

Uttar Pradesh Narrative Report



Possible Narrative for General Election in Uttar Pradesh, 2024

In 2024 India will be faced with the most crucial General Election that may in effect determine the future of Indian democracy and its Constitution. The current government that has been ruling the country for the past two terms and one decade is the most authoritarian and destructive government that has caused havoc to the democratic and secular fabric of the country as well as to its economy. The BJP led government has sabotaged all democratic institutions and misused its power to stifle voices of opposition and dissent. They have extensively monopolized the media and other means of propaganda to create constant discourses in their favor. The critical journalism that questions the government has dangerously declined in India. In this report we are trying to draw attention to certain important aspects and facts that need to be part of the narrative as we collectively approach the 2024 elections.

In the first part we have focused on the state of Uttar Pradesh. There are 80 Lok Sabha seats in UP, of which in 2014 BJP won 71, while among the opposition parties, SP won 5, Congress won 2 and BSP won 0. In 2019, BJP won 62, SP and BSP formed an alliance of which SP won 5 and BSP won 10, while Congress won 1.

Here we have charted some key issues which need focus in the next General election as a part of the campaign. There are three layers of campaign issues that were the focus of this report. The first layer is the general state level campaign issues, second is region specific and third is the constituency specific. There are issues which cut across the regions and constituencies and thus part of the overall campaign strategy that could work at the state level.

State level campaign issues:

Caste census:

The BJP's victory ascendance since 2014 is not just due to greater consolidation of the upper castes, but also because of the deep inroads among the lower castes, especially among the OBCs. Data from National Election Studies (NES) conducted by Lokniti-CSDS indicates that the party's vote share among OBCs doubled between 2009 and 2019 – it received approximately 20% OBC votes in the 2009 general elections, which increased to 44% in the 2019 elections. These inroads came at the cost of both the Congress and state-level parties.

Between 2009 and 2014, the gains were more among the lower OBCs, and between 2014 and 2019, it was among upper OBCs. In bipolar states in which the Congress and the BJP are main competitors, the gap between two parties has widened considerably since 2009. BJP received nearly half of the OBC votes in 2004 and 2009 elections, and the Congress won approximately 40%. The OBC vote for BJP in 2014 and 2019 elections increased to nearly two-thirds, while it declined for the Congress to roughly one-fourth in these states.

The BJP is hesitant to take a firm decision on caste census or releasing the Rohini commission's report in public. The caste census and Rohini Commission's report will reveal the caste fissures in Indian society and also how much resources are available to backward castes. The demand for caste census must be extensively raised and propagated.

Dalit atrocities in UP:

Uttar Pradesh carries the dubious distinction of recording the highest number of crimes against Dalits. Out of more than 1.9 lakh crimes against Dalits recorded by NCRB between 2018 and 2021, Uttar Pradesh accounted for the lion's share, with 49,613 cases of atrocities against Dalits. In 2018, 11,924 cases were recorded, 11,829 in 2019, 12,714 in 2020, and 13,146 in 2021. Atrocities against Scheduled Castes increased by 1.2 per cent in 2021 (50,900) over 2020 (50,291 cases). Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number of cases of atrocities against Scheduled Castes (13,146 cases, 25.82 per cent)

"It is not just us (Chamars) but also communities like Kashyaps (an OBC community) and Valmikis (another Dalit community), who are known to be loyal to the BJP, are suffering. Valmikis have stopped getting permanent safai karamchari jobs, while Kashyaps who run Kolhus (small-scale jaggery making units) in the region are reeling under the pressure of high electricity bills,"



In September 2023, 3 members of a Dalit family were killed in Kaushambi, UP, according to a report by the NDTV. A total of eight people were arrested in relation to the murder, which was motivated by the occurrence of a land dispute. One of the arrested include a police constable, Suresh Singh. The accused were from a backward caste and wanted to evict the victims from a piece of land.



Similarly, in UP's Mainpuri, a 33 year old Dalit man was found murdered after he could not pay back the loan to an upper caste man. Police here too suspected the issue of land grabbing.

Sexual and other violence against Dalit women in UP: (Incidents of 2023 Alone):

- **When her 20-year-old daughter reached there, she heard her mother's screams from a room that was bolted from inside, Station House Officer (Girwan) police station Sandeep Tiwari said on Thursday.** After some time, when the door of the room opened, the girl saw the mother's body lying in three pieces and informed the police, he said. Following this, an FIR was registered against Rajkumar Shukla, his brother Bauwa Shukla and Ramakrishna Shukla, the SHO said. The accused men are absconding and no arrests have been made in the case, he said.
- **A girl belonging to the Dalit community was gang-raped by three people from her own town. Police said on Tuesday that the incident took place in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur district and the rape was committed near the victim's house.** The incident took place within the jurisdiction of Jalalabad Police Station, a 16-year-old girl who was working in a field near her home was forcibly taken to another field and raped. Hearing the screams of the girl, the locals rushed to the spot. At this time, those who committed the crime escaped. A case has been registered in connection with the incident and those involved in the case have been arrested and are being interrogated. The police said that the girl has been medically examined.
- **Ballia, Uttar Pradesh: A teenage Dalit girl was allegedly kidnapped and raped by a man in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia, the police said on Monday.** Police said the accused has been arrested. A 17-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly kidnapped and raped by one Santosh Kumar Rajbhar (19) from a village in Bansdeeh area on October 20, police said. The accused also issued death threats to the girl, warning her from speaking about the incident, they said.
- **A 17-year-old physically challenged Dalit girl was allegedly gangraped in Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad district.** According to the girl's family, she had ventured out to graze goats on Saturday and later in the evening, she was found in a critical condition in a bajra field, 200 metres away from her residence.
- **Police in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj suspended a sub-inspector in connection with the rape of a Dalit woman who had gone to him with a complaint, an officer said on Tuesday.** Senior police official, Sudhir Ku-

