

**By Sidharth Mishra**



Past fortnight has certainly shown that other than the leading opposition party of the country – the Congress, all the other outfits have chartered out their well-defined roadmaps for the times to come. Let us first take up the case of other parties and then come back to the Congress to show how in the absence of a mature and strong leadership, the nation's oldest political parties is slowly but surely scripting its own political demise, with the increasing clamour to elevate him as party head. First, the issue of the command and control the leadership enjoys over the party: Congress is the only party where the leader is perceived to be seen as functioning through advisor and coteries. A cursory glance on the other parties would make the difference very clear.

Let's start with the newbie Aam Admi Party (AAP), where their leader Arvind Kejriwal is the master of his own mind. The decisions and discourse of the party have the ultimate stamp of Delhi Chief Minister, and there is no room for an ownership dispute.

Though, through a slightly different model, the same is true for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Prime Minister Narendra Modi's move to appoint his most trusted aide Amit Shah as party president reflects consolidation of power in one individual. Shah to Modi is what UN Dhebar was to Jawaharlal Nehru and Deokant Barua to Indira Gandhi.

In their synchronised functioning, Modi and Shah have left no room for any discordant note between the functioning of the Central government and the BJP's Central and state leaderships. In fact, the two together have also managed to subsume the anxieties and desires of their ideological navigator – the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) to a great extent in creating a ruling behemoth. This element was definitely absent during the regime of NDA I government headed by statesman Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Among the regional parties, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) doesn't need a note of certification from your Reporter to explain what stranglehold is enjoyed by its President Mayawati over the outfit founded by late Kanshi Ram. There is never any clarity on who has her ears and none of his close aides can claim that they have unbridled influence on their leader's decision-making mechanism.

However, the best case to show how weak the Congress leadership is that of the Samajwadi Party. In the turf war between Akhilesh Yadav and Shivpal Yadav, the former has clearly shown that he was not impressed with the Manmohan Singh-Sonia Gandhi model of governance, which characterised the 10-year UPA rule at the Centre between 2004 and 2014.

Akhilesh Yadav, as a true-bred politician has in the past few months shown that if the party wanted to feast on the performance of his government, it is he, and nobody else, who would don the master's crown. Though he, too, has an assemblage of advisors, working on strategy in this crucial battle, but they have largely remained faceless backroom boys, seldom seeking political limelight unless thrust on them by the "bull in the china shop", Shivpal Yadav.

## Scripting party's doom

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 15 November 2016 06:49

---

On the other hand, ever since Rahul Gandhi has emerged as a person of eminence in the Congress leadership pantheon, the Congress beat has always resounded with the talk about who currently enjoyed influence over him. In the past few years, he has evolved into a figure who is unable to act without the crutches of advisors and his public pronouncements are never taken to be his own. This has also reflected on the political stance which the party has taken in the past few days or even earlier. For clarity, let's talk of the past few days. The Congress party, thanks to long years of governance and political participation, has always come out with very articulate and sagacious initial reactions to matters of national importance only to be muddled by the doings of its current leader Rahul Gandhi at a later stage.

His “

*khoon ki dalali*

” (bartering soldiers' blood) comment on the surgical strike by the Army in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, his competitive bad-mouthing Narendra Modi with Arvind Kejriwal on the suicide committed by an ex-serviceman, and though on a lesser pitch, the brouhaha over the gunning down of the eight SIMI militants in Madhya Pradesh have only gone to erode his credibility as a serious politician, if ever there existed one.

What's eroding his image, which Rahul Gandhi must understand, is his competing in political madness with AAP's Arvind Kejriwal. If there was a need for proof, there was plenty to be found on the streets and police stations of New Delhi, when the leaders of the two parties fought for space behind the bars. Little did Gandhi realise that night that Modi had successfully reduced him to a position of battling for political space with newbie Kejriwal. Little did he also realise that there is a method in Kejriwal's political madness, which cannot be the political character and temper of the Congress party.

He could take a leaf or two out of the book of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, who has shown great political skills to emerge as an erudite leader from the crisis which his government and the party faced from the old guard. There isn't any other politician in the same age bracket who has shown the same wisdom to emerge as a player of long political innings as Akhilesh Yadav done.

It's an unfortunate state for the country where the principal Opposition is unable to rise to the challenge of articulating a well-argued position against the government. Congress has to identify issues for long-drawn battles in stead of resorting to the politics of shoot-and-scoot, which is patented by the AAP and suits their repertoire best.

(Sidharth Mishra is Consulting Editor,

[Millennium Post](#)

.)