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A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF SPEECHES IN INDIAN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Kanupriya Mali[*,*]

ABSTRACT

Understanding the role of rhetoric in election campaigns is essential for several reasons. Firstly, it provides insights into how political leaders craft their messages to engage and mobilize voters. Secondly, it sheds light on the ways in which language is used to frame political issues and shape public discourse. Finally, it highlights the importance of critical media literacy among voters, enabling them to better analyse and interpret the messages they receive during election campaigns. This paper examines the rhetorical strategies employed in election campaign speeches by political leaders in contemporary India, focusing on how these techniques influence voter perception and behaviour. By conducting a detailed rhetorical analysis of speeches from various political parties and leaders during recent Lok Sabha election, the study identifies key rhetorical devices and persuasive tactics used to engage and mobilize the electorate. Various themes are explored to understand their prevalence and impact within the political discourse. Additionally, the research evaluates the effectiveness of these rhetorical strategies in shaping public opinion and electoral outcomes. By bridging the gap between rhetoric and political action, this study provides insights into the role of persuasive communication in Indian democracy, highlighting the power of language in shaping political realities. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of political rhetoric's function in elections and its broader implications for democratic engagement in India.

Keywords: Rhetorical Analysis, Political Discourse Analysis, Campaign Speeches, Persuasive Communication

1. Introduction

In democratic societies, election campaigns are crucial moments where political rhetoric becomes a powerful tool for persuasion. In India, the world's largest democracy, election speeches are not merely a platform for policy dissemination but are also crafted as persuasive tools designed to resonate with a diverse electorate. The complexity of India's social fabric, characterized by myriad languages, cultures, and

[*]Department of Linguistics and Language Technology, Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha.

socioeconomic backgrounds, demands that political leaders employ a sophisticated array of rhetorical strategies to effectively communicate their messages and influence voter behaviour. Persuasive rhetoric in Indian election campaigns draws heavily on classical rhetorical principles, particularly Aristotle's concepts of ethos, pathos, and logos. These principles form the bedrock of political speech-making, enabling politicians to establish credibility, evoke emotional responses, and present logical arguments. Beyond these classical elements, modern political communication in India incorporates a variety of rhetorical devices, including metaphors, symbolism, repetition, and narrative techniques. These devices are tailored to address both regional and national concerns, reflecting the unique dynamics of Indian politics.

The Lok Sabha elections of 2024 were a significant political event in India. These elections were held across all 543 parliamentary constituencies and took place in seven phases. Major political parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Indian National Congress (INC), and various regional parties, participated actively. The outcome of these elections decided the next Prime Minister and the ruling government. In Lok Sabha election campaigns in 2024, Prime Minister Modi addressed 173 rallies and gave over 80 interviews across 22 states and Union Territories between March 31 and May 18. Rahul Gandhi (INC), Modi's fiercest opponent and Congress's star campaigner addressed 60 rallies and corner meetings across 16 states and Union Territories in this period.

This paper seeks to analyse the rhetorical strategies employed in the speeches of key Indian political figures during Lok Sabha election campaigns 2024. By examining how politicians craft their messages to persuade and mobilize voters, we can gain a deeper understanding of the role of rhetoric in shaping political outcomes in India. The study focuses on the use of ethos, pathos, and logos, along with other rhetorical devices, to reveal how political leaders navigate the complex landscape of Indian elections. Through this analysis, we aim to illuminate the intricate ways in which persuasive rhetoric influences voter perceptions and behaviour, ultimately shaping the democratic process in India.

2. Research Question

The research represented by this paper intended to answer the following questions:

i. How do Indian political leaders use rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) to connect with diverse voter demographics during election campaigns?

ii. How does the rhetorical style of political speeches differ across various parties in India, and what does this reveal about their strategies to appeal to voters?

iii. What are the most common rhetorical devices (repetition, parallelism, rhetorical questions, alliteration, and anaphora) used by

Indian politicians during election campaigns, and how do they contribute to the persuasiveness of their speeches?

iv. How do Indian political leaders balance emotional appeals with logical arguments in their speeches to persuade undecided voters?

3. Literature Review

3.1 Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor by Charteris-Black, J. (2011)

Jonathan Charteris-Black's *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor* (2011) is a foundational text that explores the pivotal role metaphor plays in political discourse. By examining the rhetorical strategies of prominent political figures, Charteris-Black provides an insightful analysis of how politicians use metaphors to influence, persuade, and engage with their audiences. This work is part of a broader interdisciplinary research area combining linguistics, political science, and communication studies, with a focus on cognitive linguistics and metaphor theory.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

Charteris-Black's work is grounded in the conceptual metaphor theory pioneered by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which posits that metaphors shape our perception and understanding by mapping one conceptual domain onto another. However, Charteris-Black goes beyond this cognitive dimension to include rhetorical and critical discourse analysis (CDA), arguing that metaphors in political rhetoric not only shape cognition but are also carefully chosen tools of persuasion. By integrating CDA, Charteris-Black analyses the political, social, and ideological implications of metaphor use, demonstrating how metaphors can reinforce power relations and influence voter perceptions. Charteris-Black emphasizes the dual function of metaphors: their cognitive role in framing concepts and their persuasive role in eliciting emotional responses. He positions metaphor as a key mechanism through which politicians create narratives that resonate with the values, fears, and hopes of their audiences. This theoretical expansion beyond purely cognitive approaches marks a significant contribution to metaphor studies.

