationalism.

Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam (the whole Earth is one family) is becoming a global reality increasingly. However, still the notion and emotion of Indian nationalism has to be offered to Indian people to win their allegiance.

All the people living in India's vast territory, east of Indus, constitute the Indian nation. Despite Pakistan and Bangladesh having become separate countries, the nationalist sentiment can be much better captured in the idea of Hindustan.

Hindustan belongs to all people living therein irrespective of their religion and other cultural beliefs. Whether Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, Christians and other are all Hindustani. All Hindustanis make a better Hindustan/India than only Hindus constituting the Hindu Rashtra.

In Hindustan, all Indians will have right to live as equals. Indian Constitution treats all Hindustanis equal and grants equal fundamental rights to all. Indian Constitution is Hindustani in character.

Hindustan narrative is definitely more inclusive and can be more powerful than the Hindu Rashtra narrative.

Competitive capitalism in place of Trophy capitalism

Indian economy suffered heavily on account of adoption of the economically inefficient socialist ideology for organising Indian industry and economy post-independence. The Congress began to realise this mistake in the 1980s and was forced to make the course-correction in 1991. Post-1991 reforms created a real investment and growth momentum in India.

The trophy capitalism strategy of BJP is not in the overall real and long-term economic interest of India. The trophy capitalism actually misuses and effectively stalls the post-1991 reforms.

The government has stopped privatising the inefficient, loss-making and capital guzzling public sector, both in the real and the financial sector. Zombies like BSNL and MTNL are being carried on stretcher with trillions of tax-payers and borrowed funds sunk-in. Every 10 years or so, India faces a crisis in the public sector banks.

The government is borrowing heavily to make capital expenditure in building new railway lines, bridges, tunnels and lining up new railway trains, while the passengers are not coming back to Railways. BSNL is losing customers across all categories- wireline, wireless and wi-fi and has in fact become a bit player. Trillions of tax-payers and lenders money have been spent essentially to serve the political need to show off railway and highway projects and for enabling the Prime Minister to flag-off Vande-Bharat trains.

The private sector is not investing in India. The real policy problems in infrastructure, manufacturing and external trade have not been resolved. Instead, fiscal support and transactional tweaks are being made to allow big industrialists and companies to earn large profits, which in turn, help stock markets rise to show-off that India is doing economically well.

The trophy capitalism can be shown for its true worth. Massive fiscal deficits (about 6% in the last four years) have raised the general government debt to over 85% of GDP. Interest payments are shooting up. Total revenue expenditure increase in budget 2024-25 was lesser than the increase in interest payments. It can be argued convincingly that fiscal situation would become unmanageable in times to come.

Indian agriculture needs to be de-governmentalized. Indian industry needs to be made competitive by exposing to genuine global and domestic competition and India needs to harness its real prowess and competitive advantage in services. Public sector dismantling would make Indian economy healthy and prosperous.

This alternative economic policy narrative for building real competitive capitalism in India can deliver much better economic growth and results than the trophy capitalism.

Focus on EBCs in place of OFCs

There is no doubt that the political power has decisively shifted to the OBCs in India. Within the OBCs, however, it is the landed castes, who have also ruled India in the past in addition to Rajputs (the OFCs), which have gained the political power, not the real OBCs- the EBCs.

Every political formation is trying to woo the OBCs. In that endeavour, the INDIA formation has fallen for its insidious and pernicious aspect- promising the OBCs employment in government and public sector by making still higher reservations on the basis of the actual proportion of OBCs in total population.

The fact of the matter is that jobs, particularly the manual jobs, are fast declining in the government and public sector thanks to widespread mechanisation and computerisation. The public sector jobs would decline further as production of private goods and services shift to private sector. Promising more jobs to the OBCs, dalits, tribals based on caste census in government is a false strategy and will come to haunt any formation which promises it.

The existing reservation policy need a tweak. EBCs have neither got the political power nor the jobs. It is time to refashion the policy to limit reservations in educational, jobs and political positions only for the EBCs, dalits and tribals.

It is not going to be a popular narrative but, as the upper castes have increasingly accepted the reality of reservations, the forward OBCs should and would also accept it gradually. The gratitude of more numerous EBCs, dalits and tribals can make this alternative narrative politically successful.

