

## CHAPTER 23

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### **CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

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#### **Abstract**

Climate change is one of the major global issues in recent political discourse on climate change. Climate action is one among the seventeen goals set by UN for sustainable development that can change the world for better. The issue has exposed the ideologies of the global leaders towards climate change. Donald Trump called climate change "mythical", "non-existent", or "an expensive hoax", and Prime Minister Narinder Modi stated that people lose the ability to adapt the climate when they grow old." This recent development makes the subject more important to be taken up for the research. This study looks to fill the gap in Indian political discourse on climate change by analyzing the PM Modi's speech at the conference of parties 26 (COP26). It attempts to investigate the textual features of climate change and the ideology of the prime minister by using Fairclough's three-dimensional framework (2001). The speaker at large has focused on the future. This suggests that the speaker wanted to present a good image of his country's government to the world. His statements make his "testimony persuasive." Modi also means the panel be flexible in policy-making, which presents him as a progressive individual at a global stage. He also refers to the developed countries' leaders to be more proactive on the subject.

**Keywords;** Climate change, Political discourse, Prime minister Modi, Conference of parties 26 (COP26), Fairclough's three-dimensional framework (2001).

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Climate change is a global problem, and many conferences around the world are organized to make people aware of its consequences and precautions. United nation is a key organization that organizes international events in the form of meetings and conferences. Most of these events are attended by the head of the states of the countries. The agenda behind organizing

such meetings and conferences is to provide suitable solutions catering the climate change problems. Mostly the speakers are either Prime Ministers, Presidents or chancellors. Their address unfolds their policies in accordance to climate change agreements. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change as; Climate Change refers to the shift in the state of the climate that can be identified (by using statistical tests) by changes in the means and the variability of its properties, and that persist for an extended period, typically decade or longer. It refers to any change in the climate over time, whether due to natural variability or human activity<sup>1</sup> Climate change is a major problem in India; it directly impacts the health of people and the economy; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned India of extreme consequences if the government fails to act swiftly on the measures to tackle climate change issues<sup>2</sup> IPCC has further warned of "frequent intense heat waves, extreme rainfall events and erratic monsoons as well as cyclone activity, among other weather related calamities, in decades to come"<sup>3</sup>

In India, Delhi and Mumbai are among the top ten most polluted air cities around the world<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, "India's average annual mean temperature during 1901-2020 showed an increasing trend of 0.62°C/100 years, with a significant increasing trend in maximum temperature (0.99°C/100 years) and relatively lower increasing trend (0.24°C/100 years) in minimum temperature"<sup>5</sup>. The purpose of this study is to analyze the themes of the speech and also attempt to study the rhetorical meanings involved in the content of the address of PM Modi, delivered at COP26, 2021.

The casual attitude of PM Modi towards climate change has been criticized several times in the past. One such incident was when Prime Minister had to face humiliation on his statement, where Prime minister said "Older people – 70, 80 and 90 years old – say in winter 'this time it's colder than last year'. It's not colder. People lose their ability to tolerate the cold as they grow older. In the same way, the climate hasn't changed. We have changed."<sup>6</sup>

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

India in the last decade has witnessed two of its worst floods. First in the year 2014 Utrakhand floods and the second one in the following year in Kashmir. Both had devastating effects on human lives. As per the Government of India data, "6000 people were killed, believed to be dead or missing", along with that "4200 villages were effected" (Tandon, 2022). Similarly, in 2014, Kashmir witnessed a catastrophic flood leaving thousands of the families homeless; as per the data, "9,814 residential houses were fully damaged in the floods" (Jammu

& Kashmir 2014 Floods, 2022); not only has India been affected by unseasonal rainfalls and floods but it has also witnessed unprecedented droughts, according to the data 7.86% of the land in India was under "drought-like condition" which increased 60% in 2021, taking it to 21.06% which makes "fifth of India's land under drought like condition."<sup>7</sup> IPCC has warned the state of Kolkata of worse effects of climate change on its annual mean temperature, alarming the state may witness an increase of "4.5 degree Celsius rise in annual mean temperature in 2081-2100 compared to the pre-industrial period (1850-1900) under the worst possible greenhouse gas emission scenario, according to the report released August 8, 2021."<sup>8</sup> The available data indicates at a grim future ahead for the people, and political leaderships seems to be recognizing that as in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections both parties included, climate change issue in their manifesto for the first time.

