

Political Rhetoric: Of Metaphors, Myths and Ideologies

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Political language – and with variations, this is true of all political parties from Conservatives to Anarchists – is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.

- George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*

Political language has the capacity to influence views, ambitions, preconceptions and fears of the masses. It acts as a weapon of self - defence and self - legitimisation. Powerful political language can urge the public to an extent that it can start believing in false statements as true claims and rejects the reality as bogus. Building upon Mukulika Banerjee's *Why India Votes* and Jonathan Charteris - Black's idea of the persuasive power of rhetoric in *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*, the paper aims to shed some light on how language affects the masses and how ideologies are perpetuated in society through linguistic manipulation. Special reference is made to some political statements by Narendra Modi, Mamata Banerjee and Kanhaiya Kumar to further explicate the argument.

Language forms an integral part of our social identities. It helps us in understanding cultures, is a carrier of information and most importantly it functions as a mobilizing tool. While on the one hand, it is about uniting people and expressing our thoughts, its capacity as a manipulative agent should never be undermined.

Language and politics have been invariably inseparable. While the former can never be free of its own politics, even politics has a language of its own. In the political discourse, language is used to shape the identities of the political leaders, to further ideologies and also often to conceal rather than reveal the truth. Linguistic manipulation or the conscious use of language to control others can be considered a prominent instrument of political rhetoric because political discourse is chiefly about persuading people to take definite

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