3.2. Methodology

Charteris-Black employs a qualitative approach to analyse speeches by leading political figures such as Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, and Barack Obama. His method involves identifying metaphors and analysing their frequency, context, and rhetorical impact. By examining how different metaphors are deployed across various political contexts, he demonstrates the versatility of metaphor in addressing a wide range of political issues, from war and peace to economic crises. The book uses a discourse-historical approach to trace how certain metaphorical frames become embedded in political narratives over time. For instance, Charteris-

Black examines how metaphors of battle and struggle have been historically used to justify military interventions and how metaphors of the "journey" or "progress" are often invoked in times of reform or crisis. By contextualizing these metaphors within specific historical and political moments, he highlights how they not only reflect but also shape public opinion. One of the central arguments in *Politicians and Rhetoric* is that successful political communication depends on a politician's ability to harness metaphor to convey complex ideas in relatable terms. Charteris-Black demonstrates that metaphors are not neutral or benign; they are ideologically loaded and can frame issues in ways that favour certain interpretations or policies. For example, the use of war metaphors (e.g., "the war on terror") often serves to create a sense of urgency and moral clarity, which can be used to rally public support for controversial policies.

The book also reveals the emotional appeal of metaphors. Charteris-Black discusses how metaphors of family, nationhood, and morality are frequently used to create emotional bonds between politicians and voters. For instance, Barack Obama's use of the "journey" metaphor in his 2008 campaign tapped into a collective sense of hope and progress, helping him connect with voters on an emotional level. Charteris-Black also highlights the importance of ethos, or the credibility and character of the speaker, in conjunction with metaphor. He argues that metaphors must align with a politician's public persona and moral framework to be effective. For example, Winston Churchill's use of battle metaphors during World War II resonated because of his image as a resolute and steadfast leader.

3.3. Elections in India: An Overview by S. Kumar (2013)

S. Kumar's *Elections in India: An Overview* (2013), published by the Election Commission of India, provides a comprehensive account of the electoral processes, historical context, and structural organization of elections in the world's largest democracy. The work is an authoritative guide, presenting both the historical evolution and operational details of Indian elections. Kumar's work is especially valuable for its insider perspective, given the Election Commission's role as the regulatory authority overseeing the conduct of elections. Kumar does not shy away from discussing the persistent challenges in Indian elections, including issues related to political corruption, vote-buying, communal tensions, and violence. The text critically analyses reforms initiated to curb these issues, such as the implementation of stricter guidelines for political party funding, voter education initiatives, and measures to ensure security during elections. Moreover, Kumar advocates for continuous reforms to adapt to evolving challenges, suggesting that electoral integrity in India requires on-going vigilance and institutional innovations. Kumar's overview provides a multifaceted understanding of elections in India, balancing historical insights with an examination of contemporary electoral reforms and challenges. His analysis is both descriptive and prescriptive, offering suggestions for the future of Indian elections. The author's emphasis on

the role of the Election Commission as a guardian of democracy is particularly notable, positioning the institution as central to the health of India's democratic process. Overall, *Elections in India: An Overview* is a critical resource for scholars, policymakers, and anyone interested in understanding the complexities of electoral democracy in India.

3.4. On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse (2007) by Aristotle

Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* is one of the foundational texts in the study of rhetoric and civic discourse, emphasizing the role of persuasion in public life and the mechanisms through which it operates. First composed in the 4th century BCE and subsequently revisited through numerous translations and commentaries, the 2007 Oxford University Press edition provides a modern take on Aristotle's timeless insights. This review explores key themes, the relevance of the work in contemporary rhetorical theory, and its enduring impact on various fields.

3.5. Core Concepts of Aristotle's Rhetoric

Aristotle divides rhetoric into three distinct categories: **deliberative, judicial,** and **epideictic**. These correspond to political, legal, and ceremonial speech respectively. Each of these rhetorical forms has different aims. Deliberative rhetoric focuses on future action, urging or dissuading a course of action, whereas judicial rhetoric concerns itself with past actions, particularly issues of justice or injustice. Epideictic rhetoric, meanwhile, emphasizes praise or blame in ceremonial settings. The division helps clarify how different situations and purposes necessitate distinct rhetorical approaches.

