Research Article

Revisiting Manifestos: An Assessment and the Prospects for the Upcoming Indian General Election 2024

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

India is the largest democracy and a land of multi-party-political system. During the wake of the election, every single party attempted to seize the attention of the citizenry, as they recognized their need to be legitimized by this set of political actors in India. In the phase of technological progression, while social media and alphanumeric expertise have traded almost all the old communication formats among these three political communication actors, the political parties, too, opt for more prompt forms of communication. What remains static is the party manifesto, a declared statement that is put into the movement as the proposed policy documents. In the same venture, almost a decade ago, India witnessed a political shift that was projected through the manifesto of the political party that is enjoying the position of the current Indian government. This research paper aims to analyze the released manifestoes of two national-level political giants in India, the BJP and INC, for the 2014 and 2019 general elections in India. It aims to explore the pattern of issues that are being addressed in the manifesto and to make predictions for the upcoming manifestos of the 2024 general election for both parties. The researcher has used the abductive reasoning method to make abductive predictions based on the previous manifestoes of the BJP and INC. After following the process of detailed exploration, examination, selection, and explanation, predictions have been given. The analysis explored that both political parties have their own exclusive issues of concern apart from common concerns, and these new set of issues will be posed in the manifesto of the 2024 general election.

INTRODUCTION

The largest democracy in the world is about to witness the 18th General Election in the upcoming year 2024. The General Elections, also known as Lok Sabha Election in India, is the process by which members of the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Parliament of India, are elected. To secure a position in the 2024 Lok Sabha Election, various political parties and political alliances will embark on the journey of this election with their manifestos. As a traditional practice, almost ten years ago, during the campaigning of the 17th general election, political parties launched their manifestos with the roadmap for the 2014 election. Back then, the Bhartiya Janata Party started its campaign with the slogan *'acche din aane wale hain'*—good days are coming—and the Indian National Congress, which was in power, also tried to legitimize the voters by getting their confidence through various political techniques. Now in the year 2023, when the general election of 2024 is approaching, we are yet again witnessing a contest that both the INC and the BJP are tossing. Although it started with the Constitution Amendment Act, the Women Reservation Bill, the Unite India or Clean India campaign, or some other structured campaign by the political parties, the contest would evolve with new issues during the course of the election campaign. This is the time to revisit the past decade and decide which of the concerns conferred by parties were just to fascinate the voters and which were the genuine issues that have been spoken about. This study aims to revisit the manifestoes of two political giants, the BJP and INC, and explore their concerns during

this 18th general election campaign. The study aims to predict the major issues that must be incorporated into both parties' manifestoes based upon the analysis of previously published manifestos of these parties during the 17th General Election in India.

Review of Literature

The scale of victory normally summarizes the strength of a party's popular mandate, at least in the initial years of rule, while the social basis—who voted for a party and who did not—should indicate what a party will do once in power. **(**Varshne, 2014) Manifestoes, being the mandate of party in the written recorded format, also play a key role in making or breaking a political party. This is why most of the party attempt to put every issue related to their mandate in the manifesto. BJP and INC have also tried to put their mandate in the manifestoes during the 2014 and 2014 General Election.