Despite being one of worst nation facing climate change it possesses a significant research gap in terms of analysing the political discourse on climate change. This study looks to fill that gap by analyzing PM Modi's speech at the conference of the party's 26th summit. The study is done by using the critical discourse analysis CDA, before discussing the methodology, it is imperative to discuss the word Critical, Discourse and Text, "Text is a particular utterance, writing or image, while 'discourse' is a form of knowledge and a field that demarcates specific expression." According to Michel Foucault (1973), the use of language is framed by conventions and principles that restrict people's knowledge of the things around them and their meanings. Accordingly, discourse is a field that constructs social relations, performances and attitudes<sup>9</sup>. What makes this arena of analysis (CDA) distinctive from the other approaches of discourse analysis is the word 'critical'. This word implies that it reveals the relations and the causes that are hidden beyond the discourse<sup>10</sup>. CDA is critical since it takes an obvious attitude towards the investigation of the ideologies that are hidden beyond discourse<sup>11</sup>

According to Wodak, CDA is an interdisciplinary field since it is associated with various fields whose primary concern is the discourse, such as pragmatics, ethnography of speaking, semiotics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse studies and conversational analysis<sup>12</sup>. CDA is different from discourse studies in that it deals with complex phenomena of social issues. Thus, CDA needs to be tackled by multi-methodological approaches<sup>13</sup>. The common misunderstanding of CDA is that it attacks serious, negative, and problematic issues. This belongs to the misperception of the word critical, which has a denotation of negativity<sup>14</sup>. The usage of discourse or text has been a controversial issue in many discourse studies; it has been emphasized by Wodak and Meyer. Power and solidarity are essential notions in ideological discourse analysis<sup>15</sup>. Language plays an essential role in the creation of power; ideologies are

mainly manifested in peaks of struggle overpower. In as much, hegemony and the dominance of power are the most important issues in ideological discourse analysis<sup>16</sup>. Climate change is one among the seventeen goals of Sustainable Development Goals set by UN in 2015, in which 195 countries agreed upon, with the aim to change the world for better, the goals are believed to be achieved by 2030. This study also attempts to investigate the efforts of the government and its plans to achieve the “*Climate action*” goal by analyzing the address of the Prime minister at COP26.

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<sup>1</sup> (Glossary — Global Warming of 1.5 °C, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> (www.dw.com), 2022),

<sup>3</sup> (www.dw.com), 2022).

<sup>4</sup> (Goshwami, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> (World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal, 2022)

<sup>6</sup> (Narayanan, 2022)

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<sup>7</sup> (Drought scare looms large over a fifth of India, 2022). <sup>8</sup>

(Drought scare looms large over a fifth of India, 2022). <sup>9</sup>

(Littlejohn and Foss, 2009)

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study is qualitative in nature and Fairclough's CDA technique was used to conduct the investigation of the selected content of PM Modi's speech at "26th UN Climate Change Conference," COP26; content analysis is a family of systematic, rule-guided techniques used to analyze the informational contents of textual data<sup>17</sup> The conference of parties summit was held in Glasgow, Scotland, on November 2, 2021. Original translated transcript of PM Modi's address was downloaded from the Ministry of external affairs website<sup>18</sup>. The transcript consists of 1094 words, PM address at COP26, the emphasis on the Indian plan to overcome the climate change issues facing the country and the world. Fairclough 2001, approach is used in the study. Fairclough argues that only analysis of the text is not enough to carry out the critical research, making it mandatory to take along the two other stages of "interpretation and explanation<sup>19</sup>" to unfold the ideologies.

In the first stage, Description stage text is analyzed in the form of the usage of pronouns in the address, vocabulary and structure. The speaker uses personal pronouns, 'I' and 'me' when others' opinions are not included in a given perspective. It provides the speaker with a "personal voice". The behaviors suggest that the speaker is in a power position<sup>20</sup>. Similarly, 'we' and 'us' indicate the speaker's position, strength and authority to speak for others on their behalf<sup>21</sup>.

