

MumbaiVotes: Press Release – Mumbai Candidate’s & National Party Agenda/Manifesto Analysis - 2024 Lok Sabha Elections

14th May, 2024: MumbaiVotes.com, part of the Informed Voter Project (hyderabadvotes.org and punevotes.org), a non-profit citizen-researcher driven civil society collective working to foster an informed active citizenry in service of a truly participatory and rigorously accountable democracy in India (represented by Vivek Gilani, Founding Trustee) conducted a Press-Conference to reveal some salient findings from its exhaustive research and evaluation over the past 3 months. These are:

Wealth Growth Analysis:

- *The Annual Growth Rate of wealth of the candidates contesting from 9 Parliamentary Constituencies across the Mumbai-area (Mumbai North, Mumbai North West, Mumbai North East, Mumbai North Central, Mumbai South Central, Mumbai South, Thane, Palghar, and Kalyan) of the 5th phase of elections was analysed.*
- *The highest rate of wealth growth amongst Candidates across 9 Mumbai-area constituencies was observed in the case of Shrikanth Eknath Shinde at 669% over 5 years, followed by sitting MP Rahul Shewale at 619%.*
- *In terms of absolute wealth declared during the current elections, the greatest wealth accumulation is seen in the case of BJP Rajya Sabha MP Piyush Goyal at 110.96 Crore, followed by Shiv Sena (ES) Candidate and sitting MLA from Jogeshwari (East), Ravindra Waikar at 54.51 Crores.*
- *While the average growth rate of wealth for the ‘ordinary Indian’ has been merely 3.5 % (in real-terms) in the last 5 years, the wealth of Candidates belonging to the **ruling NDA alliance has grown 150% i.e. 43 times faster than the wealth of the ‘ordinary Indian’**. By comparison, the wealth of candidates from the I.N.D.I.A alliance in these states has grown at a 62% lower rate than NDA alliance candidates and has grown 16 times the rate of the ‘ordinary Indian’.*
- *Unpacking the parties comprising Major Alliances, we’ve learned that the average wealth growth of candidates across the Eknath-Shinde Faction of Shiv-Sena is the highest amongst all parties contesting in the 9 Mumbai-Area constituencies; a typical SHS (ES) Candidate saw their wealth more than triple (336%) in the last 5 years.*
- *The difference between magnitude of average wealth owned by NDA Candidates in the Mumbai-Area and the I.N.D.I.A alliance was observed to be starkly disparate; the average wealth of **an NDA Candidate is 32.8 Crore while that of a I.N.D.I.A alliance candidate is seen to be 10.9 Crore.***

Criminal Record Analysis:

- *Of the major political parties, in the list of all Candidates with Pending Criminal Charges, Shiv Sena (UBT) scored the most RED FLAGS (44) followed by Shiv Sena (ES) and Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) with 34 RED FLAGS each.*
- *In terms of Serious/Violent Criminal Charge (with possible prison terms of 10 years or greater), as declared in their own Affidavits submitted to the Election Commission of India, VBA tops the list with 20 SERIOUS RED FLAGS.*

Manifesto Analysis:

- *The manifestos of 7 Major Parties (BJP, INC, CPI(M), NCP (SP), SHS (UBT), and All India Trinamool Congress, and CPI) were studied through a double-blinded process of narrative analysis (text coding) by analysts. Analysts, working autonomously, performed the narrative analysis on ‘anonymized’ manifesto text files generated through a ‘sanitizing’ process by a separate team of analysts. In essence, the process produced material for coding wherein the identity of the party was entirely ‘masked’.*
- *The narrative analysis/coding consisted of evaluating each element according to the following parameters: Diagnostic Rigor, Clarity of Scope of the Promise, Clear timeline, Clear budget outlay, Clear implementation plan, Clear commitment-oriented language*
- *The promises were graded using only the above parameters; not on whether the Analysis Panel felt the solutions being proposed were meritorious and beneficial to society i.e. their own political perspectives on the subject were not a factor in evaluation.*
- *Promises that were predicated by diagnostic rigor, defined a clear scope of beneficiaries or stakeholders, included a clear timeline, proposed budgetary expenditure to fulfill the promise, articulated a clear*

implementation plan and was framed using language demonstrating clear commitment and action (as opposed to merely being notional or conveying of intention) scored 'higher' than others.