The New York Times, in a report, mentioned that INC's (2014) manifesto deals with legislation that the party proposes in sectors such as health, education, and employment. ' Further, in a word-by-word analysis of the Congress manifesto for the 17th LSE, *The Economic Times* writes: 'The 54-page Congress party manifesto for the upcoming general election 2019 dwells on a vast range of issues, from agriculture to business to minorities.' The Economic Times also added that 'Manifestoes by most national parties address similar issues with a difference in approaches, minor or major' (Economic Times, 2019). While comparing the manifestos of the BJP for the 2014 and 2019 LSE, *The Hindu* highlights the cover of the manifestos. According to a report published in 2019, "the most visible difference between the 2014 and 2019 manifestoes of the Bhartiya Janata Party is on the cover of the documents. The 2014 manifesto was about a team of stalwarts, while the current one is all about Prime Minister Narendra Modi" (The Hindu, 2019). *The Economic Times* published a report that quoted Rajya Sabha MP, who said, "For its 2019 manifesto, the BJP has simply copied and pasted its 2014 manifesto and changed all previous deadlines from 2019 to 2022, 2032, 2047, and 2097." INC also accused the BJP of copying INC's manifesto in 2019. On the other hand, as stated earlier, *Forbes India analyzed* that '(INC) has built its agenda for the 2019 election around unfulfilled promises made by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government.' (Forbes India, 2019). Studies also revealed that the issues of concern during the campaign remained different for both the political parties. The BJP manifesto promised to eliminate fetters for the private sector so that Indian companies could be globally competitive. (Vaishnava, 2019) Similarly the INC emphasized on building a professional agency to smoothen out environmental clearance processes and water conservation for agriculture, rural and urban development. (Guha and Joe, 2019)

Objectives

The objectives of the presented study are to:
• Identify the exclusive issues in the manifestoes of INC and BJP;
• Critically analyze the choice of issues by both political parties; and
• Envisage future issues to be incorporated into the manifestoes of INC and BJP.

Methodology

The study was conducted in two phases. The primary research design for the first objective was 'Discourse Analysis'. Since the abductive reasoning of the manifestoes in form of text was to be done, discourse analysis was the most appropriate method to study the text. Researchers did a discourse analysis of the manifestos published by INC and BJP during the 2014 and 2019 general elections. For discourse analysis, the researcher first established the context, explored the production process, and prepared material for analysis. Later on, the text was coded, and the structure of the text was examined. Then the researcher collected all the statements with specific codes and looked for any argument found in the content. After finding the logic based on the codes, interpretations were made. Now, carefully analyzing the discourse, abductive reasoning was applied to meet the second and third objectives. These parties were purposely selected because they are the political giants in the mammoth Indian election campaign, with the highest number of candidates, the largest expenditure on campaigning, and their historical importance.

Research process

For the first objective, the researcher did the discourse analysis to explore and examine the text of the manifesto and to spot the key issues discussed by these parties during their respective election campaigns. Since the manifestoes and campaigning were both associated with a political context and the production process of the data was defined, the researcher listed the issues included in the party manifestos for further analysis. Both parties' official campaign agendas discussed during the election campaign were identified with the help of the manifesto. These manifestos were the manifestoes released by the BJP and INC during the 2014 and 2019 LSE campaign;

The researcher coded the manifesto based upon the parameters adopted through a literature review to identify issues. Based upon this parameter text, the manifesto was examined to see whether parties have discussed the issued listed in the parameter. The researcher collected all the statements in the manifesto with the specific codes for examination. In the second phase, after these parties explored and examined the issues, the researcher analyzed the issues selected by both parties and gave explanations. Based on the explanation, predictions about future issues

have been made. Altogether, the prediction is based on the selection of the political parties' previous campaign manifestos.

Findings

Issues discussed by both parties

There was a universal presence of a few fundamental primary issues in the manifestoes of both parties but with diverse positioning.