Fairclough indicated that the ideologically contested words are the essential focus of 'the ideological struggle'<sup>22</sup>. Fairclough stated that the terms used in a discourse reflect how the speaker experiences the natural and the social world. The next component of the descriptive stage deals with the denotation and connotation meanings, Crystal defined the denotative meaning as the objective relationship which exists between the word and the real world to which it refers. Thus, the denotative meaning can be said to be the dictionary meaning of words, without any associative meaning<sup>23</sup>.

From Fairclough's framework, the second component is the text structure in the content analysis. Fairclough described the text structure as the construction of the text in an expected order<sup>24</sup>. The next stage is the 'Interoperation stage'. This stage analysis 'situational context and intertextuality' here; situational context investigates four questions; first 'what's going on, what purpose of the activity is performed within the text? Next, it examines "who is involved in the subject of the situation" it addresses the 'power relation' meaning the relationship that is highlighted in a speech. At last, it studies the language and its role in that event address by matching the content of it with the situation<sup>25</sup>. In intertextuality, the speaker demonstrates his/her stance on the subject, his ideology and belief as well<sup>26</sup>

The last stage involves the explanation. It has two components, according to Fairclough (2001), concerning two dimensions; the first one is discourse which focuses on originality as part of social struggle, and the second one is a discourse view as a result of that power struggle relation, where the focus is on purpose and the past discourse.

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<sup>10</sup> (Frawley, 1993)

<sup>11</sup> (rogers, 2011)

<sup>12</sup> (Wodak, 2001)

<sup>13</sup> (van Dijk, 2007)

<sup>14</sup> (Wodak,2008)

<sup>15</sup> (Minelli de Oliveira, 2011)

<sup>16</sup> (Kendar, 1987; Fairclough, 1989; Jones & Peccei, 2004)

<sup>17</sup> (Mayring, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> (MEA | Statements : Speeches & Statements, 2022)

<sup>19</sup> (Fairclough 2003)

<sup>20</sup> (Jensen, Jakobsen and Pichler, 2016)

<sup>21</sup> (Maybin, Mercer and Hewings, 2006)

<sup>22</sup> (Huspek, 1991)

<sup>23</sup> (A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics, 1997)

<sup>24</sup> (Carranza, 1997)

<sup>25</sup>(Jawad and Al Jiburi, 2017)

<sup>26</sup> (Jensen, Jakobsen and Pichler, 2016)

## Data Analysis

4.1 Analysis of Prime Minister Modi's speech which was delivered by the prime minister of the Republic of India in COP26. The speech includes the Prime minister's views about the 'climate change' future planning's to cater for the climate issues, suggestions and solutions for this global issues; the address includes the steps that the government of India has taken to control the effects of global warming, the text of prime minister's speech is investigated by using Fairclough's three-dimensional approach as well as conceptual metaphor 'CMT' of Lakoff's. The first three stages concerning with Fairclough's framework, and the last stage deals with the CMT.

### 4.1.1 Description stage

The first stage of Fairclough's framework includes an investigation of discourse; in this step researcher analysis text structure, pronouns and vocabulary, meaning a language that helps to reveals the speaker's ideologies.

#### 4.1.1.1 Text Structure

At the start of the speech, PM Modi laid emphasis on the country he represents and its principles; he starts his speech as

*Today I am representing amid you, the land which gave this mantra thousands of years ago-*

**सम्-गच्छ-ध्वम्,** *That is, let's move together*

**सम्-व-दद्वम्** *let's all interact together,*

**सम् वो मानसस जानताम्।** *everyone's minds should also be one.*

After making the first statement, PM talks about the Paris climate summit and its many promises; adding to that PM enlightens about Indian tearless efforts to fill its obligations. Then the speaker talks about the lifestyle and suggests that lifestyle has played a significant role in climate change. He also means One World Movement to be taken forward, which includes a healthy lifestyle for the environment, again the PM suggests five elements' Panchamrit' that

will help in dealing with the climate issues at the end of his address, he apologizes to the speaker for taking extra time but states that it was his duty to raise the voices of the developing countries and eventually PM thanks to the speaker for giving him time.

