

INDIAN POLITICAL MARKETING- A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN DRAFTING PARTY MANIFESTO FOR ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

In the Parliament system of Government, manifestos constitute and represent an important aspect of the democratic electoral politics as statements of a party's ideology, response and policy. Manifestos are "the official statements of intended policy by political parties at the beginning of election campaign." An election manifesto is essentially a list of policies that a political party says it will enact if it is voted into power at a general election. The present study is carried out to examine the imperative role played by both audio-visual and print media in the preparation of party manifesto during elections. With respect to media and party manifesto, the researchers found that frequently highlighted live issues of the society by the media, media's hidden agenda and burning issues commented up by the media, reports and the editorials in the media are mostly find way to the drafting of political manifesto.

Keywords: Media, Political Marketing, Party Manifesto

1. INTRODUCTION

Political marketing is a new terminology in Political Science Literature. In simple, it means the application of marketing tools, techniques and methods in political process. Political marketing is the marketing of ideas and opinions which relate to public or political issues or to specific candidates. It is the penetration of

the political space by marketing. Lees-Marshment (2001) and Henneberg (2004) stated that, political marketing is a marriage of two Social Sciences disciplines - Political Science and Marketing that describe and prescribe political behaviour.

The founders of concept of political marketing argue that there are different functions that constitute to fruitful political marketing. Main functions are Product Function, Cost Function, Distribution Function, News Management Function and Communication Function. As product function theorists view political marketing in the context of a market where there is a product being traded between the politicians and the voters. This product can be the ideology, manifestos or a promise by the political aspirants that they shall improve the livelihoods of the electorate. The product can also be the political image of a politician. The political candidate is advertised to gain positive perception, attitude and approval from the public. For example, in India, the main product function of BJP was to sell Modi Brand and a good governance based on change. The ideas like “Development and Change”, “Sab Ka Vikas” were highlighted as products indicating the political agenda of the political party i.e., BJP. These ideas were successful in attracting the elite class as well as masses of India.

2. PARTY MANIFESTO

A manifesto is a published declaration of the intentions, motives, or views of an individual, group, political party or government. An election manifesto is essentially a list of policies that a political party says it will enact if it is voted into power at a general election. The word “manifesto” itself originates from the Latin word ‘manifestum’, which refers to a list of facts. Before an election, each party will produce a manifesto which will form the basis of its campaign. Manifestos serve a very important function, because they are the main way of telling voters why they should give their vote to a particular political party. A manifesto can be just a simple list of policy ideas, although these days political manifestos tend to be lengthy documents which explain the party’s policies on a wide range of issues in great detail. The key feature of a political manifesto is that it will usually say what the party’s policies are, as well as giving some kind of explanation as to what each policy is trying to achieve and why that would be a good thing, in order to persuade the voter to support it. Manifestos usually cover a wide range of political issues, including the economy, health, education, welfare, jobs, housing, defense, the environment and foreign policy.

As manifestos are designed to try to persuade the reader to vote for a particular party, they tend to repeat certain key ideas and phrases which they want the voters to associate with their campaign. Clearly, the parties decided to emphasize divergent issues in their manifestos. However, it is important to note that manifesto promises are not binding; political parties do not actually have to do any of the things they said they would in their manifesto if they succeed in getting elected, although they have to be careful, because failing to implement certain policies can leave voters feeling betrayed, leading to a negative backlash. In order for a manifesto to be taken seriously, the policies which it contains cannot be impractical or unpopular, or it would fail in its purpose to help the party to attract support.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Political Marketing is a new concept which is being discussed throughout the world, especially in democratic republics where elections are conducted on a regular basis. Globally also, political marketing

gained equal importance. The concept “political marketing” gained much momentum through the broadcasting of discussions, debates, seminars and conferences conducted by different political parties, political analysts, social activists, scholars, academicians and researchers. The present study is carried out to examine the imperative role played by media personnel in the preparation of party manifesto during election. Whether the burning issues commented up by the media has any impact on drafting the party manifesto? Media reports and editorials has any impact on the formulation of party manifesto? These questions call for empirical studies. The present study is undertaken with this end view. The result of the study will be of great use to the politicians, media, voters, government, policy makers, political consultants, academicians, researchers and to the society at large.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The available literature reveals that only a few studies were carried out in the area “Media and Political Marketing”. Most of the research studies which the investigator came across were carried out in western countries. Only very limited research studies have been conducted in India. In Kerala, yet now no such research studies have been undertaken.