These core issues include national security, women's empowerment, child protection, infrastructure, and development concerns. Under the category of agriculture, welfare measures for farmers were common. Similarly, the Indian economy included the maximum number of issues such as entrepreneurship and start-ups, taxation, tax reforms, and micro-, small-, and medium enterprises. 'Innovation' was the only issue that was listed in the BJP-2014 Manifestoes under this category. Later on, INC also included 'Innovation' in their agenda in 2019. The healthcare sector was on the priority list of both parties during both terms. It appears that INC included further plugs associated with health in their manifesto, but the issue was sheltered among a few other categories, such as women's empowerment, justice for all, and the welfare of farmers. For instance, 'Food and Nutrition were extensively addressed under the category of 'Widen the Platform', and 'Health Insurance' was covered under 'Welfare of Labor, Our Class'. Both the political parties, INC and BJP, included issues related to 'Governance' in 2014. These were 'Governance Reforms' and 'Corruption-Free India'. The BJP continued them in 2019, under the 'E-Governance: Easy, Efficient, and Effective' category. On the contrary, INC did not include the parameter in its 2019 agenda. With respect to skill education, INC comprised 'Skill Education' in the 2014 LSE agenda but included primary, secondary, and higher education further in 2019. The BJP was also consistent in this regard, as it focused on all in a similar manner in 2014 and 2019. Employment and sports were discussed under the parameter youth. Both parties covered these issues in their manifestos. INC incorporated more points related to youth as compared to BJP. The BJP inserted a few points related to some other categories, such as 'widen the platform' and 'Strengthen the framework'. Institutional reforms were the focus of both political parties in the form of electoral, judicial, and police reforms. Both parties focused more on 'judicial reforms' followed by 'police reforms' and 'electoral reforms'. Environment: INC was consistent in including one of the issues under this category, i.e., climate change. In contrast, the BJP counted only some points related to 'forest cover' in 2014 but skipped that too in the 2019 LSE manifesto. There was a clear distinction between the focus of both parties with respect to culture and heritage, as the BJP included 'Heritage' in its manifesto during both LSEs, whereas INC included the category 'Art' in the 2019 manifesto only,

not mentioning agendas related to 'Heritage' anywhere. 'Justice for All' included issues related to: Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities, Senior Citizens, Differently Abled, and LGBTQ+. All these issues were addressed by the BJP in 2019 under the categories 'Inclusive Development' and 'Social Justice'. INC listed issues related to schedule caste and minorities in the 2014 manifesto and added other issues in 2019.

Exclusive issue discussed by the BJP

- *BJP*

Business today mentioned in a report that "in the 2014 manifesto, the BJP stated that some of the key imminent issues that they would address are price rises, employment, corruption, policy paralysis, poor delivery, and credibility crises. Adding to the same, following is the list of issues that were addressed in the manifestos by the BJP."

- *Strengthen the framework*

The BJP emphasized a strong center-state relationship and pledged to guarantee the fiscal autonomy of the states. This point covered tourism, inter-regional economic disparities, tribal welfare, foreign trade, and commerce along with the development of the issues related to North-East, flood control in Assam, infiltration, and illegal immigration issues related to the Line of Actual Control in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. Additionally, in the same category, the BJP incorporated subjects related to Kashmir and Kashmiri pundits, abrogated Article 370, and brought justice to Seemandhra.

- *Law and Order*

Contrary to the Indian National Congress, BJP focused comprehensively on the issue of 'law and order' and 'Peace and Harmony'. The BJP excluded two other important issues: 'internal conflicts' and 'communal disputes'.

Decentralization and people's participation

This point focused on Jan-Bhagidarion by means of pro-active, pro-people governance and self-governance. It also comprised issues such as *Panchayat-Raj* institutions, additional grants to *Gram-Sabha,* and promises to encourage openness in governance by evolving the public-private partnership (PPP) model into the people-public-private partnership (PPPP) model.

E-Governance

Easy, Effective, and Efficient: Digital Connectivity, which was left out under the category of science and technology, was later discussed within this category. It included an exhaustive list of promises comprising empowerment, equality, and efficiency. In addition to making every Indian empowered with the help of digital connectivity, penetration, and usage of broadband across the country, technology-enabled products for students, digital learning, and training were incorporated into it. Issues overlapping

with the healthcare sector were also added, such as the Nation Rural Internet Technology Mission to facilitate telemedicine and mobile healthcare. Promoting language through the e-Bhasha National Mission and promoting IT in the Indian language were some of the issues the BJP tried to address under this category.