In terms of persuasive appeals, Aristotle introduces the well-known triad: **ethos (credibility), pathos (emotional appeal),** and **logos (logical argument).** These appeals, he argues, are fundamental to persuasion. Ethos refers to the speaker's character and trustworthiness, which establishes the authority to speak on a subject. Pathos deals with the audience's emotions, shaping their response by eliciting feelings aligned with the speaker's message. Logos involves the logical structuring of the argument, relying on reason and evidence to persuade the audience.

3.6. Importance in Civic Discourse

A significant aspect of Aristotle's work is its focus on the civic role of rhetoric. He contends that rhetoric is an essential tool for participation in democratic life, enabling citizens to debate public issues, deliberate on policies, and render judgments in courts. This democratic function situates rhetoric as not merely a tool of persuasion but as integral to the functioning of civic society. Aristotle's emphasis on rhetoric as a means of engaging in public discourse reflects the value he places on participatory governance.

Aristotle's rhetoric theory is also deeply connected to his ethical and philosophical views, particularly his concept of *telos* (end or

purpose) and the pursuit of the common good. By promoting civic discourse that seeks the welfare of the community, Aristotle ties rhetoric to ethical considerations, thereby framing persuasion not as manipulation but as a tool to guide people toward wise decision-making.

3.7. Modern Interpretations and Relevance

The 2007 edition, with its updated translations and scholarly commentary, provides new ways of interpreting Aristotle's text in light of contemporary rhetorical studies. Scholars have debated how Aristotle's insights can be applied to modern forms of communication, such as media discourse, political campaigning, and even digital platforms. The flexibility of Aristotle's framework allows for its adaptation to various contexts, particularly in analyzing persuasive techniques in today's world.

Many modern rhetoricians appreciate Aristotle's recognition that rhetoric is context-bound—persuasion varies depending on the audience, situation, and purpose. This adaptability makes his theories applicable to today's increasingly fragmented and complex communicative environments. For instance, in the age of social media, Aristotle's concept of ethos is more relevant than ever, as credibility and authority are continually negotiated in public discourse.

3.8. Conclusion

Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* remains a cornerstone in the study of persuasion, public discourse, and civic engagement. The 2007 edition by Oxford University Press provides readers with a detailed and accessible version of this classic text, allowing it to continue informing both rhetorical theory and practice. While not without its limitations, Aristotle's work offers timeless insights into the nature of communication, the role of rhetoric in democratic life, and the ethical dimensions of persuasion. Its relevance in contemporary settings—from politics to digital media—ensures that Aristotle's exploration of rhetoric will continue to be studied and applied across disciplines.

4. Methodology

This study employs qualitative content analysis to examine speeches from prominent Indian politicians during recent 2024 Lok Sabha election campaigns. Speeches were selected from rallies of BJP and INC, two major political parties of India to provide a comprehensive overview. The analysis focuses on identifying and categorizing rhetorical strategies, with a particular emphasis on ethos, pathos, and logos.

The literature is clear on the power dynamics presented in this paper. Cook (2011) uses Foucault's argument that power is manifested in (political) discourse. When something or someone can manipulate discourse, they can manipulate where and through which mechanism power is manifested. This is because states no longer have a monopoly

on power. The speeches have been analysed within the framework of the research, as well as the social and communicative situation where and when they were created, the aims and findings determine the fact that this research belongs to the field of political discourse analysis. Political linguistics itself forms two approaches to the analysis of political discourse. A renowned contributor to this area, Sheigal (2004) describes the descriptive approach for the needs of political linguistics as one which roots in "the classical methodology of rhetorical analysis of public speaking represented by the works of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. In modern linguistics, one aspect of the descriptive approach is related to the study of the linguistic behaviour of politicians, linguistic means, rhetorical devices and manipulative strategies used by politicians in order to persuade". The method of critical discourse analysis "would mean that critical-political discourse analysis deals especially with the reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination through political discourse, including the various forms of resistance or counter-power against such forms of discursive dominance. In particular such an analysis deals with the discursive conditions and consequences of social and political inequality that result from such domination (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1993).

5. Analysis and Discussion

The use of ethos, pathos, and logos is central to the effectiveness of political speeches. These three rhetorical appeals—originally conceptualized by Aristotle—serve as the foundation for persuasive communication. In political contexts, these appeals are strategically employed to influence public opinion, garner support, and establish the speaker's credibility. Let's explore each in detail:

5.1. Ethos (Credibility and Character)

Ethos refers to the ethical appeal or the credibility of the speaker. In political speeches, ethos is crucial because it establishes the trustworthiness and authority of the speaker. If the audience believes in the speaker's character, they are more likely to be persuaded by their arguments.

5.2. Ways Ethos is Used in Political Speeches

- Authority and Expertise: Politicians often highlight their experience, qualifications, or past achievements to establish authority. For example, a candidate might refer to their tenure in office, legislative successes, or professional background to demonstrate competence.
- Moral Integrity: Politicians build ethos by portraying themselves as morally upright and aligned with the values of the audience. They might emphasize their honesty, commitment to justice, or dedication to public service. A politician who is perceived as ethical and trustworthy is more likely to gain the public's confidence.