mar said the victim, in her testimony, accused Jhanghai Police outpost in-charge Sudhir Kumar Pandey of raping her on September 21. Pandey, a sub-inspector posted at Sarai Mamrej Police Station, was booked under IPC sections 376 (rape) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) as well as under the SC/ST Act on the basis of the woman's complaint, Kumar said. Pandey is absconding. According to police sources, the woman was being harassed and getting death threats by some men, and had gone to the Jhanghai Police outpost in-charge with her complaint. On September 21 evening, sub-inspector Pandey called her to the police outpost. On the pretext of going to arrest the men, he took her in a car and gave her a cold drink laced with sedatives and raped her when she was unconscious, they said.

- On August 28, a young woman from Sant Kabir Nagar district filed a complaint with the Kotwali police against Raza for allegedly raping and molesting her younger sister and murdering her father. The Kotwali police had registered a case on September 5 against the accused former BJP leader Rahi Masoom Raza's son Sanaullah Khan. The girl and her family were living on rent in the BJP leader's house for the past six years.

Violence against Dalits:

- Tension prevailed in Sandeepan Ghat area under Harraipur police station of Kaushambi district after murder of three member of a Dalit family on Thursday night. Agitated over the sensational crime, locals gathered at the spot and shouted slogans demanding justice for the family. A heavy police deployment has been made in the area to prevent any untoward incident. As per the initial reports, force from several police stations in the area have rushed to the spot. Several senior police officers are already at the crime spot. Police said that the people from the victims' side also set ablaze to the houses of some of the suspects in the village.



- An 18-year-old Dalit youth was killed in Sultanpur allegedly for a simple demand of Rs 1200 of unpaid wages for a full four days of labour at a farm in Baramadpur village. The victim's elder brother spoke to The Quint, stating, "This is the price one pays for being a Dalit in this country. What was his fault? They killed him for just Rs 1200. That's how cheap our lives are." On August 25, around 3 pm, the victim went on his cycle to collect the owed wages at the house of one Anuj Yadav. However, by 7 pm that same evening, Girijesh Yadav arrived at the victim's home informing them that the young man had met with an "accident" and had been hospitalised in Ambedkarnagar's civil hospital. Upon reaching the hospital at 8 pm, the family was informed their loved one had already passed away.
- **A Dalit family in Sambhal district of UP has filed a complaint with local police seeking protection for their 20-year-old daughter's wedding ceremony on Tuesday following alleged restrictions imposed by a group of upper caste men from their village for gifting a Royal Enfield motorcycle to the newly-weds.** The bride's parents, Rishipal Valmiki and Sheela Devi, claimed that the local village head had threatened them "not to give away gifts like upper caste families do" if they want the wedding to be held smoothly. They were also warned of "violent reprisals like stone pelting during the wedding procession".



Yogi Adityanath's Cabinet:

Yogi Adityanath's Cabinet 2.0 has 21 ministers from the upper castes; seven are Brahmans, three are Vaishyas and eight, including the chief minister, represent the Thakurs. The Cabinet also has one Kayastha and two Bhumihar ministers. Of the seven Brahmin ministers, three are in the Cabinet, one has independent charge and three are junior ministers. While Brajesh Pathak is one of the two deputy chief ministers of the state, Yogendra Upadhyay and Jitin Prasada, who switched over from the Congress, have been given Cabinet berths. Pratibha Shukla, Rajni Tiwari and Satish Sharma took oaths as junior ministers.



Unemployment under the double engine government:

As per the Report of the Seventh Central Pay Commission in 2015, there were 52 lakh government employees. The number of vacancies declined to 40.66 lakh as of March 1, 2019 – a reduction of 11.34 lakh – out of which only 31.43 lakh were filled, a gross contraction of 20.57 lakh. If these vacancies were filled, 3,08,550 SCs, 1,54,275 STs and 5,55,390 OBCs would have been employed. Total, 20.57 lakh families would have improved their status and their children would have got better education and quality of life. UP would have got a major share.



In 2012-13, there were 17,33,973 employees in Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) out of which 2,86,350 were contractual workers and 43,166 daily wagers. Shockingly, in 2019-20, there were only 14,73,810 employees out of which 4,98,807 were contractual workers and 53,127 daily labourers. Contractual workers and daily labourers, whose pay is very low, don't have reservation, job security and pension.

In 2019-20, a survey of CPSEs showed there were 9,19,648 regular employees out of 1,60,384 were SCs, 99,693 STs and 1,98,581 OBCs. The number would have been double without privatisation and outsourcing of regular work to contractors.