Convergence of welfare & freebies narratives

After adoption of freebies (earlier derided as revadis) by BJP as Modi guarantees, there is not much difference in the 'sabka saath sabka vikas and Labharthis' narrative of BJP and cash and in kind handouts and rights based narrative of the opposition parties. Almost all of the Labharthi schemes of BJP are nothing but renaming and reformulation of erstwhile UPA era schemes.

The difference is only in terms of credibility and implementation. However, certain inherently poor and costly policy choices like reverting to Old Pension Scheme (OPS) or offering reservations in private sector have to be eschewed as these are fiscally costly and impact growth impulses negatively.

ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE BEGS PATRON

The alternative narrative outlined above has a natural fit with the INDIA alliance. The alliance, however, seems quite reluctant to embrace most of its elements.

The Congress has significant presence in the Hindutvaland and also in the Deccan. Regional parties like Trinamul Congress, DMK, AAP, Samajwadi Party, RJD, BJD, NC, BJD, KCR Congress and SAD are powerful in the states where the Congress is not strong. Together, the INDIA alliance can form a good alternative to BJP, if it has a credible vision and appealing narrative.

The alternative narrative also fits very well for a federal India. There are so many strong regional parties in the alliance, which makes the federalism, as contrasted with centralised polity of Narendra Modi, the natural governance model for INDIA. The Federal India narrative can effectively neutralise the Hindu Rashtra's Centralised India narrative.

Most regional constituents of INDIA alliance represent the OBCs, dalits and tribals of India. They have been the victims of strident Brahmanism in the country. The liberal, humane and Hindustani narrative fits their needs and aspirations quite well. Strong dose of redistribution programmes meets the needs of the voters of INDIA alliance perfectly.

The competitive capitalism for growth narrative, however, is INDIA's Achilles Heel. The Congress brought 1991 reforms which laid the path of competitive capitalism in the country. The party, however, is quite reluctant to own this up and adopt the same for economic growth in India.

Many regional parties forming INDIA are also heavily public sector oriented parties and don't really lay store to India growth story by unleashing public sector reforms and investment by the private sector.

MODI JUGGARNAUT ROLLS ON IN 2024

Narendra Modi is targeting 370 seats for BJP and 400 for NDA.

The composition of current Parliament is such that roughly about 300-325 seats fall in the Hindutva Land and the rest outside. BJP wants to win at least 90% of seats in the Hindutvaland and the rest in remaining India.

The opposition/ INDIA can defeat Narendra Modi only if can win 30% or more seats in the Hindutvaland and does not allow BJP to make inroads in the rest of India.

In the Hindutvaland, Congress is the predominant party with Samajwadi and AAP as the other prominent ones. If INDIA can adopt and espouse the alternative narrative and there is good and functional seat sharing between these three parties in Hindutvaland, INDIA alliance can hope to win 30% of seats.

In Deccan, Congress is strong in Karnataka, Kerala and Telangana whereas DMK and YSR Congress are quite dominant in Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. TMC in Bengal, BJD in Odisha, RJD in Bihar, Shiv Sena and NCP in Maharashtra, NC in Kashmir and AAP in Punjab are also strong in these states.

If INDIA alliance adopts the alternative narrative and can bring all these parties together, INDIA alliance can probably get more than 75% of seats outside the Hindutvaland. It is unlikely, however, to happen for two reasons.

First, there is no ideological conviction in INDIA alliance on the alternative narrative and agenda. Congress, in fact, has quite contradictory view and the position of key constituents of INDIA also differs violently on all important constituents- Hindustani, liberal competitive capitalism, reservation of jobs for OBCs, dalits and tribals and federalism. The INC and regional parties are still caught up in the time warp and consider the public sector as the creator of jobs and the private sector a disaster. INDIA alliance does not have any economic growth strategy actually.

Second, most constituents of INDIA alliance will not be able to rise beyond their narrow parochial interests. They may not actually be able to have even a functional seat sharing arrangement in most states.

Emperor Modi returns with majority in 2024

Lok Sabha elections are round the corner. In the absence of any good alternative narrative and INDIA alliance already tottering, there is likely to be a good walk-over to Narendra Modi in the Hindutvaland. The BJP may substantially lose non-Hindutvaland areas, still there is a good likelihood that Narendra Modi will romp home with a good majority in Lok Sabha in May 2024.

Narendra Modi, with comfortable majority in 2019, delivered the lowest growth post-1991 of only a little over 4% per annum. It is no guarantee, however, that another term with a good majority will usher India into a high-growth future.