Widen the platform

This particular category emphasizes 'Rural Development' and 'Welfare Schemes for All'. Within this category, the BJP promised to strengthen the delivery of poverty alleviation programs, provide facilities to the rural population for agri-allied activities, implement the PDS model, and ensure food security. They also incorporated assurances related to the transformation of the Food Corporation of India with respect to the issues of under nutrition and malnutrition, accelerated social justice, integrated development, equal opportunity, promoting harmony and trust, and many more.

Social security

Problems related to children, such as child welfare, malnutrition, child labor, child trafficking, child sexual abuse, juvenile crime, school dropouts, slums, and disabled children and their issues, were included in this category. It also proposed the start of some schemes, such as the Integrated Child Protection Scheme, the implementation of the right to education, the right to food and security, and the Child and Adolescents Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act. Issues related to the welfare of senior citizens, such as their security and healthcare, additional tax benefits, and setting up old age homes, were emphasized. Several issues related to disabled people and youth were also addressed.

Services, Driven by Quality and Efficiency

This category focuses on providing good services to tourists and native Indians with the help of zero-defect products, world-class ports, increasing intellectual property rights and patents, and ensuring the availability of institutional credits. Tourism-related promises included a mission mode project to create 50 tourist points and cultural, archaeological, and heritage advancements by solving issues in the Himalayan, coastal, and desert regions.

Labor force

BJP tried to sum up all the important issues related to the labor force in this category. Issues related to the unorganized sector, their health, and their education was promised to be ensured with the help of issuing identity cards to them. Addressing their economic issues, such as dedicated workers' banks, strengthening pension and health insurance, low-cost housing programs, credit availability, and interest-subvention schemes, were incorporated into the manifesto.

Water: Make It Reach to All Homes, Farms, and Factories

This was a dedicated category that paid attention to the issues related to irrigation, water security, groundwater recharge, rainwater harvesting, and drinking water supply in coastal cities. Water pollution, sewage treatment plants, and community-managed water resource management were also included.

Inclusive development

This point was added in the 2019 manifesto by the BJP, which included most of the things discussed separately in the manifesto issued in 2014. The list of issues includes. Ensuring justice for all, strengthening *Sabka Vikas*; the welfare of the poor; and commitment to geographical equality.

Exclusive issues discussed by INC

Forbes India writes soon after INC released its manifesto that the manifesto released by Congress under the supervision of Rahul Gandhi looks like a list of unfulfilled promises by the BJP. It added, 'Congress has gone all out to grab the opportunity presented by the looming question of these issues and built a manifesto that promises to address all of them in a bid to attract voters'. INC listed issues such as jobs, rural poverty, farmers' distress, hate crime, dissent, One Tax-One Nation, universal Aadhar usage, data privacy, protecting democracy, the women's reservation bill, the environment, and climate change. Following are the issues that were prominently discussed in the INC manifesto but were not included in the parameter:

• *Innovation, Information, and Communication*

Issues falling under different categories as per the parameters were listed under this category in the manifesto issued by INC for the 16th LSE. Issues were 'Provision of Aadhar Number', Direct Benefit Transfer, time-bound delivery, increase in the budget of Science and Technology, high speech broadband connectivity to *Gram panchayatshigh-speed*, the electronic delivery of services, and a multi-protocol wireless system for disaster management. It is quite clear that with this point, INC touched on many of the categories, such as e-governance, the welfare of all, and rural development, all in one.

• *Protecting the interests of labor*

Primarily focusing on the financial and health issues of labor, INC promised to strictly implement the Contract Labour (Prohibition and Abolition) Act of 1970, providing health insurance and pension cover to laborers, coverage of migrant laborers under Aadhar, and bringing one comprehensive law for the welfare of laborers, especially those working under plantations and other hazardous industries.

