

Discourse in the Miniatures: Linguistic Politics

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India is a multi-lingual society. With increasing penetration of politics in terms of parties and movements – old class-based movements as well as new movements, the uses of Hindi and local dialects, regional and local languages as well as the currency of English have become vital in political socialization, political communication and political mobilisation. The state has similar compulsions as it governs a wide range of citizenship behaviour. The research has thus sought to examine certain dimensions of the interface between language and politics in India.

It is increasingly our everyday experience to encounter political articulations and interests contending with each other and congregating in multiple political spaces, in the form of [i] slogans [ii] political visuals like cut-outs of leaders and [iii] political metaphors coined and circulated by politicians to address and recruit their subjects. All these forms of brief communications share a few attributes, like brevity, ease to decipher, easy discernibility of empirical referents, and capacity for repetition. The use of the vernacular often gives them a multilingual character. Their circulation in the political field depends both on oral circulation and on the changing technologies of media, which often curate these brief communications. Indeed, I like to conceptualise them as discourse in the miniatures.

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- (a) Trace the genealogies of slogans, visuals and metaphors to different political/philosophical/ideological positions;
- (b) Identify the historical moments when certain slogans, visuals and metaphors were constructed and disseminated;

- (c) Locate the inter-textual connections in order to trace how these brief communications have a social life;
- (d) To argue how these discursive acts reveal fundamental principles governing our political acts and designs of governance in the democratic state.

As such, the project is located in critical discourse studies [CDS]. It tried to analyse and contribute to the better understanding and potential solution of social problems, especially those triggered by public and political communication that embody various forms of social domination and exacerbate social inequality.