

Manifesto : Better health care as a 'right' of the citizens

Jaipur: The Congress released its election manifesto for the state, with special focus on the farmers, whose agricultural loans it promises to waive, and on the unemployed youth, the section it offers to pay a monthly allowance of ~3,500.

The party also lists out better health care as a "right" of the citizens and says it will safeguard the journalists with a law for their protection. The party also promises free education to all girls — in what the manifesto notes would be "a first in the state".

Claiming it to be a 'people's manifesto', the party named it as the 'Rajasthan Jan GhoshnaPatra,' saying it has been finalised after going through over two lakh suggestions and opinions from the people, Congress state president Sachin Pilot said.

"What we had said six months ago (allowance for the unemployed), they (the Bharatiya Janata Party) have incorporated it in their manifesto. We have plans for its (the manifesto's) time bound implementation and the party will bring an accountability bill within 30 days," Pilot said, adding that the manifesto was prepared after collecting feedback from the people.

The Congress manifesto also highlights several schemes of the BJP government as being "non functional", and promises to ensure their "effective implementation". The big take-aways include waiving farmers' loans "within 10 days of coming to power", pension to the elderly farmers, 5% reservation to Gujjar, Raika, Gadiyaluhar and Banjara community under the special backward class category, 30% of fair price shops to women, enhanced pensions to the elderly and the deprived sections.

The Congress also promises to scrap minimum education



qualification criteria introduced by the BJP government in Panchayati Raj elections. The 39-page manifesto also promises to increase the old age pension scheme amount from ~500 to ~750, and from ~750 to ~1,000. The party also proposes to exempt agricultural equipment and tractors from the Goods and Services Tax (12% at present), constitute a spice board, a pasture land development board (which also finds mention in the BJP's manifesto) and a directorate of handicraft and handloom. It promises free education to all girls and women, and a new education policy to improve the quality of education in the state. The party also promises to review and open 20,000 schools shut by the BJP government "in the name of rationalisation".

The manifesto mentions creation of seven boards including one for Vipra (Brahmin) and another for Vedic traditions and education as compared to nine by the BJP, which had also proposed a board for Parshuram, revered by a section of Brahmins. Right to health law; free vocational education to especially abled; enhanced pensions to elderly and deprived sections; blood bank

at all district hospitals; efforts to provide 24X7 electricity supply in rural and urban areas; Vipra (brahmin) welfare Board; efforts to implement 14% reservation on economic basis; Tonk, Dungarpur and Banswara railway line; strengthening Rajasthan Housing Board; providing affordable houses to BPL families; Film City scheme; Tourism call center; stadium at tehsil, district and state level; construction youth hostel at district headquarter; in view of the 73rd amendment brought for the development of rural areas, Congress will give maximum powers to each Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Jila Parishad through decentralization of governance. Facility of internet and wi-fi at every gram panchayat will be made and constitution of rural engineering services. Journalist Protection Act; Advocates Protection Act; CCTV at all police stations; work plan to constitute new districts and sub-divisions and tehsil; Accountability Act — right to get redress within 30 days Unemployment allowance to educated youth of Rs 3500 per month, which BJP too has promised of Rs 5000; loan to youth for self employment at easy rates; job opportunity to

youth in government, semi-government and private sector; free travel through roadways to students appearing in competitive exams on showing their entry card. New Industrial Policy for balance development; new mining policy; simplification of GST and proposal to exempt state's traditional products to GST Council; new industries will be free from all taxes and given relaxation in norms for three years — those who are setting up in tribal, mountain and desert areas; Minority welfare: constitution of Self development Council to provide for providing loan at easy rates to women from minority for their skills such as kite making, printing, bandhej, etc. girl students scoring 75% above marks in Class-xii to get ~500 per month assistance. free education to all girls and women at all levels and a new education policy to improve quality of education. 24X7 women helpline center to provide human and police assistance; 30% reservation to women in public distribution outlet allocation; new rehabilitation schemes for physically molested women; compulsory self defense course in primary schools.