• *A future for the hands that built the nation*

Issues of paramount importance, such as social security, basic welfare for all working people, enforcement of the minimum wage law, etc., were covered in this category. INC affirmed implementing the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008; provision of pension cover, life and disability cover, and health and maternity benefits, along with free medicine for all. Some other assurances

were related to old age protection and provident funds, old age homes for elderly people, and housing, education, and scheme for children. Employment injury benefits, a working environment without harassment, and humane working conditions were also promised in 2014.

- *Informal and Unorganized Sector*

INC listed too many issues in an indexed manner, like support for medium and small enterprises, minimum wage for workers, setting up *Aajivika Kendra* in major cities for the welfare of scrape pickers and rack pickers, the implementation of the Street Vendor (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, and many others.

- *Minimum Income Support Programme, or NYAY*

By including this point in the manifesto, INC promised to assist 5 crore poor families. INC guaranteed a cash transfer of 72,000 rupees per year to all the families below the poverty line in India.

- *Banking and Financial Sector*

Many measures were discussed in this category to meet the banking and financial needs of the country. With the help of banking reforms, a review of the governance structure, the provision of regional rural banks, and banking correspondence to provide inclusive development,

- *Border-Security*

It emphasized the issue of 'External-Security' by increasing the strength of BSF, SSB, ITBP, and Assam rifles and providing good working and living conditions to security personnel.

- *Tourism*

INC focused on tourism development with the help of low-cost, long-term funds for improving tourist places and nearby areas with a special tax regime for tourism-related businesses and income.

- *NRI's*

Promises related to health, safety, condition of work, social security, and safe return to India for NRIs were listed in the manifesto. They also promised to implement the NRI Invest scheme to encourage savings from the NRIs.

- *Engaging with citizens and civil society*

Under this category, INC is assured to reconstitute the National Integration Council and Inter-Faith Council. The party promised that these councils would be reconstituted to promote unity, solidarity, communal harmony, fraternity, and reconciliation. Promoting respect for all religions and mutual tolerance was also listed.

- *Institutional reforms*

INC listed many institutions to be taken into account. To name a few here, these were the Central Vigilance Commission, the Election Commission of India, the Central Bureau of Investigation, the Central Information Commission, and many more. A few other issues were listed under different categories. Such as governance, transparency, and accountability; federalism and center-state relations; and local self-government that dealt with issues such as social audits, anti-discrimination laws, and the Whistle-Blowers Protection Act. Inclusive development with the help of proper power distribution between the center, state, and local government, 'Perspective Planning and New Planning Commission', 'Gender Justice' and Justice to All: 'Religious and Linguistics Minorities'.

Media and Freedom of the Media

INC talked about the Press Council of India Act 1978 amendment. It promised to strengthen the self-regulation system while ensuring journalists' freedom. INC also listed issues such as paid news, fake news, and editorial freedom. Some other points were to:

- Formulate and enforce a code of conduct on reporting in situations of natural disaster, communal conflict, riots, terrorist attacks, and war;
- Pass a law to curb monopolies in the media and cross-ownership of different segments of the media;
- Protection to journalists working in conflict areas or investigating matters of public interest; and
- Revisit the Cinematograph Act, 1927, to restrict the censorship of films.

Jammu and Kashmir, North-Eastern states

From finding an honorable answer to the Jammu and Kashmir issue to restoring the special category status of North-Eastern states, INC voiced many other issues. Most of the issues addressing J&K were related to decreasing force, law and order, and anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures for traders. INC is also insured to launch more projects such as UDAAN, HIMAYAT, and UMMEED to impart training in skills and create economic opportunities for the youth of J&K.

- For the north-eastern state, INC aimed its attention at border security and infiltration-related issues. Under this category, they listed the withdrawal of the Citizenship Amendment Bill and the NRC. Some other issues included in the manifesto were:
- Security of the borders of the NES with Bangladesh, Myanmar, and China; resolve any border issues through dialogue with the neighboring countries
- Resolve the pending inter-state issue and the issue of illegal immigration.
- Ensuring regular import-export border trade, along with a comprehensive review of the policies related to NES.
- Increase the budget outlays for infrastructure and social sector development in the NES and increase the budget for railways, roads, communication, connectivity, and tourism.
- Seminomadic and de-notified tribes: Reservation,

education, and a special census for tribes were promised in this category.