In the Railways, where the reservation policy has been fully implemented, there were 14,41,513 employees as of March 31, 2004, as against 12,53,593 in the same month in 2020. Unfortunately, there are 7.5 lakh contract workers without reservation and job security in the Railways, which is being privatised gradually, taking away the jobs of lakhs of SCs, STs and OBCs.

Public sector banks, another major employer, have the same story. In 2005-06, there were 7,29,424 employees in public sector banks and 1,39,039 in private ones. The government has been encouraging private banking and recruiting lesser employees for public sector banks.

As of March 31, 2021, public sector banks had 7,83,518 employees in spite of a more than 100% increase in business but private banks had 5,70,713. The government has decided to privatise IDBI Bank and two public sector banks, which will have a big impact on job reservation.

Similarly, the number of employees in the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India has declined from 1,19,767 to 1,08,987. LIC, which also implements the reservation policy in toto, also employs 13 lakh agents who earn a good income. The Centre could sell 5%-10% stake in the company and also allow foreign direct investment.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) are classic examples of the government's intent to privatise the telecom sector. In 2014, BSNL had 2.38 lakh employees and MTNL 36,000. Bent on killing BSNL and MTNL to help Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio, 78,569 BSNL employees and 14,387 MTNL employees opted for VRS in 2019 after they were not paid for months. Around 50,000 contract employees were not paid for a year forcing several of them to commit suicide.

Compared to 2014, BSNL's employee strength has come down by 71% and MTNL's 84%. In 2019, a revival package of Rs 69,000 crore for BSNL and MTNL that included their merger, monetisation of their assets, 4G spectrum and VRS was approved. So far, 4G has not been allocated. Both BSNL and MTNL, which are incurring losses and have almost no reservation policy, might disappear

sooner or later.

The destructive strategy in the public sector is aimed at gradual privatisation to benefit corporate entities at the expense of the soaring number of jobless Indians.

60 lakhs of vacancy, nationwide, 2021:

Central government departments and institutions	Central Ministries and Departments	910,153
	Public Sector Banks – stimated	200,000
Health Services	Health Personal	168,480
	Anganwadi	176,057
Primary Education	Central and Novodaya Vidhalaya	16,329
	Primary Scool – States	837,592
Higher Education Institutions	Central School	18,647
	IIT/IIIT/IIM/NIT	16,687
	Other Central Educational Institutions	1,662
Army and Police	Indian Army	107,505
	Central Armed Police Force	91,929
	State Police	531,737
Vacancies in Courts	Supreme Court	4
	High Courts	419
	District and Lower Courts	4,929
Vacancies in States – Estimated		3,000,000
Total Vacancies		6,082,130

According to CMIE data, the proportion of households where more than one person is employed has dropped from nearly 35% in 2016 to just 24% in 2021. Uttar Pradesh, for example, has seen its employment rate plummet from 38.5% five years ago to 32.7% as per CMIE data published in the *Indian Express*. in non-technical popular category of railways 1.25 crore people appeared for 35000 positions. The exam scheduled to held in 2019 was finally held in 2022. The Railways preferred college degree holders while the official criteria was lower and introduced one more layer of exams, leading to students erupting in protest. Sub Inspector and VDO too, recruitment remained stalled for more than five years in UP. In UP, the number of unemployed persons – those without jobs but willing to work – has risen from about 40 lakh in January-April



2017 to nearly 56 lakh in May-August 2021, as per CMIE's latest reports.

For young men and women between 25-29 years of age, the unemployment rate has nearly doubled – from 8.8% to 15.9% - over the past four and a half years of the much-celebrated double engine government. In the other age group of 20-24 years, joblessness has increased from an already unconscionable 23.1% to a jaw-dropping 31.5% in the same period.

Women appear to have borne the brunt of the misguided economic policies of the double engine government. The unemployment rate among those women who are without jobs and willing to work rose steadily from mid-2018 (32%) to a mind-boggling 71% in the last months of 2020 when the state was reeling under the catastrophic second wave of the pandemic and finally reaching 48% in May-August 2021, as per Center for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data

Corruption and Paper leaks of government exams under Yogi:

1. **July 2017:** Question paper of online exam for UP Sub Inspectors' posts was leaked over WhatsApp. STF arrested seven persons for their involvement. During the probe, they found that Rs 10 lakh was charged by the gang who used to install remote access to computers of examination centres to solve the papers.
2. **February 2018:** UPPCL (Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited) junior engineers' exam paper was leaked; STF arrested 12 persons of a solver gang from various places in the state.
3. **September 2018:** The exam paper for Tubewell Operator posts was leaked; STF arrested 11 persons from Meerut.



4. **November 2020:** Diploma in elementary education paper was leaked; the exam was cancelled and postponed.
5. **January 2021:** CTET (Central Teachers Eligibility Test) paper leaked, and police arrested five persons.
6. **November 2021:** UPTET (Uttar Pradesh Teacher eligibility test) paper leaked, and the police arrested around 50 persons.

UP Lekhpal (revenue department staff) recruitment exam conducted on July 31 2022. 27 people were arrested by STF

Suicide due to unemployment:

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2021 report, titled “Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India”, also paints a grim picture of the average Indian’s economic health. While the suicide rate among the employable pool of Indians has steadily increased since 2014, it reached shocking levels in 2021. A total of 1,64,033 cases of suicide were reported to the police during 2021, up 7.2 per cent from 1,53,052 cases in 2020. Daily wage earners were the largest category (25.6 per cent), followed by the self-employed, the unemployed, and people in the farming sector.