Blood, R. (1981) points out in his study “**Unobtrusive Issues in the Agenda Setting Role of Press**” that there may be many issues raised by media and all such issues may be clarified into obtrusive and unobtrusive issues. According to him media sets the agenda for the issues which people consider unobtrusive. The political parties shape their strategies according to their perception about unobtrusive issues.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main aim of the present study is to examine the role and perception of media personnel’s in drafting manifesto during the elections. The study is designed as an empirical one based on survey method. Data have been collected from both secondary and primary sources. Primary data were collected from the sample “Media Personnel” through personal interview method with the help of an interview schedule. The investigator is attempting to find out the perception of media personnel on how far they are able to exert influence in drafting manifesto during elections

The researcher adopted multistage random sampling technique for the collection of data from both Audio- visual and Print Media personnel. For the purpose of collection of data, the researcher selected only those leading dailies whose circulation is more than one lakh as per the records of “Audit Bureau of Circulation”. Accordingly, the researcher selected four print media in Malayalam language whose circulation is above one lakh.

The media personnel from Audio-visual Media were selected from the leading Satellite Malayalam News Channels only. Eight Malayalam news channels were rated as the top news channels in the state of Kerala by “Broadcast Audience Research Council of India” (BARC) and “The News Minute Ratings”. Thus, the researcher in total selected four Print Media and eight Audio-visual Media. The survey was conducted among the Editors, Reporters and Cameramen of selected print and visual media by using a structured interview schedule. The survey was conducted among 84 Reporters, 12 Cameramen and 24 Editors of both print and visual media. Thus, the total sample size consists of 120. For collecting primary data from Media

Personnel, field survey was conducted during the months of March 2018 to December.

6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the important objectives of the study:

1. To study the concept and growth of political marketing in India.
2. To analyse the role and perception of media personnel in drafting manifesto during elections.

7. SCHEDULE FOR MEDIA

PERSONNEL

The schedule for media personnel contained 6 variables related to political marketing with forty-seven statements at five-point Likert Scale (1 = unlikely to 5 = very likely) for measuring the decisive role played by different medias in political campaigning and in deciding the final election result. Editors, Camera Men and Reporters of selected print and visual media were interviewed by distributing the copy of the schedules. Interview schedules were developed by the researcher based on Dr. Arun Kumar's book "Political Marketing in India" and through extensive review of the available literature in India and abroad.

The data collected were examined by the researcher for their completeness, comprehensibility, consistency and reliability. Parametric statistics like Regression Coefficients and one-way ANOVA was used for the comparison of the factors considered between different levels of demographic variables. A level of 0.05 was established a priori for determining statistical significance. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) – a type of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses. All the statistical measures and tests were conducted by using SPSS 20.0, Micro Soft Excel and AMOS.

8. MEDIA AND PARTY MANIFESTO-ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The field survey revealed that majority of the sample media personnel's are below the age of 35. Regarding the gender composition; out of the total respondents 85 per cent were male and the rest were female. The information regarding the educational qualification shows that 45.8 per cent of the respondents are graduates while 33.3 per cent are post graduates and 20.9 per cent fall in the category others. The sample reveals that 70 per cent of the respondents are Reporters while the 10 per cent of the respondents are Cameramen and the rest ie; 20 per cent are Editors.

The researcher has investigated the role of media in drafting the party manifesto for election. The following attributes are used for measuring the impact of media on preparation of party manifesto.

1. Frequently highlighted live issues in public (MPM1)
2. Media's hidden agenda (MPM2)
3. Burning issues commented up by the media (MPM3)
4. Media reports and editorials (MPM4)
5. The reports in media with similar ideology of the party (MPM5)

In order to test, whether the five constructs have significant impact on drafting of party manifesto or not, the following hypothesis were formed. Here the hypothesis is tested using measurement model of CFA. It is exhibited in Table 1

1. **H₀**: Frequently highlighted live issues in public have no impact on party manifesto
H₁: Frequently highlighted live issues in public have a significant impact on party manifesto
2. **H₀**: Media's hidden agenda has no impact on party manifesto
H₁: Media's hidden agenda has a significant impact on party manifesto
3. **H₀**: Burning issues commented up by the media has no impact on party manifesto
H₁: Burning issues commented up by the media has a significant impact on party manifesto
4. **H₀**: Media reports and editorials has no impact on the formulation of party manifesto
H₁: Media reports and editorials has a significant impact on the formulation of party manifesto
5. **H₀**: The reports in media with similar ideology of the party has no impact on party manifesto
H₁: The reports in media with similar ideology of the party has a significant impact on party manifesto

Table 1 shows that all the attributes loaded significantly on the latent constructs. The value of the fit indices indicates a reasonable fit of the measurement model with data.

- 1) **H₀**: MPM1 has no impact on party manifesto
H₁: MPM1 has significant impact on party manifesto

The results exhibited in Table 2 revealed that the regulatory construct MPM1 has significant influence on party manifesto as the standardized direct effect of this construct on party manifesto is 0.544, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4 (p value is significant). H_0 is rejected. So, the hypothesis H_1 is accepted and concludes that 'frequently highlighted live issues of public' (MPM1) is a factor that has significant impact on party manifesto'.

