



## B-schoolers take a page out of poll campaign book

The IIMs, ISB, FMS & MDI are among those using political examples and case studies to teach students about branding, leadership and consumer behaviour.

By **Anjali Venugopalan** ET Bureau | Updated: Apr 13, 2019, 07.43 AM IST

From citing the Balakot air strikes as an example of a masculine leadership style to comparing gathbandhans or political alliances with corporate cartels – there's no escaping election fever for the country's top B-schools.

The Indian Institutes of Management, Indian School of Business, Faculty of Management Studies and the Management Development Institute are among those using political examples and case studies to teach students about branding, leadership and consumer behaviour.

IIM Indore plans to introduce analysis of political speeches in its communication and marketing curriculum in the upcoming academic year, director Himanshu Rai said. The institute's professors already use slogans such as 'Main bhi chowkidaar' while teaching digital media strategy and communication, said Rai.

While teaching information processing, Siddharth S Singh, associate professor of marketing at ISB Hyderabad, discusses whether calling the Nyuntam Aay Yojana a "surgical strike" on poverty is effective for the Congress, considering that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is associated with the term. In his new product development classes, Singh also talks about how, unlike earlier, leaders like Modi and the Aam Aadmi Party's Arvind Kejriwal have been "designed" by their respective parties to project a certain image.

Management students seem to be enthusiastic. A student at IIM Kashipur, not wanting to be identified, said they analysed bias in news coverage, which was useful because they were generally grouped as rightist or leftist, and this made them more unbiased. They also studied political ads on social media such as Facebook and Instagram to understand how targeting works.

A student from IIM Lucknow rued that many of his classmates didn't discuss politics for fear of being labelled supporters of one or another party, and if they did, it was only during elections. He hoped for more initiatives like the public policy course at IIM Ahmedabad, for which former President Pranab Mukherjee was roped in as guest faculty.

According to Harsh V Verma, professor of marketing at FMS Delhi, Modi is an example of Carl Jung's masculine saviour archetype. In his classes on consumer behaviour and leadership, Verma talks of how Balakot air strikes and Modi's subsequent poll positioning based on nationalism attempt to dwarf criticism, and appeal

### Case Studies Take Political Turn

**The IIMs, ISB, FMS and MDI are using political examples and case studies to teach students about branding, leadership and consumer behaviour**

**IIM Indore plans to introduce analysis of political speeches in its communication and marketing curriculum in the upcoming academic year**

**Classroom exercises range from analysing bias in news coverage to studying political ads on social media to understand how targeting works**

#### ELECTORAL LESSONS



Effectiveness of 'Main bhi Chowkidar' as a social media strategy

■ Mahagatbandhan as a type of political 'cartelisation'

■ Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's entry as an example of 'brand rejuvenation'

to the people's need for survival. Priyanka Gandhi's role in Congress has been discussed as an example of "brand rejuvenation."

Satya Dash, professor at IIM Lucknow, talks about BJP's WhatsApp strategy in Maharashtra and also about how many political parties in India are largely "selling-oriented" than "marketing-oriented" — meaning they "sell" ideas like demonetisation. Other topics discussed in the political marketing elective include "citizen-centric, governance-oriented" parties from the UK and the US.

At International Management Institute, New Delhi, students learn about how elections are similar to event and social marketing, said professor Pinaki Dasgupta. Swachh Bharat (Clean India) and the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana for clean cooking fuels, for which the Modi government has taken credit, are taught in the rural marketing class.

According to professor AK Jain, who teaches behavioural sciences at MDI Gurgaon, the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal gathbandhan is similar to corporate rivals forming cartels.

Jain said kicking up controversies by being in the news is a way of using the 'availability heuristic' — people judge the likelihood of an outcome based on how easily they can recall an example. The availability heuristic is a psychological concept introduced by mathematical psychologist Amos Tversky and Nobel Prize-winning economist Daniel Kahneman.

At IIM Bangalore, students organised an extracurricular event called El Politico, participating in branding prime ministerial candidates for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, ranging from Modi and Sachin Pilot to Mamata Banerjee, said a student who did not want to be identified.