Lucknow:

Uttar Pradesh has over 1.68 lakh Shiksha Mitras who teach in primary schools. These Shiksha Mitras were appointed on a contractual basis to assist primary school teachers in rural and urban areas for Rs 2,250/month and were upgrad-



ed to a pay scale of Rs 39,000/month. Around 1.37 lakh of them were promoted as permanent employees in 2014 by the Akhilesh Yadav led state government. This order was, however, quashed by the Allahabad High Court in September 2015. After the Supreme Court upheld the HC verdict, the teachers launched a massive agitation. The Yogi government has increased the salary. As many as 1.73 lakh Shiksha Mitra in UP are paid around Rs 10,000 per month with the last increment in September 2017, but they have not been regularized. The shiksha-mitra are demanding regularization of their job as assistant teachers and similar pay for similar job. In 2021, about 135 teachers, Shiksha Mitras and instructors died of COVID-19 infection and symptoms while on Panchayat election duty. Few Shiksha Mitras have died by suicide. Their rallies have been brutally lathicharged by Yogi government.

Farmer's issue:

“Between 2017 and 2022, neither has anyone died from hunger nor has any farmer died by suicide due to scarcity of means,” he said, adding that this did not include those who died by suicide due to “familial and personal reasons”. This “scarcity” included fertilisers; Adityanath insisted no farmer “was allowed to go back empty-handed” and that every farmer “was provided an adequate quantity of fertilisers”. **But, according to data from the National Crime Records Bureau, 87 farmers died by suicide in Uttar Pradesh in 2020.**

MSP: The three controversial farm laws were withdrawn in November 2021. Yet, the real cause of discontent is still to be addressed – the absence of a legally guaranteed MSP. This remains a distant dream for farmers, despite assurance by PM in Rajyasabha in February 2021. They said they had to sell paddy at a price ranging between Rs 1,100 to Rs 1,650/quintal, while its MSP for its common variety was Rs 1,940/quintal for the 2021-22 crop year (July-June). MSP of



mustard last year was Rs 5,500/quintal, but farmers could sell it at Rs 3,700/quintal.

In UP, government procurement is consistently low. Compared to the all India average, it is far less. an estimated 32% of the rice produced has been procured by government agencies, whereas at the country level, this was 55% of the total produce.

Out of the 157 lakh metric tonnes of rice produced, a “record quantity” of 66.84 lakh metric tonnes was procured, for which farmers received Rs 12,491.88 crores as per MSP of Rs 1,868 per quintal. This means that about 90 lakh metric tonnes of rice were likely not bought at MSP but sold below that rate. The government said that around 12.98 lakh farmers sold their paddy crop at MSP. Going by the same proportion as paddy sold below MSP, some 13 lakh farmers were thus deprived of MSP.

When it comes to other crops, the Yogi government’s record is even more dismal. According to a reply given by the Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti, state minister for consumer affairs, food and public distribution, in the Rajya Sabha on December 10, 2021, procurement of jowar, bajra and ragi – three popular coarse grains – has been nil in UP since 2017-18. Only some paltry quantity of maize was procured in some of the years. The procurement of mustard seed and groundnut, two oilseeds grown in UP at a significant scale, was also measly. Mustard seed procured was nil in 2017-18, followed by 1,211.41 metric tonnes in 2018-19, 1,455.75 MT in 2019-20 and just 319.20 MT in 2020-21.

Stray cattle:

It is largely an outcome of Adityanath’s stringent legal framework around cow slaughter, which has made the trade of cattle virtually impossible. As a result, abandoned animals have become a menace for farmers.



Electricity:

Currently, electricity is available to farmers on a nominal fixed tariff, but in some places, the power department fixed metres in tube wells, which hiked their electricity bills. On July 5, the farmers' union AIKS held protests at district electricity offices across the 75 districts of UP. Where metres have been installed, farmers are paying up to Rs 3000–4000 per month; earlier, they only paid a maximum of Rs 1100–2000.



Small Industries:

The main challenges faced by the small industries are demonetization, the imposition of GST, the digitization of company papers and finally the COVID induced lockdown. All these have destroyed the core of these small and cottage-based industries. The competition of cheaper alternative from China have destroyed the market too.

One of the first moves of the Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government in UP in 2017 was enforcing stricter guidelines on the sale of meat, as well as closure of several private slaughterhouses. Coupled with draconian anti-cow slaughter laws, these changes have directly impacted the meat and leather industries in the state.

The small industries used to get with artisans' credit card loan with a 4% annual interest, now that has completely stopped. Now the MSME can take MUDRA's loan that has 12% yearly interest with taxes that come to almost 22% annually.

The Artisans' identity card that used to be issues earlier also stopped since 2017. With these identity cards the artisans in other places in the country and also abroad could showcase themselves as government recognized artisans in fairs or exhibitions. But now they lack such recognition.

The businessmen into the job work of dyeing or printing of textile and textile products will have to pay 12% GST n their sales as compared to the current rate of 5%. they provide job work to any person not registered under GST hen 18% tax will be applicable.