- 2) **H₀**: MPM2 has no impact on party manifesto
H₁: MPM2 has significant impact on party manifesto

The results exhibited in Table 2 revealed that the regulatory construct MPM2 has significant influence on party manifesto as the standardised direct effect of this construct on party manifesto is 0.462, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4 (p value is significant). H_0 is rejected. So the hypothesis H_1 is accepted and concludes that 'Media's hidden agenda (MPM2) has significant impact on party manifesto'.

- 3) **H₀**: MPM3 has no impact on party manifesto
H₁: MPM3 has significant impact on party manifesto

The results exhibited in Table 2 revealed that the regulatory construct MPM3 has significant influence on party manifesto as the standardized direct effect of this construct on party manifesto is 0.562, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4 (p value is significant). H_0 is rejected. So the hypothesis H_1 is accepted and concludes that 'Burning issues commented up by the media (MPM3) has significant impact on party manifesto'.

- 4) **H₀**: MPM4 has no impact on the formulation of party manifesto

H₁: MPM4 has significant impact on media and party manifesto

The results exhibited in Table 2 revealed that the regulatory construct MPM4 has significant influence on party manifesto as the standardised direct effect of this construct on party manifesto is 0.792, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4 (p value is significant). H₀ is rejected. So, the hypothesis H₁ is accepted and concludes that ‘Media reports and editorials (MPM4) has significant impact on party manifesto’.

5) **H₀:** MPM5 has no impact on party manifesto

H₁: MPM5 has significant impact on party manifesto.

The results exhibited in Table 2 revealed that the regulatory construct MPM5 has no significant influence on party manifesto as the standardized direct effect of this construct on party manifesto is -0.073, which is less than the recommended value of 0.4. So the hypothesis H₁ is rejected and concludes that ‘The reports in media with similar ideology of the party (MPM5) have no significant impact on party manifesto’. i.e. H₀ is accepted.

Constructs MPM1 to MPM4 have significant influence on party manifesto while MPM5 has no significant influence on party manifesto.

9. Conclusion

The investigator came across the fact that political parties adopt variety of marketing strategies so as to inspire and motivate the voters to choose their product (candidate/policies/plans). The analysis of the various elections and the overall campaigning makes it clear that the role played by the media is inevitable. Media are utilised not only for capturing the voters’ mind and their support, but also for organising all party workers on a common digital platform.

With respect to media and party manifesto, the researcher found that frequently highlighted live issues of the society, media’s hidden agenda and burning issues commented up by the media, reports in media and the editorials mostly find way to the political manifesto. But reports in media with similar ideology of the party do not have any special influence in the preparation of party manifesto.

Table 1

Model Fit Indices for CFA – Media and Party Manifesto

	χ^2	DF	P	Normed χ^2	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
Media and party manifesto	1.199	3	.753	.400	.996	.980	.982	1.107	1.000	.036	.000

Source: Primary Data

In Table 2 the investigator presented the Regression Coefficients.

Table 2

The Regression Coefficients – Media and Party Manifesto

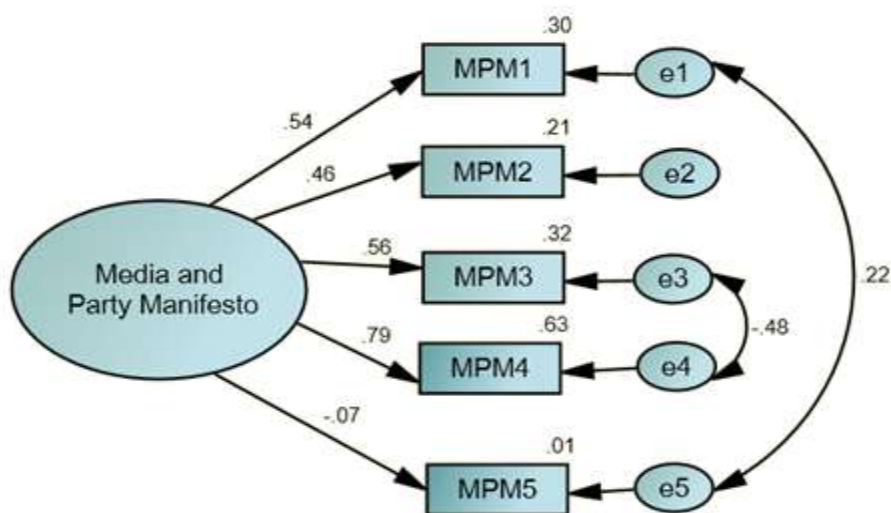
Factors/ Latent Variables (Dependent Variable)	Construct (Independent Variable)	Regression Coefficient	t	P	Variance Explained (%)
Media and party manifesto	MPM1	0.544	6.596	<0.001	29.5
	MPM2	0.462	5.407	<0.001	21.3
	MPM3	0.562	6.877	<0.001	31.5
	MPM4	0.792	11.647	<0.001	62.7
	MPM5	-0.073	-0.791	0.430	0.5

Source: Primary Data

The graphical representation of Media and Party Manifesto is exhibited in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Media and Party Manifesto



10. REFERENCES

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