- Connection with the Audience: Politicians use ethos to establish a connection with the audience by presenting themselves as relatable or sharing similar values and experiences. For instance, a politician might emphasize their humble beginnings or their understanding of common people's struggles to create a bond with the electorate.
- Use of Testimonials: Sometimes, politicians enhance their ethos by being endorsed by respected figures or organizations. Endorsements from trusted community leaders, celebrities, or influential groups can bolster a politician's credibility.
- Example in Political Speeches: A politician might say, "As someone who has served this community for over 20 years, I understand the challenges we face. My record shows that I have consistently fought for your rights, and I promise to continue doing so with integrity and dedication."

5.3. Pathos (Emotional Appeal)

Pathos involves appealing to the emotions of the audience. In political speeches, pathos is used to evoke feelings that resonate with the audience's values, fears, hopes, or desires. Emotional appeal can be a powerful tool in persuading the audience, especially in creating a strong connection to the issues at hand.

5.4. Ways Pathos is Used in Political Speeches

- Storytelling: Politicians often use personal anecdotes or narratives that evoke empathy or pride. By telling stories that illustrate the struggles or successes of ordinary people, politicians can make their messages more relatable and impactful.
- Appeal to Values: Politicians appeal to emotions by aligning their messages with the audience's core values, such as freedom, justice, or family. By framing their policies as a defence or promotion of these values, they can generate strong emotional support.
- Evoking Fear or Hope: Fear and hope are powerful motivators in politics. A politician might warn about the dangers of a rival's policies to instil fear, or they might present a vision of a brighter future to inspire hope. Both strategies aim to move the audience to action.
- Use of Symbolism: Emotive symbols, such as national flags, historical references, or patriotic music, are often employed in speeches to evoke a sense of unity, pride, or nostalgia. These symbols can reinforce the emotional appeal of the speech.
- Example in Political Speeches: A politician might say, "Imagine a future where every child in our nation has access to quality education, where no family has to choose between healthcare and putting food on the table. This is the future we can build together-one filled with hope and opportunity."

5.5. Logos (Logical Appeal)

Logos refers to the logical appeal or the use of reason and evidence to support an argument. In political speeches, logos is used to convince the audience through rational argumentation, presenting clear evidence, facts, and logical reasoning.

Ways Logos is used in Political Speeches

- Use of Facts and Statistics: Politicians often cite data, statistics, and empirical evidence to support their claims. For example, a politician might reference economic data, crime rates, or employment figures to justify their policy proposals.
- Structured Arguments: Politicians use logical reasoning to structure their arguments in a clear and coherent manner. They often present problems, followed by solutions, and explain the cause-and-effect relationships between them.
- Citing Research and Expert Opinions: To strengthen their arguments, politicians might refer to studies, reports, or expert opinions. This reliance on authoritative sources can make their arguments more convincing and credible.
- Comparative Analysis: Politicians often compare their policies or track records with those of their opponents. By logically contrasting the outcomes of different approaches, they aim to demonstrate the superiority of their own positions.
- Example in Political Speeches: A politician might say, “Over the past decade, our state has seen a 20% increase in employment due to our investment in green energy. If we continue on this path, we can reduce our carbon footprint by 50% in the next five years while creating thousands of new jobs.”

5.6. Interplay Between Ethos, Pathos, and Logos

In effective political speeches, these three appeals are often used in combination. A politician might start by establishing ethos, and then use logos to present a rational argument, and finally, employ pathos to leave a lasting emotional impact. The balance and interplay of these appeals can significantly influence the persuasiveness of a speech.

For instance, a speech might begin by establishing the speaker's credibility (ethos), move on to present a well-reasoned policy proposal supported by data (logos), and conclude by appealing to the audience's hopes for the future (pathos). This holistic approach ensures that the message resonates intellectually, emotionally, and ethically with the audience.

5.7. Metaphors and Symbolism

Metaphors and symbolism play a significant role in Indian political rhetoric. Prime Minister Modi Ji’s references to India as a "mother" and his use of religious symbolism resonate deeply with many voters. On the other hand, Arvind Kejriwal's use of the "aam aadmi" (common man) metaphor underscores his party's focus on ordinary citizens' concerns.

5.8. Repetition and Parallelism

Repetition and parallelism are used to reinforce key messages and make speeches more memorable PM. Modi's repeated use of slogans like "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" exemplifies this strategy. Similarly, Rahul Gandhi's speeches often feature repeated calls for unity and inclusivity.