The lock industry (Aligarh): 1.5 lakh skilled and unskilled workers are employed by the lock industry, that is run through around 6500 cottage units. The industry is facing crisis owing to rising cost of raw material, electricity charges and competition from Chinese products. The government has not stepped in despite several appeals by the small industrialists. The entrepreneurs of this unorganized sector had to suffer the successive blows of demonetization, digitalization, GST and lockdown.



The brass industry (Moradabad): The Moradabad Brass industry has shrunk significantly in the past one decade. The brass industry is now worth Rs 8,000-9,000 crore at best. Until 2008-09, the turnover was at least Rs 20,000 crores. Over 50% of brass manufacturing units and 25-30% of our export units have shut down in the last decade. Already under distress since the twin blows of



demonetisation and the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the onset of the pandemic, and the rising cost of raw materials and coal forced thousands to migrate. Brass is now said to make up just 20-25% of the metal industry in Moradabad.



Region specific campaign issues:

The potato belt:

The region around Agra- Mathura in UP is known as Aloo/ belt. Potatoes were selling at Rs 300-350/quintal in this area. Not even half of the rate the government has fixed leave the input cost. The cost of potatoes came at 1250/quintal. The farmers are forced to leave the potatoes in cold storage.

Fertiliser:

Even as the Centre continue to claim that there is no shortage of fertilizers and record procurement of food grains at minimum support price (MSP), the ongoing crippling crisis of DAP (di-ammonium Phosphate), NKP (Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium) and urea, and “empty” promises regarding the MSP are posing a threat of an erosion of support base of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in the agrarian belts of the state.

Farmers have to wait for hours and even days for a sack of DAP and urea, which is extremely essential for their ongoing Rabi crops (wheat, mustard, potatoes, pink lentil (masoor dal), etc. They will complain that they are getting the fertilisers at elevated prices in the black market. According to them, the DAP, which should cost them Rs 1,250/bag, is being sold at Rs 1,500 a bag. The NKP, which costs Rs 1,800/bag, is being sold at Rs 2,000. And the urea is available at Rs 330/bag against its controlled price of Rs 270/bag. Many small farmers had to sow wheat without fertilisers. Even paddy farmers are facing acute crisis



because of lack of fertilisers like DAP, NPK and urea.

The country had 4.8 million metric tonnes of DAP in store in September 2018. It went up to 6.6 million metric tonnes in 2019. The stocks came down to 5 million metric tonnes in 2020. And it reached only 2.1 million metric tonnes in September 2021.

Bundelkhand:

The long-standing issue in this area is drought and lack of water for irrigation and for consumption by humans and animals. There have been huge packages declared for the relief of Bundelkhand since 2009, but the non-implementation of these schemes has perpetuated the long-standing water crisis. Only 18% of the budget for building wells have been utilized. That too a lot of wells were built on grounds with low groundwater level and therefore they remain dry. Many check dams have been constructed, which remain as dumping grounds and non-functional due to faulty constructions. The Rasin dam had displaced a lot of people, many of whom are yet to receive compensation.

Agrarian crisis:

According to the data of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, the average paddy yield in Uttar Pradesh is 2.70 tonnes per hectare, whereas in Buldelkhand its very low. Its Banda it is 2.11 tonnes, 1.61 tonnes in Chitrakoot, 1.99 tonnes in Jhansi and 2.07 tonnes in Mahoba. In 2009-10, lentils were sown in a total of 2.66 lakh hectares in seven districts, which came down to 1.67 lakh hectares in 2019-20.

Similarly, jowar used to be sown in a total area of 84,467 hectares in this region, but it slid to 63,104 hectares in 2019-20. During this period, the area under



maize cultivation also decreased from 45,632 hectares to 24,089 hectares.

The farmers should be helped and subsidized to grow less water intensive crops like jowar, bajra, tur, moong, mustard. The government needs to fix MSP for these crops. But in reality the mandis across Bundelkhand have closed down and premises are lying dilapidated. A total of 138 mandis to serve as agricultural markets for the farmers were set up in seven districts of Bundelkhand, incurring an expenditure of Rs 625.33 crores. But no trading takes place in most of the mandis, which has added to the local farmers' woes. Some of the mandis have been converted into Gaushalas.

PM-AASHA was formed to procure oil seeds with MSP but it failed. The farmers were forced to sell their crops at throw away prices.

Indebtedness of farmers in Bundelkhand and suicides:

Sixty percent of farmers in the region are unable to repay loans because agriculture has been in crisis, facing nature's wrath for several decades now. At least 3,500 farmers have reportedly committed suicide in the past three decades in the region. The common thread being-- a huge burden of bank loans. Bank officials claim only 20-25% farmers return the borrowed sum.



West UP- Sugarcane Belt

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Meerut | 5. Saharanpur |
| 2. Muzaffarnagar | 6. Gaziabad |
| 3. Baghpat | 7. Bulandshahar |
| 4. Shamli | 8. Bijnor |

There are 9 districts in this region popularly known as the sugarcane belt. In this region all districts have high levels of urban and rich households. According to the 2011 Census, the aggregate share of rural population in this region is 58.4% compared to 81.1% in the rest of the state. According to the top asset quintile (top 20%) in these regions was 31%, significantly higher than the 16% average for the state. In urban areas there has traditionally been strong support for the BJP.

