

History repeats itself



By Meenakshi Lekhi | Issue Date: April 22, 2018 | Updated: April 14, 2018 17:35 IST

It was not long ago when a political leader from Delhi, with national ambitions, seemed to have developed a rather peculiar obsession. His mornings began with Modi, Modi, Modi, his afternoons were full of Modi, Modi, Modi and evenings were Modi, Modi, Modi. This leader kept throwing accusations with alarming frequency, used derogatory language while addressing the prime minister and slowly and steadily turned into an online troll, whose only ambition seemed to be to elicit a reaction from Modi. The single and dedicated chant of Modi, Modi, Modi was supposed to be his strategy of establishing himself as the true competitor of the prime minister, the only one who dared to challenge him. He believed that the retweets on Twitter would convert into votes and pave the way for his ambitions towards 2019. But, the trap got tighter and his Modi-saddled mind could not deal with the reality playing out in front of him. He lost the only other state where his party had some hold and got enmeshed in internal politics of his own party. Thoroughly ridiculed, shamed and exposed by his own party men, he decided to slowly move away from his obsession with Modi and embrace silence instead. But, the damage had been done and by that time he had shot off his mouth way too often.

He was charged with defamation cases, left, right and centre and the last we heard of him, he was bundling up his ideology and his bravado and was apologising to all who would care to listen. His days of glory were gone.

The country is way too familiar with this story and the way it tanked. But, even after an example had been made of the Delhi-based leader, there is another leader who decided to take the same path. He has carved a niche for himself as one who has the capacity to snatch a defeat from the jaws of victory. But, because he belongs to the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, none of this matters for him, as his party does not care to look beyond his surname.



Illustration: Bhaskaran

If there is a character in contemporary India which has undergone more reincarnations than Ekta Kapoor's protagonists, it is Rahul Gandhi.

As if it is an annual ritual, stories and narratives of Rahul's newly invented self get planted. Then, he takes his party to a new low. Again he gets reincarnated, and this cycle continues, and the country is told, 'Look, he has arrived!'

2017 saw the nth such reincarnation for this nearly fifty-year-old youth leader, when he was promoted to the position of president in his party. And, with the promotion, apparently came a new personality and a new social media presence. But, as it turned out, the new personality was actually channelised from that out of favour Delhi

leader who believed that an obsessive hatred of the prime minister could launch him into success. This failed dynast has strangely adopted the same failed approach and his new personality is just the same old wine in a reincarnated bottle. The minute he speaks directly in front of an audience, his awkwardness becomes visible and the bloopers start revealing themselves.

It is amazing to see Rahul evidently getting similar reviews to Arvind Kejriwal. While this youth leader tried to attack the prime minister's app using a caveman's logic, their own app had to be deleted. The obsession and the visceral hatred for Modi has reached such proportions that this dynast has even lost perspective of what is beneficial for the country. In his quest of positioning himself as a rival and an equal of Modi, he has again lost track of the fact that he needs to win elections, he needs to acknowledge the debacle of his party and he needs to first build his own credentials as a leader before challenging others.

The direction that the Delhi chief minister and the Congress party president have taken are the same, and they will get the same results. The futility of the exercise and the disservice to the cause of politics has been proved once. Let us wait and see when it is proved the second time over.

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