6. Data (Speech) Analysis

6.1. Election Campaign Activity

6.1.1. Narendra Modi's Campaign (Key Highlights)

- PM Modi addressed double the number of election events compared to Rahul Gandhi during the five phases of the Lok Sabha elections.
- PM Modi held 120 rallies across 22 states and Union Territories, with a strong focus on Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Maharashtra.
- His campaign themes revolved around nationalism, security, development, Ram Mandir, and accusations of opposition "appeasement politics".
- Modi Ji used divisive rhetoric, accusing the Congress of favouring Muslims over Hindus.
- Modi Ji claimed Congress was supporting Muslims in a "vote jihad" to take over India, contrasting it with "Ram Rajya" an idealized Hindu society.
- One of the defining features of PM Modi's rhetoric is his emphasis on national security and India's global stature. At a rally in Uttar Pradesh, Modi highlighted his government's strong response to external threats, particularly focusing on actions against terrorism:

  > *"We carried out surgical strikes, and today, no one dares to challenge India. We have given a befitting reply to terrorists and those who harbour them. The BJP's government is a strong government that puts India's safety first."*

- PM Modi has consistently focused on his government's development agenda, using the theme of *"Vikas"* (development). In a rally in Maharashtra, he spoke about infrastructure projects, including highways, railways, and new airports:

  > *"Under the BJP, India is witnessing unprecedented infrastructure growth—new roads, metro lines, airports, and highways are being built at record speeds. We are making India a 21st-century superpower with the development agenda at its core."*

- Modi Ji often uses his speeches to defend his government's economic reforms and initiatives, such as *Atmanirbhar Bharat*

(self-reliant India) and the *Production Linked Incentive* (PLI) schemes to boost manufacturing. At a rally in Tamil Nadu, he said:

> *"India is becoming the world's manufacturing hub. From electronics to defence, we are building industries that will provide jobs to millions. The BJP government has put the economy on a path of high growth."*

- In another speech in Gujarat, he contrasted his government's economic management with that of the Congress party:

  > *"The Congress left India's economy in a mess, and it took years of reforms to bring it back on track. Today, despite global challenges, India is the fastest-growing major economy in the world."*

- PM Modi often emphasizes his government's social welfare programs, aimed at the poor and marginalized. At a rally in Madhya Pradesh, he spoke about the success of the *Ayushman Bharat* scheme, which provides health insurance to low-income families:

  > *"Under Ayushman Bharat, crores of Indians have received free medical treatment. We are providing dignity and security to the poor, ensuring that no family has to suffer due to the cost of healthcare."*

- Modi's speeches frequently targets the Congress party and other opposition parties, often portraying them as corrupt and ineffective. In a rally in Karnataka, he referred to the Congress as a "party of dynasts":

  > *"For Congress, politics is a family business. For them, power is an inheritance, not a responsibility. The BJP, on the other hand, works for the nation, not for one family."*

- In several speeches, Modi has also accused the opposition of stalling progress and dividing the country along caste and religious lines. In a rally in Bihar, he said:

  "While the BJP is working for 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas,' the opposition is playing politics of caste and religion. They want to divide the country, but we will unite it with development."

- PM Modi regularly highlights India's rising stature on the global stage, often attributing it to his government's foreign policy. In a rally in Delhi, he said:

  "India's voice is now heard in the G20, at the UN, and on every global platform. The world looks at India as a leader, and this has been possible because of the BJP government's decisive leadership."

- In some regions, particularly in northern India, Modi Ji invokes themes of cultural nationalism, connecting with the Hindu

majority. In a speech in Uttar Pradesh, he mentioned the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya:

"For years, the Congress tried to stop the construction of the Ram Mandir, but today, it stands as a symbol of our faith and culture. This is the victory of the people's will."

- PM Modi claimed in a TV interview that Mahatma Gandhi was not widely known outside India until Richard Attenborough's 1982 film Gandhi. He attributed this lack of global recognition to previous Congress governments, despite figures like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. acknowledging Gandhi's influence on their activism.

6.1.2. Rahul Gandhi's Campaign (Key Highlights)

- Rahul Gandhi Ji held 60 rallies in 16 states and territories, with a focus on Southern India (Kerala, Karnataka).
- He emphasized social justice, demanding a caste-based census and focusing on unemployment, farmer debts, and the rights of marginalized groups.
- He criticized Modi's ties with industrialists like Adani and Ambani.
- In a rally in Rajasthan, Rahul Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of working for a few select industrialists. He said:

"This government is not for the common man. It is a government for Adani, Ambani, and a few others who are close to the Prime Minister. Modi ji is using public institutions to benefit these industrialists, while small businesses, farmers, and laborers suffer."

- In another speech in Madhya Pradesh, he remarked:

"The BJP government talks of 'Achhe Din,' but where are the jobs? Where is the relief for farmers? Modi ji talks big, but his promises remain unfulfilled."

- At a rally in Uttar Pradesh, Rahul Gandhi highlighted the growing economic disparity, saying:

"Under Modi ji's rule, the rich have become richer, and the poor are getting poorer. Small businesses are shutting down, farmers are struggling, and the youth are unemployed. Our fight is to create an economy that works for everyone, not just the top 1%."

