

A Study: Importance of Manifestoes

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to study of election manifestoes. Manifestoes play significant role in the elections. On the behalf of manifestoes people can compare the policies, Programmes and performance of different political parties. Political parties prepare election manifestoes by keeping in mind the needs and demand of voters. The manifesto is an opportunity for a political party to present its agenda for the embodying the loftiest hopes and noblest aspirations of the people.

The political parties in democratic countries have become extra active on the time of general elections. Each of them, before approaching the electorate, issues manifesto. Election manifestoes serves as an important document. On the basis of election manifestoes, the political parties propagate their aim and objectives. It creates awareness among the masses about the policies and programme of the government. With the help of manifestoes, various developmental programme are planned. Important issues are raised by different political parties. In the present era, people are well educated and are much conscious about the performance of government. Voters cast their vote on the basis of their policy and programmes and these are mentioned by the parties in their manifestoes.

Election manifestoes also provide a forum to the parties to mould the public opinion in their favor and win elections. Election manifestoes are also beneficial for the voters also on the basis of manifestoes people can judge the aim and objective of the party

Keywords: *Manifesto, elections, political parties, public, democracy.*

Introduction

Election Manifestoes are an important part of electoral process and provide valuable insight for understanding the policies and programme of various political parties. Political parties occupy an important place in a democratic setup. A policy based on democratic Institutions and structure provides exemplary opportunity to the masses, they are the ultimate and real repository of power, to decide about their political future and rulers. The manifesto is an opportunity for political party to present its agenda according to hopes and aspiration of peoples.¹ Political Parties provide the necessary platform for the people with diverse social economic culture, religion, interest to come closer to each other, for promoting and protecting their interest.² Manifestoes are like a charter of promises of a political with voters.

Political parties are one of the major and significant institutions in any democracy. The free and fair elections require the presence of political parties as mean for presenting alternative policies or programme to public for approval. Indeed a democracy without political parties is impossible. On the time of election political parties make so many promises which are reflected in manifestoes.

The political parties in a Parliamentary democracy are very important. Modern democratic Government can't function effectively in the absence of political Parties. They disseminate Political Education to the masses and make their participation in Political process of a society, meaningful and effective, In fact, they are essential conditions for the successful working of representative government and social process, since they perform a number of vital functions in these processes like harmonizing or containing the diverse interests of various groups, integrating the individual in society and transmitting social and political values from one generation to other. Thus, the growth and development of political parties and their functioning becomes a determinant for the stability of social governmental and political order.³ Political parties in democratic countries become extra active on the time of general election. Each one of them before approaching the electorate, issue election Manifesto which declares the aim and objective of the party.⁴

“A Public, official and authoritative declaration making announcement or explanation of intentions, motives or principles of action”.⁵

“A written statement in which a group of people, especially a political party, explain their beliefs and say what they will do if they win an election”.⁶

According to shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 'A Manifesto is a public declaration by Sovereign prince or state or by an individual or body of individuals whose proceedings are of Public Importance making known past actions and explaining the motives for actions announced as forthcoming.'⁷

"It is a public statement issued by a prince, leader of a party or other person in authority of principle and future policy."⁸

"It is a document, which is issued generally before a major election by a political party outlying its policies and programme".⁹

A document in which a political party set out the programme it proposes to follow if returned to office. The document may reflect compromises between

Different party grouping, rather than an agreed programme of action.¹⁰

"It is a document, which is issued generally before a major election by a political party outing its policies and programme".¹¹

For issuing manifesto on the eve of general elections, the credit goes to the Congress Party. On the eve of first general election in 1952, Jawahar Lal Nehru, a great democrat took keen interest in drafting the document. With the passage of time issuing manifestoes on the eve of elections has become an essential part of the elections and to insert 'all things for all classes of voters' so that every classes of society can be pleased, has become the theme of preparing of manifestoes.

Role of Manifestos

Election manifestoes savers as an important document, On the basis of election manifestoes, the political parties propagate their election policies and programmes. It creates awareness among the masses about the policies and programmes of the government. With the help of manifestoes, various development programmes are planned. Many issues are raised by different parties. In the present era, people are well educated and are much conscious about the performance of the government. Voters cast their votes on the basis of the policy and programmes of the parties and these are mentioned by the parties in their manifestoes, apart from being influenced by the cast or religion factor.

Election manifestoes play important role both for the political parties and for the voters during the elections. Elections manifestoes serve as an election tool for the political parties. With the help of manifestoes political parties propagate their policies and programmes to the people. Every party issue manifestoes at the time of elections. During campaign, they propagate their policies and programmes which are mentioned in the manifestoes by the political parties.

Election manifestoes also provide a forum to the parties to mould the public opinion in their favor and win elections. The political parties prepare their manifestoes keeping in view the demands and aspirations of people, so that party's vote bank may increase on the base of manifestoes.