- Water Management Sanitary and hygiene: setting up a Ministry of Water to ensure universal access to drinking water and other water-related issues were listed. Other hygiene-related issues were also addressed.

- The digital right of every citizen: High-quality internet connectivity and regulating the power to shut down the internet were two major issues. There were a few others related to data privacy, net neutrality, free use of open-source software, and safeguards against unlawful or excessive surveillance and monitoring.

- Climate Resilience and Disaster Management: It indexed some points related to the National Disaster Management Act and the National Disaster Management Authority. Expanding disaster cover to wild animals, domestic animals, pets, livestock, and crops

The careful exploration and examination of the manifestos issued by the INC and BJP during the 16th and 17th general elections suggests that parties included every possible issue during both terms. It is also observed that both parties approached the common issues differently.

To summarize, both parties consistently prioritized a few issues. These issues are related to parameters such as national security, including internal security, foreign policies, and the welfare of soldiers. Women's empowerment, child protection, and environment-related issues like forest cover, infrastructure and development, institutional reforms, the Indian economy, science and technology, the healthcare sector, governance, education (from primary to higher), as well as skill education, 'youth-related issues', and 'justice for all' were included by both parties in their manifestos.

Selection of Issues by Political Parties

The selection of other issues in the party manifestos by the parties with a different approach gives an explanation of the pattern of issues for the upcoming general election by these parties. The issues of exclusive interest were addressed under distinct heads while stressing a particular issue. For example, under the parameter 'Culture and Tourism', the BJP included issues related to 'Heritage', whereas INC focused on issues related to 'Arts'. Other key issues for the BJP were interconnected and addressed under many themes to put emphasis on them. For example, 'Child-Protection-Schemes' were repeatedly occurring under the heads such as 'Social-Security', 'Inclusive-Development', and 'Widen the platform'. Similarly, issues related to labor are also called out under these heads. Exclusive issues taken up by the BJP included 'Strong Centre-State Relationship' under the heading 'Strengthen the Framework'. Decentralization and people's participation were discussed with the inclusion of '*Jan-bhagidari*' and 'Public-Private-Partnership-Model'. There

was mention of 'Digital Connectivity' again covering issues such as 'Education', 'Health', and 'Rural Development' through the internet. Heads like 'Widen the Platform' and 'Social Security' talked about 'Welfare for All', covering issues such as malnutrition and under nutrition. The BJP focused on 'zero defect products' and '50 tourist points' under the theme 'Services'. 'Low-Cost Housing Program', dedicated work through pension and healthcare schemes has been discussed under a separate head called 'Labour Force'. Some other heads are related to 'Water Security' and 'Availability and Inclusive Development'.
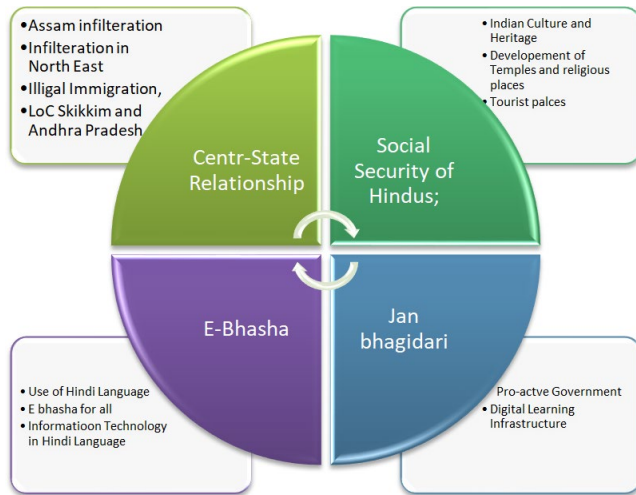
A different approach was found by INC while addressing the issues in its manifestoes. It included headings such as 'Innovation, Information, and Communication' that included direct benefit transfer and the provision of an Aadhar number. For the labor class, INC included the protection of the interests of the labor class, specifically migrant labor, health insurance, and pension cover for labor. Another theme was also dedicated to labor issues like social security, basic welfare housing, education, and employment schemes under the heading 'A future for the hand that builds nation'. Issues related to informal and unorganized sectors were addressed, and they talked about supporting small and medium enterprises and ensuring the minimum wage. INC talked about 'NYAY'—the minimum wage program,' Banking and Financial Reforms', 'Border Security, a low-cost long-term fund for tourism, and NRI's welfare. Very long lists of issues were listed under the headings 'Engaging with citizens and civil society institutions'. Two heads were very distinct in INC; these were: (i) related to media and its freedom which talked about a code of conduct for reporting, laws to curb monopolies of media, and the protection of journalists; (ii) 'Jammu and Kashmir and North Eastern States' promise to ensure the special status of the North East, reservation, and education for seminomadic and de-notified tribes. For Jammu and Kashmir, INC promised decreasing force, anti-discriminatory, and anti-harassment measures.

