

Election jamboree



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The election campaign in India this time round has been the most expensive one. It has been touted by many as a jamboree, a must see political carnival. Frankly, speaking it is an entertainment in itself, clearly outflanking the over the top K serials of Ekta Kapoor. The 2009 Lok Sabha elections has got everything in it: flamboyance, wealth, drama, star power and loads and loads of suspense and action.

PR firms, advertising companies and brand consultants are busy writing slogans, copies and with strategic positioning mind games for political parties and candidates, rather than for products and brands. Big bucks are also being spent on its visibility. Joining the fever called elections are the endless number of Bollywood celebrities like Aamir Khan, Priyanka Chopra and others, all urging us to assert our right to vote.

The political parties and their candidates have used every viable medium to communicate, place their mandate and persuade the rightful votes to their party. Whether you are watching a news channel or a mindless programme on any one of the general entertainment channels, they are all out there. Ubiquitously present with scores of endorsement from aam janta (in the case of Congress) or the towering profile of LK Advani, the Prime Ministerial candidate of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), beckoning us to vote for BJP. We cannot miss them. Surely, a time will come when the political parties will use chopper services to colour the sky with campaign messages.

During the last Lok Sabha elections, mobile users were confused, elated and surprised to be greeted by the deep voice of the then Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He appealed the citizen of India to vote for BJP, for progress and for 'India Shinning'. This time round the BJP has gotten smarter and wiser; they have used the medium of Internet. They have entrenched themselves to every viable website. So much so, that if you Google for Mr. Advani, you will find that there are

598,000 hits against his name and for Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh, 2,810,000 hits.

The intensity of the campaign really surprises me. No matter which website I visit, even a website like www.timeanddate.com, has been inundated by its e-campaign. This has been further fuelled by the participation of Bollywood and TV celebrities. If the IPL matches weren't on, I am confident that we would have had a bevy of endorsements from the likes of M.S Dhoni and others. There are very few, who would be doing this as a concerned citizen.

I chose to bring out this aspect of campaigning for; honestly, speaking my heart wrenches to see so much money being spent on so called campaigns and its visibility. How I wish the political parties (and all those involved), would loosen their purse and voluntarily donate to feed hundreds of hungry stomachs, or provide education to the underprivileged children, build shelter homes for the destitute and fight for social irregularities such as child marriage and female infanticide. If the political parties would have done their duties and fulfilled their commitments, when voted to power, they wouldn't have needed to rely so heavily on reaching to the voters through the media. I hope the voters can see through this.

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BY PINKYPRADHAN

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