Farmers:

The sugarcane belt consists of 42-45 constituencies in the northern part of the state accounting for 10 MP seats of western Uttar Pradesh. These constituencies are spread across nine districts of the state -- Bijnor, Meerut, Moradabad, Baghpat, Muzaffarnagar, Rampur, Saharanpur, Sambhal and Shamli. Uttar Pradesh's sugarcane economy, estimated at Rs 40,000 crore, directly impacts 4 million farmers. A majority of the sugarcane is produced in 42 constituencies.

Farmer's Movement:

In 2021 a nationwide farmer's movement began against the 3 farm laws arbitrarily passed by the BJP government to benefit its masters in the corporate housing. The strongest presence of this movement was felt in these districts particularly in Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat, Shamli and other neighboring districts and that also got reflected in the 2022 assembly elections, as BJP lost the majority of seats in these three districts.

The farmers movement still has its effects in this region. So we need to bring the farmer's issues and demands to the forefront of our campaign.



Sugarcane price: MSP and non payment of previous dues: according to news sources till July 2023, Sugar mills have paid nearly Rs.1.04 trillion to cane farmers so far in the current marketing year that ends on 30 September, but Rs.9,499 crore worth of dues remain unpaid, according to the government. Of the total cane arrears, millers in Uttar Pradesh only need to clear Rs.6,315 crore worth of dues to sugarcane farmers. Only in the Budhana area, 17,000 farmers have been affected by non-payment of their dues.

Stray cattles:

While the total number of stray cattle in the country decreased by 3.2% from 2012-2019, the population of stray cattle in Uttar Pradesh increased by 17.34% during the same period. There were more than 1.18 million stray cattle reported in the state in 2019 alone, according to the livestock census. According to the state government's records, there are only about 6,000 cowsheds for over a million cows roaming free in the state. Moreover, there is a lack of transparency in the operational functioning of gaushalas.



In western UP the issue of stray cattle has been one of the thorniest issues for the BJP government to handle. The stray cattle not only destroy crops, but also affect the pattern of crops sowing in this region as farmers refuse to diversify their crops in west UP. Apart from that a number of people died in accidents while colliding with the stray cattle. According to the TOI report 14 people died in the last 6 months across west UP districts.

Electricity bills:

In a bid to reach out to farmers ahead of the next Lok Sabha polls, the state government recently announced a 100% waiver on power bills of private tubewell consumers. Prior to this, such consumers were getting a 50% rebate. So we need to see whether this is implemented or not. To this the BKU's district president in Muzaffarnagar Yogesh Sharma the UP government's announcement was an eyewash to lure farmers ahead of the LS polls. "We don't trust them. If they are so concerned about farmers, then they should stop installation of meters at tubewells," he said.

Farmer suicide:

there are rising incidents of suicides in the state and particularly in the western UP. Suicides are most commonly associated with the rain-fed cotton-growing areas of Maharashtra (Vidarbha region), Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. In 2013, of the 11,744 farmer suicides in India, 44% were in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra; in comparison, UP recorded 750 farmer suicides (6.4% of total farmer suicides in the country). “Western UP is a recent phenomenon – where high levels of indebtedness, deficit monsoon and sugarcane arrears have intensified the farmer’s economic distress,” said Sudhir Panwar, president of farmers’ forum Kisan Jagriti Manch and professor at University of Lucknow.

Youth and issue of employment:

Chief minister Adityanath recently promised over two crore jobs for the state’s young people in the next three-four years, that would mean about 13,700 new jobs created per day or 4.17 lakh jobs per month. However, in the last six and half years, the state government claims to have provided only six lakh government jobs, which is far below what the Yogi government promised. Employment rate which is much lower in the state (4.2%) from the national average (7.1%) is actually a distortion of the real picture of the state. The Youth labor participation rates in the states have also been falling consistently since the COVID-19 pandemic began. According to the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE) report, before the pandemic the labor force participation rate for the youth in UP was 41.2%, according to CMIE data. It fell drastically to 31.3% in May-August 2020, triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. It then continued to fall to 27% in May-August 2021, 22.5% in May-August 2022 and 22.4% in September-December 2022.

One of the major issues in this belt is unemployment, particularly youth looking for jobs in the police and army often called ‘belt ki nokri’. In the recent years there has hardly been new openings in these fields and the post Agniveer induction policy there has been strong resentment among the youth.

Dalits assertion in this belt:

Dalit assertion in western UP has been a new social development in western UP. This region has witnessed an assertive dalit identity which is ready to fight and assert its identity. There have often been incidents of violence between the dalits and the dominant castes. This region also has a good number of SC pop-



ulation which has largely supported the BSP. But one section of SC has shifted to BJP with the marginalization of BSP in electoral politics. A meaningful campaign must focus on providing the dalit community a political space and accommodation to win this region particularly when the BSP is not very active and increasingly losing its ground.

Communal violence and hatred against Muslims

This region was the epicenter of large-scale communal riots which erupted in western Uttar Pradesh in 2013. The communal polarization – largely among the politically influential Jats in this region – which followed is believed to have helped the BJP in a big way in the 2014



Lok Sabha elections. The situation was not very different in the 2017 polls, when the BJP achieved an all-time high seat share to vote share ratio in Uttar Pradesh, largely a result of a fragmentation in Opposition votes.