- He has also addressed the issue of rising inflation:

"Prices of essential goods like cooking oil, vegetables, and petrol are skyrocketing. The BJP government has failed to control inflation, leaving the common man to suffer."

- At a rally in Karnataka, he said:

"We will not let them divide India on the basis of caste, religion, or region. India is one, and Congress is the party that will unite, not divide."

- In Kerala, Rahul Gandhi emphasized the Congress party's commitment to secularism and unity, stating:

  "India belongs to everyone—Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Dalits, tribals. The BJP's politics of division is dangerous. We must fight against hatred and work towards unity and brotherhood. Love is our biggest weapon against hate."

- In Bihar, addressing a youth rally, Rahul Gandhi criticized the BJP's failure to create jobs:

  "Modi ji promised 2 crore jobs every year. Where are the jobs? Our young people are talented, but they don't have opportunities. The Congress will prioritize job creation and bring policies that will provide employment to every Indian youth."

- He also highlighted the challenges faced by the educated youth:

  "Millions of young people in India are educated but jobless. This is not just an economic problem; it's a social crisis. Our government will bring industries back on track and create millions of jobs."

- During a rally in Delhi, Gandhi emphasized the need to protect democratic institutions:

  "Modi ji and the BJP are attacking our democratic institutions. The media is not free, the judiciary is under pressure, and even the Election Commission is being influenced. We must protect these institutions to preserve democracy in India."

- In a rally in Maharashtra, he said:

  "They are destroying the very fabric of our democracy. The Congress party will restore the independence of institutions and ensure that the voices of the people are heard."

- In a rally in Uttar Pradesh, he spoke about the importance of a free press and judiciary:

  "Under Modi ji, media houses are scared to speak the truth, and the judiciary is being influenced. This is not democracy. A free press and an independent judiciary are the cornerstones of our Constitution, and we will fight to protect them."

- At a rally in Punjab, Gandhi accused the BJP of undermining parliamentary procedures:

  "Modi ji does not believe in debate or discussion. They pass laws in Parliament without consulting the opposition, without listening to the people. We will restore the dignity of Parliament and make sure that laws are made through consensus, not dictatorship."

- Rahul Gandhi has also focused on women's empowerment, particularly in his speeches in southern states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala:

  "India cannot progress unless its women are empowered. The Congress party will ensure 33% reservation for women in Parliament and state assemblies. We will also work on improving safety for women in public spaces and increasing job opportunities for women across sectors."

- In Goa, he brought up environmental issues and the need for sustainable development:

  "The BJP government is selling our natural resources to corporations, destroying our forests, rivers, and coastline. Congress believes in development, but it must be sustainable. We will protect the environment for future generations while creating jobs in green industries."

- In Madhya Pradesh, Rahul Gandhi addressed the shortcomings in healthcare and education:

  "The BJP government is spending billions on statues and bullet trains, but our schools and hospitals are in shambles. Congress will prioritize healthcare and education, and ensure that every Indian has access to quality services."

6.2. Election Themes and Rhetoric

6.2.1.PM Modi's Rhetoric: Some of the themes highlighted by PM Modi are:

- Modi held *120 rallies* across *22 states and Union Territories*, with a focus on key states like Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Maharashtra. His campaign was far more extensive compared to opposition leaders, notably addressing double the number of election events as compared to Rahul Gandhi.

- National security was a key theme, with Modi frequently referencing *surgical strikes* and the government's strong stance against terrorism.

- Modi consistently highlighted his government's infrastructure projects, including new roads, railways, airports, and metro lines: *"We are making India a 21st-century superpower with development at its core."*

- Modi emphasized the success of initiatives like *Ayushman Bharat*, which provided health insurance to millions of low-income families: *"Crores of Indians have received free medical treatment."*

- Modi accused the Congress party of dynastic politics, corruption, and *appeasement* of the Muslim community: *"For Congress, politics is a family business."* And *"Congress wants to divide the*

country through caste and religion, while we unite it with development."

- Modi invoked Hindu cultural symbols, particularly the *Ram Mandir* in Ayodhya, contrasting his government's support for the temple's construction with Congress's alleged opposition: *"The Ram Mandir stands as a symbol of our faith and culture."*
- Modi regularly highlighted India's growing global influence under BJP leadership, citing platforms like the *G20* and *UN* as examples of India's rising status on the world stage: *"India's voice is heard on every global platform."*

6.2.2.Rahul Gandhi's Rhetoric

Some of the key issues raised by Rahul Ji are as under:

- Gandhi has consistently criticized Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP government for their handling of issues like unemployment, inflation, and crony capitalism. His speeches often portray the BJP as favouring a select few wealthy individuals while neglecting the common man, farmers, and the marginalized.
- Rahul Gandhi's rhetoric focuses on India's growing economic disparity. He speaks about the struggles of the middle class, small businesses, and farmers, blaming the BJP for policies like demonetization and GST, which he argues have harmed the economy. He often promises policies that would alleviate economic hardship, such as loan waivers for farmers or support for small industries.
- Another strong thread in Gandhi's speeches is the appeal for religious and social harmony. He positions the Congress party as a defender of India's secular fabric, contrasting it with the BJP's perceived divisive policies. Gandhi frequently invokes themes of love, unity, and inclusion to counter what he frames as the BJP's politics of hate.
- Gandhi's rhetoric often reflects concerns about the erosion of democratic institutions under BJP rule. He accuses the government of undermining the judiciary, media, and Election Commission. This aspect of his speeches serves as a call to protect the country's democratic values and the rule of law.