- When it came to agriculture and farmer welfare, it was the promises laid down by the Trinamool Congress that came up trumps. This manifesto had clear references to the shortcomings of the current government (“agriculture’s share in the union budget almost being halved from 4.4% to 2.5% over the past 4 years”) as well as specific solutions to some prevalent issues in this sector. Another example is doubling investment in agricultural research and development from 0.5% of the existing agricultural GDP to at least 1%, composing a market-diversified yet farmer-friendly import-export policy that reviews the ban on wheat, rice and sugar exports, and immediately withdrawing the many cases registered against farmers during the protests in the capital. On the other hand, the manifesto of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Bal Thackeray) scored low on all 6 hierarchical counts from diagnostic rigour to clear timelines when it came to farmer issues.
- Some of the other sectors in which the manifesto of the Trinamool Congress scored impressively related to health, labour & employment, and law & justice. While the INC as well as BJP also clocked high scores on issues related to health, INC edged out BJP by scoring in the 88th percentile compared to BJP’s 71st percentile. Trinamool for example states that it intends to increase health expenditure to 6% of GDP, while CPI(M) claims to increase it to 5% followed by the INC promising to commit 4% of total expenditure. The BJP manifesto makes no mention of healthcare expenditure in these terms. Instead, it focuses more on achieving a non-specific increase in medical facilities and seats, along with a similarly general increase in access to generic medicines and other healthcare services. Compared to its own manifesto in 2019, the BJP manifesto for 2024 shies away from committing concrete numbers for many of its promises.
- Unemployment and livelihood challenges have been one of the primary concerns across various communities of citizens this election cycle. Trinamool Congress, CPI(M) and BJP were the top performing manifestos in that order with a common acknowledgement of social security schemes for unorganized workers, including gig workers and migrant workers. However, there were some important differences such as a clear emphasis on filling up 10 to 25 lakhs of government job vacancies and providing employment guarantees in the Trinamool and CPI(M) manifestos, while the BJP focused more on supporting the ‘start-up’ ecosystem. The manifesto of the INC and NCP also talk about filling “30 lakh” government vacancies. Incidentally, the INC manifesto promises to institute a “Right to Apprenticeship Act” for a year for all diploma holders under the age of 25.
- The BJP manifesto scored poorly in the area of law and justice, being rated consistently low across major counts, while the INC fared better, securing the second highest score after Trinamool. The INC manifesto has dedicated sections explaining the legal entitlements and protections owed to various citizen groups that they recognize as SC/ST and OBCs, religious and linguistic minorities, persons with disabilities and LGBTQIA+. It also emphasizes the need to ensure press freedom through the Press Council of India Act, and supports the withdrawal of acts tilted towards government censorship such as the Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2023 and Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. While freedom of expression is also mentioned clearly by NCP, there are no specific instances provided, which reduced its scope, and diagnostic rigour.
- On gender issues, especially those related to women, NCP (Sharad Pawar faction) scored high, coming in third after Trinamool and CPI(M) manifestos by “endeavouring” to achieve 50% reservations for women in government jobs and fast tracking women’s reservations in Parliament. This is echoed by the INC manifesto as well, which additionally promises 33% reservations for women in Lok Sabha elections like Trinamool and CPI(M).

About Informed Voter Project (mumbaivotes.com)

Informed Voter Project is a comprehensive transparency and accountability-related Non-Profit Civil Society Organization that helps citizens of India continuously monitor the performance of their Elected Representatives and their deliverance on promises. During elections, we provide detailed candidate profiles and comparative analyses to enable voters to take an informed decision. Our strategy for enabling Informed Voting in India has been applied across National, State and Local elections witnessed in Mumbai and Pune since 2009.

Since the National Elections in 2009 in India, we have regularly published Performance Report Cards of Elected Officials, wherein progress against each promise made by them prior to elections is illuminated upon,

tracked their performance through uninterrupted news-research, and conducted periodic video interviews with MPs, MLA and Municipal Councillors who are asked to explain their performance/non-performance to citizens directly.

Research and analysis is conducted through the work of Research Assistants from Academic Institutions in India through official arrangements with their academic departments, by trained Social Science Researchers. Our academic partners include Mumbai University and Pune University's Journalism and Political Science Departments. The Research & Analysis Methodology has been approved by an expert panel comprising of Dr. Alope Thakore (Founder of Journalism Mentor Foundation and Member, Media Foundation, India) and Dr. Uttara Sahasrabuddhe (Professor, Department of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai). Our institutional partners include (past and present): Association for Democratic Reforms, AGNI, Praja, Jagrut Nagrik Manch, UN Youthopia Progra, and JaagoRe (Janaagraha).

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