Therefore, it becomes clear that both parties have gone out to grab all the opportunity to collect votes by emphasizing key issues, namely agrarian distress, unemployment, rural development, poverty, governance, and the universal and mandatory use of Aadhar. These issues are not exclusive to the 2019 LSE; they were also part of the 2014 manifesto. Hence, manifestos didn't turn into a massive agenda book; they remained mere lists of promises to attract the maximum number of voters in the upcoming elections. They remained consistent with limited or minimum changes in the cataloged issues.
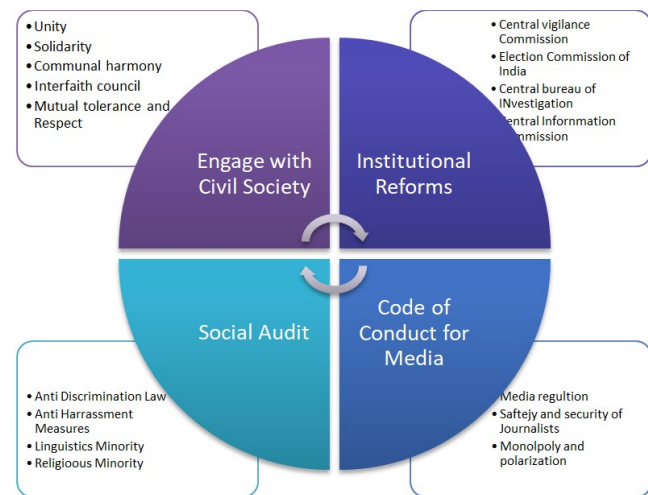
Predicting the Future

The exploration, examination, and selection of explicit issues by the political parties deliver an explanation of what the issues of special focus can be during the course of the next general election in India. The analysis of the finding advocates that the center-state relationship will

(Source: Researchers' illustration of future prediction)

Figure 1: Prediction of Issues to Be Discussed by the BJP in the Manifesto 2024

(Source: Researchers' illustration of future prediction)

Figure 2: Prediction of Issues to Be Discussed by INC in the Manifesto 2024

be one of the central agendas of the BJP while addressing additional issues such as infiltration in the North East and Assam. The BJP would co-opt the agenda of the regional parties, and it would also put in the middle the matter of illegal immigration while having an agenda to resolve the issue of the line of control in Sikkim and Andhra Pradesh.