Conclusion:

Of the nine districts, six have a share of Muslim population which is higher than the state average. In two of these districts, Meerut and Muzaffarnagar, the share of Muslim populations is close to 40%. There is significant variation in the share of other communities including Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Scheduled Castes (SCs) among Hindus and Hindus who do not belong to either OBCs, SCs or Scheduled Tribes (STs)

Rohilkhand region:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Amroha -40 Muslim | 5. Badaun |
| 2. Sambhal - Muslim 40 | 6. Shahjahanpur |
| 3. Moradabad | 7. Rampur |
| 4. Bareilly | 8. Aonla |

There are 11 constituencies in this region. These are Aonla, Budaun, Nagina, Amroha, Sambhal, Rampur, Pilibhit, Kheri, Shahjahanpur, Bareilly and Moradabad. The region has 13-23% dalit population, 38-49 Muslims and nearly 30% backward classes, mainly Lodh, Siani Yadavs, besides Brahmins and Sikhs in substantial numbers in pockets of Shahjahanpur and Aonla.

Census of India 2011, District wise population suggests that there are 50.57 percent Muslims in Rampur, 52.17 percent in Sambhal and 47.12 percent in Moradabad, 34.54 percent in Bareilly, 24.11 percent in Pilibhit and 21.47 percent in Badaun. Thus this region was considered to be the stronghold of SP, BSP and Congress at different points of time. But BJP never got a stronghold in this region before the Modi wave. Since then BJP has won most of the seats largely based on polarization. The spillover effect of 2013 anti-Muslim violence in Muzaffarnagar also polarized the society in this region.

Farmer's issues:

The issue of stray cattle is one of the important electoral issues in this region too. Stray cattle menace is also affecting the farmers in this region.

The payment of previous dues of sugarcane by the private mills and MSP are main farmer's issues that we need to focus on in the coming elections. The electricity bills which have been waived off recently by the state



government is also an issue in the state.

Another important issue is the **MPS** and the availability of **Mandi** in this region. The farmers in this region aren't as lucky as their counterparts in Haryana or Punjab, who get a basic **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** for their produce from the government. Mandis in this region (Gonda) are located far away from farms and middlemen eat out most of the 'price-induced profit margins' on their produce.

One of the major issues that has seriously affected the income of the farmers is **the rise in input cost of farming**, but the market price of their crops has not increased in proportion to the money that is invested in the farming.

SMALL INDUSTRIES, Demonetization and GST:

The main challenges faced by the small industries are demonetization, the imposition of GST, the digitization of company papers and finally the COVID induced lockdown. All these have destroyed the core of these small and cottage-based industries.

A total 88.99 lakh registered units in Uttar Pradesh accounted for the country's 14.20% MSMEs. *This region is famous for zari zardozi (gold embroidery), surma (kohl), manjha (abrasive kite string), striking cane furniture, particularly the Bareilly district is fast losing its traditional, small-scale and unorganized industries.*



The annual turnover of *zari* production is somewhere near Rs 175 crore. It is mainly exported to the US, Europe and the UAE. Skyrocketing prices of raw materials, almost static price of the final products, several prohibitions, invasion of international products and tough competition from cheaper domestic products are cited as the unanimous answers to the question.

At least 30,000 people in the Bareilly district itself are engaged in Manjha making. Most of them don't have any other source of income. The trade has an annual turnover of around Rs 50-60 crore.

Polarization and split in Muslim votes :

Since this region has significant Muslim votes, one of the main strategies of BJP is to split the Muslim votes. The BJP has been active with the Pasmenda issue in this region. In these constituencies the data suggest that there is significant division of Muslim votes between the SP, INC and the BSP.



Conclusion:

Having the highest concentration of Muslims in comparison to other parts of the state this region is one of the toughest tests for BJP. As a result the region witnesses sharp polarization on religious lines. The major campaign in this region should primarily focus on communal harmony which can depolarize the region again, which effectively means that the focus of campaign should be the lower castes of OBC particularly the Lodh, Sainis, and Kashyap.



Terai belt- 2

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Basti | 6. Kaiserganj |
| 2. Gonda | 7. Ambedkarnagar |
| 3. Shrawasti | 8. Bahraich |
| 4. Domariaganj/siddharthnagar | 9. Balrampur |
| 5. Khalilabad- | |

Amidst issues like agricultural law, inflation, unemployment, half-baked development, poor health services etc, the region faces multi-sectoral Under-development. There are 9 districts in this region.

In a recent speech, the chief minister of UP said that the region comprising Gonda, Balrampur, Shrawasti and Bahraich have seen a rise of income in past few years because both the state and the central governments have been making efforts to provide public facilities, boost development, tourism and amenities along with assistance to farmers. However, these districts continue to be the worst performing districts in the state.

Electricity, education, health, water, railways and roads are one of the main development issues in this region. This is one of the underdeveloped regions of Uttar Pradesh.

This region is one of the most backward regions in India. NITI Aayog released the list of 101 backward districts of the country. In this list 4 districts are from this region, Shrawasti district of Uttar Pradesh is at fifth place, Bahraich is at sixth, Siddharth Nagar is at seventh and Balrampur is at eighth. All four districts are neighbors of each other.

Shrawasti 'tops' the list, with 74.38 per cent of the population deemed to be "multidimensionally poor", followed by neighboring Bahraich (71.88 per cent) in second position, and Balrampur (69.45 per cent) in fourth in the list of 101 Backward districts list of Niti Ayog.