#### **4.1.1.2 Pronouns**

Pronouns play a vital role in investigating the speaker's ideology, the usage of the pronouns helps to deliver particular messages. The statements from the PM address are quoted and explained below. These statements illustrate the function that pronouns serve.

*"We all know this truth that the promises made to date regarding climate finance have proved to be hollow."*

*"We have to take big steps today to save the world." "We are making every effort with determination." "We are working hard and showing results."*

*"Our future generations," "Our energy mix."*

In the above statements, the speaker has used 'we' and 'our', specifying the efforts of the people present in the event, which gives the impression of inclusiveness further when a speaker uses "our future generation", he does not talk only about his nation but a future generation of the world,

*"I first came to Paris for the Climate Summit,"*

*"I am happy that a developing country like India,"*

*"I would like to draw your attention to one more important topic. Today, the world admits that lifestyle has a big role in climate change. So, I propose before you a One-Word Movement."* In the above statements, PM Modi has used 'person singular pronouns' to show his feelings, commitments, efforts and draw the attention of the speakers towards the essential subjects; it shows Prime Minister is aware of the problems, as well as the actions of his government, this person singular pronoun are used by the speaker to persuade the audience with all authority.

#### **4.1.1.3 Vocabulary**

The words that are used by the speaker in his address reveal the ideology of the person and his stance on the subject he speaks in his address. PM starts his speech with the expression "friends", and he uses this expression in his seven times; this expression is associated with the

social relationship that the speaker wants to establish with his audience in the panel. In the second paragraph speaker

*"Today, the whole world believes that India is the only big economy that has delivered in letter and spirit on the Paris Commitment. We are making every effort with determination, and we are working hard and showing results."*

In the above statement, the speaker has used the word '**spirit**,' '**effort**,' and '**determination**' to hail his nation's efforts in delivering on the Paris commitments that show the country's positive attitude towards climate change, which creates positive dissonance.

*India expects developed countries to provide climate finance of \$1 trillion at the earliest. Today, it is necessary that as we track the progress made in climate mitigation, we should also track climate finance.*

The above-quoted statement from the PM address in COP26 stress the need to do more from the side of developed countries from the financial perspective; he calls upon the developed countries to "provide finance of \$1trillion at the earliest" the word '**earliest**' indicates that the speaker recognizes the problem, and wants it to be addressed as soon as possible.

*"In the midst of this global brainstorming on climate change, on behalf of India, I would like to present five nectar elements, 'Panchamrit', to deal with this challenge.*

**First-** India will take its non-fossil energy capacity to 500 GW by 2030.

**Second-** India will meet 50 per cent of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030.

**Third-** India will reduce the total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes from now till 2030.

**Fourth-** By 2030, India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by more than 45 per cent.

**And fifth-** by the year 2070, India will achieve the target of Net-Zero.

*These 'Panchamrits' will be an unprecedented contribution of India to climate action."*

The speaker then provides the five '**nectar**' elements to deal with the problems, the word nectar indicates the good results that would be achieved by following the steps, and further, these five steps are the efforts that the country would take to complete the target of net zero by 2070, which would be '**unprecedented**', the word unprecedented indicates about the difficulty of the task but yet presents in a doable way.

*We all know the truth that the promises made to date regarding climate finance have proved to be hollow.* The speaker shows disappointment in the statement and focuses on the reality, and the word '**hollow**' suggests that the speaker wants the addressees to make more efforts as far as the climate finances are concerned and wants them to fill this space to fight the climate change problem.

We have to take big steps today to save the world. This is the need of the hour, and this will also prove the relevance of this forum. I am confident that the decisions taken in Glasgow will save the future of our future generations, giving them the gift of a secure and prosperous life. The above statements are the concluding remarks of the speaker; here speaker makes a statement of '*taking big steps*' suggesting that the things that are being done are not enough; this also refers to being more serious to words the problem than the speaker show faith on the members, the word '*confident*' reflects that positivity and faith of the speaker on the members and makes them conscious about the future generation of providing them with a "secure and prosperous" life.

