

Tiwari, R.K. (2019). *Political Parties, Party Manifestos and Election in India, 1909-2014*. South Asia Edition: Routledge.

The book by R.K Tiwari is a lucidly presented analysis of evolution of electoral system in pre- and post-independence India. It deals with evolution of electoral process and manifestos. It is definitely a major contribution for political scientists and informed readers/researchers who wish to get an insight details about the dynamics of electoral politics and party manifestos in Indian politics. The book studies the electoral Polity in mainly two phases: nation building process in Pre-Independence era (evolution and growth of electoral system) and Post Independent India (Parties and its manifestos- A comparative assessment). The book is broadly divided into four chapters discussing evolution of idea of nation building, constitutional reforms, electoral system, political parties and elections before independence, Lok Sabha elections and a comparative analysis of party manifestos of national parties. The unit of analysis is primarily Election Manifesto. R.K Tiwari in his book has adopted qualitative methodology doing historical comparativist study of manifestos, content analysis and archival study. The party manifestos have been analysed by the content analysis methodology and most of the materials were obtained from secondary sources. The author further goes in archive to trace out how the manifestos have evolved over the period of time for example the size of the manifestos of political parties between 1952 and 1967 varied from 3 to 24 pages, from 1971 and 1984 it went up to 8-48 pages, and thereafter it went up to 79 pages. We see increase in size of manifesto from 1971 and it is largely attributed due to their coverage of large number of issues while also providing a detailed

analysis and corrective action on each of the issues. Tiwari seeks to examine the ideas, concerns and issues which political parties advocate in their manifestos. He mainly covers the national parties like BJP, INC, CPI and CPI(M) in his work. However, he does not discuss the manifestos of small regional parties, regional issues have been ignored and left out by the author. It would have been better if author would have considered and analysed the manifestos of regional parties because the national and state subjects varies, the issues are also different for people when it comes to the state and national election, their voting pattern also changes. Author fails to distinguish between the state issues and national issues and somehow merges the two. In analysing the manifestos, the book does not provide election-wise cataloguing of the party manifestos. The elections for that underwent after independence doesn't find a mention in the book. Tiwari's defining work in the form of *"Political Parties, Party Manifestos and elections in India, 1909-2014"* remains an effective, essential and decent contribution to the field of Indian electoral politics and the study of manifestos. However, I have some of the criticism and my own reservation regarding the way author has approached to this book. The majority of the section is attributed to the portion of Political party's manifestos thereby not doing justice to the title of the book itself. The second point of contestation which I want to make with author is the way by which he has explored and examined the core issues and the stand of parties on dealing with those core issues. It would've been a better comprehensive study had author done the election-wise study; dealing all elections separately. In this book author simply took some of the core socio-economic issues and has

proposed the stand of various parties on the issues. Neither the book deals with the implementation part nor does it examine how far parties were able to achieve to their proposed manifestos. The stand of parties on various issues as discussed in the book is somewhat pretty vague and difficult for reader to go through as the author is not as specific as he should've been. Have core electoral issues remained the same since the time of independence or has it changed is what author should've engaged with in his work but unfortunately this part has also not been dealt with. Third point of disagreement is with the leaving out of regional political parties, their manifestos, their vision and stand on national issues as in the era of coalition government the regional players have much more to say in decision making process thereby, the study of author seems to be limited in his approach. It was also hard to find coherency between the chapters of the book. Nevertheless, this book provides a comprehensive understanding of the electoral polity its evolution and growth, a journey with a nuanced understanding of the different stations of Indian democracy, discussing Constituent assembly debates on constitutional provisions and comparative analysis of election manifestos of national parties. So far in the study of Indian politics, there was very less emphasis on party manifesto and it was a marginalised section, this book will certainly create enthusiasm among the researchers and draw them close to doing comparative research in this domain.

Raushan Thakur

Research Scholar

Department of Political Science

University of Delhi

Email: raushanworld@gmail.com