7. Findings

Evaluation of 2024 election rhetoric based on the research questions is as follows:

7.1. Narendra Modi (Star campaigner of BJP)

7.1.1. How do Indian political leaders use rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) to connect with diverse voter demographics during election campaigns?

- **Ethos (Credibility):** Modi frequently establishes credibility by emphasizing his personal journey from a humble background (tea-seller to Prime Minister); reinforcing the idea that he is a leader of and for the people. He also uses his government's achievements, like surgical strikes and infrastructure development, to enhance his ethos as a strong and effective leader. This resonates with voters who seek a capable and credible figurehead.
- **Pathos (Emotion):** Modi's speeches often evoke strong emotional responses, particularly through *nationalistic* rhetoric, such as references to Ram Mandir and India's security, which stirs pride among the Hindu majority. He also employs pathos when discussing social welfare programs aimed at the poor, evoking feelings of gratitude and hope among marginalized communities.
- **Logos (Logic):** While emotional appeals dominate, Modi uses logical appeals when discussing India's economic growth, infrastructure projects, and foreign policy success. These arguments provide voters with tangible evidence of progress under his government, especially middle-class and aspirational voters who prioritize development.

7.1.2. How does the rhetorical style of political speeches differ across various parties in India, and what does this reveal about their strategies to appeal to voters?

- Modi's rhetorical style tends to be *aggressive* and *nationalistic*, heavily focused on *security*, *development*, and *cultural nationalism*. This approach aims to unify the Hindu majority and project strength. In contrast, Congress leaders, like Rahul Gandhi, often use a more *conciliatory* and *issue-based* approach, focusing on *inclusivity*, *social justice*, and *anti-corruption* themes. Modi's rhetoric reveals a strategy of rallying nationalist sentiments and positioning himself as a protector of India's culture and sovereignty.
- BJP's reliance on religious and nationalistic rhetoric contrasts with Congress's efforts to appeal to *minorities* and *lower-income groups* through promises of economic reforms and welfare policies. This difference highlights how the BJP uses divisive rheto0loric to consolidate its base, while Congress adopts a broader, more inclusive message.

7.1.3. What are the most common rhetorical devices (repetition, parallelism, rhetorical questions, alliteration, and anaphora) used by Indian politicians during election campaigns, and how do they contribute to the persuasiveness of their speeches?

- Repetition: PM Modi frequently uses repetition to emphasize key points, such as "Vikas, Vikas, Vikas" (Development, Development, Development). This constant reiteration reinforces his development agenda and makes the message more memorable for the audience.

- Anaphora: He often uses anaphora in his speeches, such as the repeated use of *"For years, the Congress tried to..."*, to highlight Congress's perceived failures, making his accusations more forceful and persuasive.
- Rhetorical Questions: Modi employs rhetorical questions to engage the audience and provoke thought. For example, *"Can we trust Congress with our national security?"* This technique subtly leads the audience to the conclusion that his party is the only trustworthy option.
- Alliteration and Parallelism: Modi uses alliteration and parallelism to enhance the rhythm of his speeches, making them more impactful and memorable. For instance, in his slogan *"Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas"*, the parallel structure conveys inclusivity and development for all.
- These devices help create emotional engagement, clarity, and emphasis, which increase the persuasiveness of his speeches.

7.1.4. How do Indian political leaders balance emotional appeals with logical arguments in their speeches to persuade undecided voters?

- Modi strategically blends emotional appeals with logical arguments. His references to *Ram Mandir* and national security appeal emotionally to the Hindu majority, evoking pride and a sense of identity. Meanwhile, his discussions about *infrastructure projects*, *economic reforms*, and *foreign policy* provide a logical framework that appeals to middle-class and undecided voters who prioritize tangible progress and stability.
- For undecided voters, especially those on the fence due to economic or security concerns, PM Modi balances his emotional appeals to national pride with logical discussions on *India's economic growth* and *global stature*. This mix allows him to connect with both emotional and rational voters, ensuring broader appeal across demographics.

7.2. Rahul Gandhi (Star campaigner of INC)

7.2.1. How do Indian political leaders use rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) to connect with diverse voter demographics during election campaigns?