The BJP will also raise the issue of Kashmiri Pundits by providing a wider context of social security for Hindus living in India in the manifesto for the 2024 general election. Batting on the same grounds of illegal immigration, Kashmiri Pundit, center-state relationship, and issues related to north-eastern Assam and Kashmir, the BJP would confidently address the disputes related to the smooth conduct of the *Amarnath Yatra*, the development of places of worship and spiritual places under the rhetoric of 'development of tourist places' in India, and safeguarding the Indian cultural heritage. Charging the previous issues associated with the idea of a national language, E-Bhasha, the BJP will put emphasis on the usage of Hindi not only in schools, colleges, and skill education but also in the IT-related sectors. I.N.D.I.A. vs. Bharat Jibe will also be given importance. Pro-active governance and Jan-bhaghidari will be the central strategy of the BJP, and it will be done with the help of providing a digital learning infrastructure to the people of India.

The Indian National Congress will focus on communication and civil society engagement. It would bring into focus the Unite India campaign while putting the context of unity, solidarity, and communal harmony. INC would promise to establish an interfaith council to have a positive link between people of different faiths. It would set all the debates in the manifesto based on the issues of mutual tolerance, respect for all religions, and reconciliation.

Setting the issue in the context of decreasing faith among people in the Election Commission of India and other agencies working under the central government, INC will propose institutional reforms of a few key institutions, such as the Central Vigilance Commission, the Election Commission of India, the Central Bureau of Investigation, and the Central Information Commission.

It would also offer and repeat the concept of social audit, along with accentuating the issues linked to religious and linguistic minorities. It would focus on the violence and communal strain that took place and talk about the peaceful existence of all with the help of anti-discrimination laws and anti-harassment measures. INC will surely incorporate the issue of new planning commissions to achieve a balance between different states and regions and the Whistleblowers Protection Act.

Resolving border and pending illegal migration issues will also be an important part of INC's 2024 manifesto. The selection of issues during the 209 general elections reveals that INC will stress issues related to freedom of media, the code of conduct, media regulation, and laws to avoid monopoly and polarization in journalism practice in India. Media ethics, media literacy, freedom of communication, and the protection of journalists will also be stressed in the approaching manifesto.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the analysis and exploration of the manifestos issued in the past decade by both political parties, it can be concluded that both parties will be poles apart, putting their issues of concern in front of the public in the form of manifestos. The BJP will stick to its strict polarization policy of making India a *Hindu Rashra*. It would incorporate all the issues that can help them establish their ideology and make India a Hindu nation. For the same, they would be putting forward the issue of the social security of Hindus and the safeguard of Indian ancient culture, specifically related to

the Indian knowledge system. The BJP will also talk about the art and aesthetics of India and will put pressure on the issue of cultural heritage in India. It is also explored that the BJP will raise the issue of Ram Mandir and other associated temples and mosques in the name of the development of religious and tourist places. The development of all the religious yatras, such as the *Amaranth Yatra and the Char Dham Yatra*, would be kept in focus.

The BJP would enjoy the trust of the people with a connection to Hindu ideology and would ensure *that jan-bhagidari safeguards* the culture and heritage of India. By focusing on the issue of infiltration in Assam, the North East, and Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP will repeatedly talk about the rights of the majority. The issue of illegal immigration will be raised, and that will also be related to the issue of Hindus vs. others. Similarly, a proactive government and the use of Hindi would all ensure that India becomes a Hindu Rashtra in 2024, as per the Manifesto of the BJP.

On the one hand, the BJP would be more vocal about Hindu Rashtra Jibe, and INC will focus on the issue of increasing distrust and discrimination in the public. It would hold the BJP responsible for the entire chaotic scenario. Similarly, it would promise to bring unity and solidarity to society. It would talk about mutual harmony, interfaith council, and mutual tolerance and respect once elected. INC will raise questions about the functioning of ECI, CIC, and CVC while proposing reform measures to ensure justice in society. It would not only talk about social audits but also about media monopolies, media convergence, media cross-holdings, new trends in media, and media regulation to ensure a justifiable reporting environment in the media landscape.

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