There are high illiteracy rates, malnutrition among children, substandard ed-



ucation facilities, absence of decent employment opportunities, decrepit infrastructure, and poor sanitation.

This region also has poor healthcare facilities. Shravasti, in fact, is the country's worst city in terms of healthcare facilities.

This region has the smallest number of households with electricity, the largest number of households with no toilets and with no drainage.

Farmers:

Flood is also one of the major issues faced by this region particularly in the Balrampur, Shrawasti and Gonda districts. Excess rains and rivers – Ghagra, Sarayu, Bisuhi and Tedhi in Gonda and Rapti and Kuwano in Balrampur – overflowing their banks. **Proper compensation, rehabilitation and effectively dealing** with the flood



situation is an important issue in this region. The farmers aren't even compensated for the crops insured for (and lost) to poor monsoons or geographical consequences and as a result, their discontent with the current administration is quite clear.

Water logging in the field is also an important concern of the farmers in this region. The farmers were promised a siphon (water pipe) that would help divert excess water away from the fields to the local river nearby. This didn't happen. Most of them have been holding on to this hope, but little was done for them by the government.

This region has also suffered greatly because of the **stray cattle menace**. The damage to the crops and accidents are major issues caused by the menace of stray cattle.

This region is not as rich as the western UP. Maize, sugarcane and paddy crops are the main crops in this region. But Flood situations every year cause low yielding from the fields.

Poorvanchal

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Allahabad | 8. Gazipur |
| 2. Phoolpur | 9. Mau/ghosi |
| 3. Bhadohi | 10. Gazipur |
| 4. Machli Shahar (Muslim-maurya) | 11. Jaunpur |
| 5. Mirzapur | 12. Azamgarh |
| 6. Chandauli | 13. Varanasi |
| 7. Balia | |

There is a presence of various smaller political parties in this region.

Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP): SBSP contested in 18 seats in alliance with SP and all these seats are in the Purvanchal region

Mahan Dal: Mahan Dal is a political party having influence in the lower Other Backward Classes (OBCs) castes like Mauryas, Shakyas and Kushwahas.

Janwadi Party (Socialist)- Chauhan/Nonia caste in Gazipur, Mau, Chandauli, Azamgarh and have influence in 15-20 assembly seats.

Nishad Party- Sanjay Nishad- BJP has given 16 seats to Nishad Party out of which 12 are in the Purvanchal region.

Apna Dal (S) and Apna Dal (Kamerawadi)- are other regional parties in Purvanchal region considered to be parties of Kurmi/Patels community. Apna Dal (S) which was a BJP ally and contested in 18 assembly seats. Of these 18 seats, 12 are in Purvanchal region. On the other hand

Narsi crafts, embroidery, agricultural implements, handicrafts, fans, carpets, wooden toys, pink enamel, clay and stone sculptures.

Handloom and powerloom industry has suffered a lot in recent years particularly because of the lockdown during the pandemic and later by the GST. Many of the handloom and powerloom got shut during the covid pandemic.



The burgeoning electricity bills, no support from the state. Many of the traditional weaving communities are followers of Islam, a significant number also belong to the oppressed Dalit castes.

Beedi workers: In the Poorvanchal region, A number of mostly-Female workers are employed to make India's popular low-cost smoking product called Beedi. Beedi sticks have a market share of 85 percent of all smoking products in the country, and therefore the home production of the immensely popular low-cost cigarettes is a major source of livelihood for millions of women in India.

In 2017-18, the domestic consumption of beedi was 260 billion sticks, or 10.4 billion packets, which was worth Rs 156 billion and earned the government a revenue of Rs 25 billion.

India's informal beedi industry is thought to employ over seven million workers, around five million of whom are believed to be women who are employed by small contractors to make beedis at home for wages as low as Rs 50 a day, mainly because there is no other available work.

The workers employed face poor wages, health hazards and exploitation. There is a need to run a campaign to improve their conditions.

Stray Cattle menace:

Nine of Purvanchal's 17 districts are among the poorest in the state. The annual per capita income of the 17 districts of Purvanchal in the year 2011-12 was Rs 13,058, which is three-fourth of the per capita income of Uttar Pradesh (Rs 18,249), and about one-third of the country's per capita income. The farmers in this densely populated region of eastern Uttar Pradesh are struggling to survive.

Poorer farmers in the poverty-ridden areas of Purvanchal (Eastern Uttar Pradesh) are forced to remain on guard all through the night or risk losing their food grain, which is meant for their own subsistence, as opposed to their wealthier, more resourceful counterparts in Western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.

The farmers in this region largely grow wheat and paddy. There are mostly small scale farmers who just cultivate land for their personal consumption. There is hardly any mandi

Electricity employees issue:

The employees went on strike from Thursday, demanding the regularization of pay, the regularization of contract workers, reintroduction of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), rolling back of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022, among other issues. So far, the Uttar Pradesh government lodged an FIR against 29 workers and terminated services of 3000 contract workers during the strike.

Roughly **one lakh employees and engineers of the power department across the State** have joined the strike organized under the banner of **Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Karmachari Sanyukt Sangharsh Samiti**. Though the strike was taken back, the demands of the contractual employees are still unmet.



**POSSIBLE NARRATIVE FOR GENERAL ELECTION
IN UTTAR PRADESH, 2024**