Election manifestoes are also beneficial for the voters. These manifestoes provide a platform to the masses to judge the aims and objectives of the political party. Performance of each political party is afterwards critically analyzed on the basis of the respective manifestoes issued by them. Election manifestoes highlight the respective ideology of various political parties.

Election manifestoes are the mirror of political parties. So election manifestoes serve as a yardstick to the test the popularity of the respective parties among the masses.

Election Manifesto also provides alternative choice to people. Election Manifesto amounts to a fresh pledge which a Political Party undertakes to redeem. It is a strong reminder-a strong taking sometime as also a fresh appraisal of the programmes and policies by the political parties in the light of their experience during the Inter election years. On the manifestoes basis, the voter can simply compare similar stands on issues such as on economy, defense or religion and so on, what the parties say about the general concern of the people. The manifesto is a charter of assurances and promises of a political party- something for everyday, so that more votes can be garnered. It is said that manifestoes are not comprehensive policy documents to give details of programme. They are meant to give broad goals for a large section of voters. The manifestoes are drafted in such a way that legally the politicians cannot be held responsible for breach of faith even if they do not fulfill the promises after winning the elections.

Elections are occasions when political parties make solemn pledges to the people which are reflected in their manifestoes. The manifestoes is an opportunity for a political party to articulate its policies and programs with a freshness of vision, a boldness of intent, a clarity of purpose and a renewed sense of determination. The manifesto is a charter, a compact that a political party enters into with the people it serves. They give a new aspiration and new expectation among the people to better their lives and improve their standard of living. They can look forward with the hope and confidence to what the future holds for

them. But ironically, manifestoes which could possibly be the only legitimate document for the purpose perhaps are only for party archives after their ritualistic release. They never reach the hands of the voters.¹²

With the development of coalitional government and alliance politics the party's manifestos have attained an important position, so that the clash of ideologies can be minimized and the consent on basic issues can be included in the joint manifestoes. Now the opposition also keeps an eye on the manifestoes for criticizing and opposing the government policies and programs. The opposition keeps on reminding the party in power to implement its poll promises. The frequency of elections also minimizes the no value of the manifesto because the leaders and parties have to go to the voters with their promises and performances. It is also important to make the context of this country that in India the two manifesto talk of the same sort of things, but once in power, any of the two parties can be counted on doing altogether different things-not only different from those mentioned in the rival's manifesto but different from those mentioned in their own manifesto. Indeed a closer analysis of the manifesto of a political party over a number of elections shows how the character of our parties has changed over time, in response to the situations.¹³

The 2014 Lok Sabha elections Congress manifesto contains a comprehensive discussion of the major issues facing the country. If one reads this manifesto against those issued earlier, one sees how the Congress Party has evolved in recent years regarding liberalization and economic reforms. Similarly, the NDA manifesto also shows the clear signs of compromise on controversial issues.

The party Manifesto fulfills a double function. They make political leader think seriously of the problems facing the country and suggest remedies. They also educate the electorate on the problems and their possible solution.

The most common issue for all the political parties is national unity and integrity of country. The election manifestos also deal with the social issues and problems of the society.

Election Manifesto can be classified in the three categories namely:

- i. Election Manifesto issued at time of general election. These Manifestoes are issued by national political parties, in particular, and contain issues which are of national and international importance.
- ii. Those issued at the time of bye election and in these Manifestoes issue of local importance are highlighted by the political party.
- iii. Those issued on the eve of State Assembly election. These Manifestoes are issued by the regional parties beside national political parties. In these Manifestoes, issues related to the region or the concerned are highlighted.

Factors Influencing the Formation of Election Manifestos

There are so many factors which are influencing the formations of elections Manifestoes.

(I) Constitution

The Constitution of the country influences the formation of the election Manifestoes. The election Manifestoes have to be framed keeping in the mind structure, aims and objectives of constitution. There is Parliamentary form of government in India and political parties have to frame their Manifesto according to the system.¹⁴ There is no legal binding for political parties to fulfill the promises make at the time of election.

(ii) Structure of Party

Socio-economic factors are also important in party structure. Party structure also play important role in framing their election manifesto. It helps us understand the distribution of authority mode, decision making and pattern of communication in an organization. Party structure depends on the caste, religion and class, e.g. The Bhartiya Janta Party advocates the policy of 'Hinduisim'. Hindu nationalism considers the Hindu society and nation to be identical. Akali Dal is held to be the political party of Sikhs. The Muslims league claims to be representatives of the Muslims. Indian voters are influenced by the communal consideration. The election manifestoes are formulated according to communal feeling of people. The spread of educated, modernization, industrialization, urbanization, all have led to the politicization of the castes. Politics and caste go together. Most of political parties are caste based e.g. DMK and AIADMK while Bhujan Samaj Party is a caste based party. So while formulating a manifesto the structure of party depends on its support base, caste and class domination. so caste factor in election manifestoes is very important.

