

The tumultuous Gujarat assembly election.

Gujarat has always been significant in the national politics. This is the state which gave to our nation, its “father”, Mahatma Gandhi. Further, this is also the state, outside the Hindi heartland, that has given two prime ministers to the nation, Morarji Desai and Narendra Modi. Hence, any political development in this state, is also crucial to the entire nation.

Election to the Gujarat state assembly was held recently. The ruling BJP has won the election for a record sixth time, and has formed the government. However, the BJP, which has been comfortable till recently, faced a stiff fight from the Congress party. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the BJP narrowly escaped in this election.

BJP president, Amit Shah declared in advance that, the BJP would win 150 seats. But, it could not even cross the 100 seat mark, and got only 99 seats. BJP's vote percentage also got reduced by 10%, compared to the votes it got in the 2014 Parliament election. On the other hand, Congress Party recorded its best performance since 1985, and won 77 seats.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the main campaigner for the BJP in this election. He addressed tens of rallies. But, in these rallies, the Prime Minister did not talk much about “development”, which is his favourite subject. This is because, people are not willing to buy any more, his much touted “Gujarat model of development”. The Prime Minister also did not open his mouth about “corruption” this time, which is his another favourite subject. This may be because of media reports that Jay Shah's income increased 16,000 times. Instead, he was merely trying to appeal to the “Gujarati Pride”, by claiming that he was the son of Gujarat.

The derogatory “lowly person” remark, made by Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar (neech kism ka aadmi), came handy to the Prime Minister. He twisted that the “Gujarati Son” and Gujarat were insulted by Aiyar. The Prime Minister also competed with Mani Shankar Aiyar in making vilifying remark against the former Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, by saying that he conspired with Pakistan. The Prime Minister stooped to a new low, and said that Pakistan was conspiring to make the Congress leader Ahmed Patel as the chief minister of Gujarat. All these showed that the Prime Minister has become totally desperate.

Undoubtedly, the Prime Minister was raking up ‘non-issues’, instead of discussing real problems being faced by the people of Gujarat. This was because, the Prime Minister could no longer boast about the “Gujarat model of development”. The emergence of many cast groups, like the Patidars under Hardik Patel, the OBCs under Alpesh Takore, Dalits under Jignesh Mewani, etc. in Gujarat, are nothing but manifestations of the sufferings by various sections of the people, due to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, sufferings of the small farmers, etc. The results of the Gujarat assembly election shows that the BJP has miserably failed in settling the problems of the people.