- **Ethos (Credibility):** Rahul Gandhi presents himself as a defender of social justice and democratic institutions. By positioning the Congress as a party for the marginalized (farmers, youth, women, and minorities), he tries to establish his credibility as someone fighting for the underprivileged. His critique of Modi's ties to industrialists (like Adani and Ambani) builds on his ethos as a leader prioritizing fairness and equality over corporate favouritism.
- **Pathos (Emotion):** Gandhi employs emotional appeals by focusing on rising *economic inequality* and the struggles of farmers and

unemployed youth. His emphasis on the *"common man"* vs. the wealthy elite is aimed at create an emotional connection with voters who feel left out of India's economic growth. He also invokes the *idea of unity*, emphasizing India's diversity and secularism, which resonates with minority and progressive groups.

- **Logos (Logic):** Rahul Gandhi often appeals to logic when discussing unemployment, inflation, and the BJP's failure to deliver on its promises. He provides a logical critique of BJP policies by highlighting unmet promises of job creation and economic growth. For instance, he consistently points out Modi's failure to deliver the *2 crore jobs* promised each year and argues for more equitable economic policies.

- How does the rhetorical style of political speeches differ across various parties in India, and what does this reveal about their strategies to appeal to voters?

- Rahul Gandhi's rhetorical style contrasts with Modi's in several ways. While Modi often uses *nationalism* and *security* to appeal to the Hindu majority, Gandhi emphasizes *social justice*, *economic equality*, and *secularism*, which appeals to marginalized groups, minorities, and those concerned with democratic principles.

- Gandhi's speeches focus on *issues-based* politics (jobs, inflation, and farmer distress) and institutional integrity, revealing the Congress party's strategy to appeal to voters disillusioned by the BJP's governance. While Modi positions himself as a strong protector of Indian culture and security, Gandhi positions himself as a champion of *inclusivity* and *economic fairness*.

- What are the most common rhetorical devices (repetition, parallelism, rhetorical questions, alliteration, and anaphora) used by Indian politicians during election campaigns, and how do they contribute to the persuasiveness of their speeches?

- **Repetition:** Gandhi frequently repeats themes of inequality, unemployment, and the failure of the BJP government to meet its promises. For example, his repeated use of *"Where are the jobs?"* and *"The rich are getting richer, while the poor are getting poorer"* emphasizes the growing economic divide.

- **Anaphora:** Gandhi uses anaphora, such as in speeches where he starts multiple sentences with *"Modi ji promised…"* to highlight unmet promises.

- **Rhetorical Questions:** Similar to Modi, Rahul Gandhi frequently employs rhetorical questions, asking *"Where are the jobs?"* or *"Is this the achhe din you were promised?"* This device allows him to connect with voters who feel their expectations have not been met, inviting them to reconsider their support for the BJP.

- How do Indian political leaders balance emotional appeals with logical arguments in their speeches to persuade undecided voters?
- Rahul Gandhi blends **emotional appeals** with **logical critiques**. For instance, while appealing to emotion by discussing the struggles of farmers, the unemployed, and women, he also uses logical arguments when pointing out the failures of BJP policies. He tries to support his emotional narratives about inequality by data-driven critiques of inflation, unemployment, and economic disparity.
- His speeches seek to resonate with voters who feel economically marginalized and politically alienated, combining an emotional appeal to fairness and unity with logical arguments about BJP's governance failures. This mix aims to convince undecided voters that the Congress is both a party of compassion and of practical, logical solutions.

8. Conclusion

In politics, the art of persuasion is a critical tool for shaping public opinion and influencing voter behaviour. Words, when articulated with precision and delivered effectively, have the power to change minds and alter beliefs. This power lies not just in the content of the message, but in the manner and context in which it is presented.

The analysis of the 2024 election rhetoric tries to reveals distinct strategies employed by Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi in their bid to connect with voters. Modi's approach leverages a blend of nationalistic fervour and development-focused arguments, aiming to evoke emotional pride through cultural symbols and a strong stance on national security. His rhetoric is characterized by aggressive and emotional themes, with a clear emphasis on Hindu identity and infrastructure achievements, which helps consolidate his base and appeal to voters prioritizing security and development.

In contrast, Rahul Gandhi's rhetoric tries to focus on social justice, economic disparity, and institutional integrity. His speeches critique the BJP's governance and highlight issues like unemployment, inflation, and crony capitalism. Gandhi aims to employ an issue-based approach, aiming to connect with marginalized communities and those disillusioned with the current administration's failures. His emphasis on unity and secularism is aimed to position the Congress as a defender of democratic values and economic fairness. Both leaders use rhetorical devices such as repetition, anaphora, and rhetorical questions to reinforce their messages and engage voters. Modi's speeches often include nationalistic and developmental themes, while Gandhi's focus on economic and social justice issues. The balance between emotional appeals and logical arguments in their speeches reflects their respective strategies to address the diverse concerns of the electorate and sway undecided voters. Overall, the contrasting rhetorical styles and thematic focuses of Modi and Gandhi illustrate their differing strategies to

appeal to various voter demographics and shape public perception in the 2024 election.

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