(iii) Ideology

Role of ideology is also crucial in the formation of election manifestoes. It helps us in understanding the policies of party and the aim and objective of the party to justify their socio-political actions. Ideology provides a broad spectrum of ideas and values that influences party policies in determining organizational

go and gives legitimacy to the behaviour of party activities.¹⁵ Indian National Congress determined socialist pattern of society as its main objectives. But new for many years, Congress has left behind the objectives of 'Socialism' and adopted the 'economic-liberalism'. The party also believes in Democracy and Secularism. Bhartiya Janta Party had five ideological principles namely Nationalism and National integration, Secularism, nonalignment, Gandhian Socialism, Democracy. The Communist party of India believes in anti imperialism colonialism and Racialism. These basis are-Marxian-Leninism, Secularism and Democracy. The Parties frame election manifesto on the basis of its ideology.

(iv) Alliances

In present era coalition politics play vital role in formation of government. Politics is a struggle for power among various political parties. In plural societies, like India, where there is a multiparty system, no single party is in position to form the government. Many political parties make alliances with other political parties to remain in power and contest the elections.

The alliances play an important role in election manifestoes. The electoral alliances between parties may be of two types. These types are pre-election alliances between and post-election alliances. Pre-election alliances play important role formation of the election manifestoes. When the political party contests the election of its own, it is free to incorporate anything in its manifesto in spirit of its ideological commitments, while when a political party has to fight elections by formatting an alliance with other political parties has to fight elections compromise with them on many issues and policies. Akali Dal is considered to be the political party of Sikhs. Before joining an alliance its manifesto favors the interest of Sikhs and after joining an alliance with BJP its manifesto is more liberal to Hindu also.¹⁶ Due to electoral alliances it is very difficult task for political parties in formulating their manifestoes.

(v) Recent issues

The political parties take into account current political issues and try to frame their election manifestoes. The sensitive issue like Drugs, China-India border issue, demand for new states, corruption and terrorism needs to be looked at. The parties highlight these issues in their respective manifestoes highlighting their ideology and present them to the masses for votes on their basis.¹⁷

(vi) International situations

International environment is also very important for political parties. Political parties frame their manifesto according to international environment For e.g. The SAD party encourages economic and culture exchange among neighboring countries and opening of trade route through road transport with Pakistan.¹⁸ The CPI (M) provokes people to people relation between India and Pakistan reapproving Indo-Pak dialogue at a suitable time.¹⁹

In present time all the world has become Global village. All countries depend upon each other to satisfy their needs. In such a situation it is necessary that peace should prevail in all countries. Each political party lays stress on international peace and cooperation, Globalization Liberalization etc. International environment situations are very important for political parties to frame their manifesto according to international environment of the globe.

In 2012 Vidhan Sabha elections SAD got victory by defeating Congress and other parties on the basis of manifesto in Punjab. Under the guidance of the Mr Suhkbir Singh Badal, a well manifesto was prepared by SAD keeping in view the development of people and country. The SAD is the party that believes economic growth and communal harmony and social justice are two sides of coin and must always go hand in hand. The SAD is the party that combines experience and youth, wisdom, achievement and ambition. On this basis of well manifesto, SAD won the elections in Punjab Vidhan Sabha.

In the recent 2014 Lok Sabha elections on elections all national as well as regional parties released their manifestoes. In Punjab, the contesting parties like Congress, SAD, BJP, CPI, CPM, AAP issued their manifestoes according to the aspirations and demands of the people, Political parties almost made equal promises to the people during the elections. As development of all sections of society, development of peasants, backward classes, improvement in the educational system, end of terrorism, communalism, science and technological advancement, judicial reforms, recast of centre-state relations, provide employment facilities to the people, opposed prevalent evils like female feticide and dowry system etc. During elections campaign, all parties propagated their election manifestoes among the masses. Through these manifestoes, the parties rededicate themselves to the policies of service and politics of strengthening the foundation of the modern Indian nation state.²⁰In 2014 Lok Sabha election AAP, SAD, Congress and BJP prepared their manifesto and fight election out of 13 Lok sabha seats AAP and SAD won 4 seats each, INC won 3 seats and other won 2 seats on the basis of manifesto. In the recent Vidhan Sabha Election 2017 Congress won the Election on the basis of well prepared manifesto was made in the leadership of Manpreet Singh Badal (present finance minister of Punjab) promises like farmers loans, Job in every house like

promises are made with people and Congress got clear majority in these Elections. So election manifestoes play vital role in the elections.²¹

Conclusion

On the basis of manifestoes the voter can simply compare similar stands on the issue such as on economy, defense, agriculture, education, jobs, infrastructure or religion and so on. Election manifestoes are the mirror of political parties. So election manifestoes serve as a yardstick to test the popularity of the respective parties among the people. The manifestoes are drafted in such a way that legally the politician cannot be held responsible for breach of faith even if they do not fulfill the promises after winning the election. The party manifesto fulfills the double function. They make political leader think seriously of the problems facing the country and suggest remedies. They also educate the voters on the various issues and their possible solution. So election manifestoes are very important in democratic system.

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