#### **4.1.2 INTERPRETATION STAGE**

This stage includes the contextual meanings and details used by a speaker in his address, along with intertextual expressions,

##### **4.1.2.1 *Situational Context***

The discourse of the Prime minister's speech is about the nation's plan to fight the climate change issue; most of the parts in the address as directed to the addressees about making more contributions to help the developing countries fight this issue effectively. The speaker also shares five elements that would help India fight climate change. Throughout his address, he has given a sense that it's the developed countries that are not putting in the hundred per cent

that is required to fight the problem. The speaker addressed in his speech both the addressees and the people outside the conference hall; the relationship that the speaker has tried to make his address revolves around "politics and society."

##### **4.1.2.2 *Intertextuality***

The speaker has used this discourse many times in his speech; the statement quoted below from his speech is an example of intertextuality, where the speaker shares the detail of his nation's position of strength, which is targeted to persuade the member of the conference that it is not that difficult to do,

*Today, India ranks 4th in the world in installed renewable energy capacity. India's non-fossil fuel energy has increased by more than 25% in the last 7years, and now it has reached 40% of our energy mix.*

Prime Minister Modi refers to commitments and the solution that the country has "cooperated with the world", which he calls a revolutionary step in solar power; he mentions the "initiative of international solar alliance" "coalition for disaster resilient infrastructure for climate adaptation" to save the life of millions of the people. Again speaker has engaged the audience in the panel with the Indian efforts, seriousness and active participation in fighting this global issue. All these statements are an attempt to persuade the addressees.

*The proper justice would be that for the countries which do not live up to their promises made on climate finance, pressure should be put on them.*

The extract presents the speaker's view that no casual attitude should be entertained, and if anyone does so world community should put pressure on them to fight is problem effectively.

Which would lead to saving countless humans on earth

*"I came as a representative of a culture that gave the message of 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah', The speaker does not only focus on the climatic discourse but also makes the panel aware of its cultural history by quoting 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, meaning happiness for all'" indicating that the people of India possess no menace for anyone and always stand for the good of the people. He also uses emotions in his statements, when states, "for me the event in Paris was not a summit, it was a sentiment and a commitment. And India was not making those promises to the world, but 125 crore Indians were making those promises to themselves."* The speaker uses the emotional statement to persuade his colleagues and the penal member by giving reference to *"125 crores Indian making promise to themselves"*.

#### **4.1.3 EXPLANATION STAGE**

In this stage ideologies of the speaker are revealed; this stage will show the PM Modi's discourse, his attitude towards the problem, *"Every year more passengers travel by Indian Railways than the population of the world. This huge railway system has set a target of making itself 'Net Zero' by 2030. This initiative alone will lead to a reduction of emissions by 60 million tonnes annually. Similarly, our massive LED bulb campaign is reducing emissions by 40 million tonnes annually. Today, India is working at a faster pace on many such initiatives with a strong will"* the extract gives the impression about the speaker that he is optimistic and is hopeful of its targets to be achieved on time. The speaker is actively involved in restoring the climate for a better future. The speaker at large has focused on the future. This suggests that the speaker wanted to present a good image of his country's government to the world. His statements make his "testimony persuasive." Modi also means the panel be flexible in policy-making, which presents him as a progressive individual on a global stage.

## **CONCLUSION**

Concerning the data that is analyzed, the research concludes that Prime Minister is happy with the progress of the country in talking the climate change, but the reality is not as good as it is being portrayed in the speech; the textual analysis of PM's speech composing of description and interpretation stage indicates at a positive text structure, which is more persuasive and optimistic in nature, PM has repeatedly used the word 'I' in his speech which suggest that PM kept indicating as him representing the country, and also conveyed his solidarity with the addressees, the ideology of the speaker in the address is of optimistic individual, a man who is hopeful of good things to come.

Climate Actions remained in focus throughout the address of the prime minister Modi, the important points that were raised were ‘India will reduce the total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes from now till 2030.’ and “By 2030, India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by more than 45 per cent.

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