Jaipur: Bharatiya Janata Party also targeted farmers, youth, women and Dalits in its 48-page manifesto, promising creation of 50 lakh jobs in the next five years, monthly unemployment allowance of Rs 5,000, loan relief commission in each division and Rs 250 crore rural start-up fund to double farmers' income. The BJP manifesto also deals with various communities. Chief minister Vasundhara Raje promised creation of a board in the name of Parshuram, considered a revered among Brahmins and building hostels for Jain and land for celebrating of the Jain

festival called Chaturmas. She also promised a board for nomadic tribes and at least five new initiatives in name of Bhimrao Ambedkar. "We will also provide money through MGNREGA to grow fodder for cattle in pasture lands," Raje said, adding that a board to development pasture lands will also be set up. She also said additional police check posts to deal with cow smuggling will be set up in Mewat region comprising of Bharatpur and Alwar districts. Releasing the manifesto, union finance minister, Arun Jaitley, said the manifesto was the roadmap for development of

Rajasthan for the next five years while expressing confidence that chief minister Vasundhara Raje will get elected again. Raje said that her government had fulfilled 95% of the promises made in 2013 manifesto and did "unprecedented" work not done by several past Congress governments. Through the manifesto the BJP had tried to deal with the concern raised by farmers and youth, the two big voting groups in the state, which the rival Congress is trying to tap for December 7 polls. The chief minister said cooperative banks will give loans

of Rs one lakh crore to farmers, the government will ensure transparency and strengthening of minimum support price for agriculture produce and farmers' income will be doubled in five years by setting up Rs 250 crore start-up fund. The BJP has promised a law to protect lawyers and will contribute equally in welfare fund for them. State will also appoint legal advisors at district to provide consultation to small and marginal businessmen, the manifesto said. Manifesto promises creation of 13 boards covering various traditional skills and that for extreme backward classes.

Expectation's With New Government

Restoration of Original Boundaries of the Lakes : In last 10-15 years , the boundaries of the lakes have been altered to help land mafia. This has led to extinction of important littoral zone necessary for ecosystem of the lakes and breeding and nesting ground for local and migratory avifauna (birds). The Pichola which was 6.96 square kilometer has been reduced to 4.5 square kilometer. Similarly the Fatehsagar submergence has been reduced from 4.0 square kilometer to 2.5 square kilometer. Reducing the submergence has also led to reduction in area for aqua culture.

This action has resulted in 20 to 40 percent shrinkage of the lakes. The land , which was once declared as lake peta is now outside the lake.. The construction on this portion would destroy the ecological character of the lakes. Therefore , in order to maintain and conserve the Littoral Zone of lakes; the biological processes essential for the survival of lakes; sustaining the avifauna; and the overall Eco system of lakes, there is urgent need to restore the original boundaries of the lakes. Further, many of the small lakes of Udaipur are now not exist. We expect that the political parties would promise to restore the original boundaries and submergence of all lakes of Udaipur.

Safety of Dam Structures of the Lakes : There are many attempts to temper the centuries old dams and embankment walls of Udaipur lakes . Without understanding the profile and inner composition, as well as the present strength and durability of these structures, the governmental agencies are developing beautification projects on these delicate structures . It may lead to a catastrophes. There is need to first ascertain the profile, inner material composition and strength of these centuries old Dams , by all latest technological methods and modeling techniques . The dam safety rules of Government of India be strictly followed and any deviation may immediately be corrected. All tubewells in the safety zones of the lakes be grouted immediately.

Ban on Cutting of Hills : The city of Udaipur prides itself on the large number of lakes and the surrounding ecosystem of hills and valleys which not only provide a aesthetic backdrop to the whole city but also plays a significant role in maintaining the health and hygiene of the lakes. Further, Hills-lake eco-regime is an important constituent in the sustainability of all the water based habitats of the area by way of reinforcing and synergizing the geo-hydrological balance and well as the sub-surface hydrology. Udaipur city is surrounded by layers of beautiful hills and the hills have naturally helped in creating the entire lake system of Udaipur. Any unwarranted disturbance in the naturally delicate balance in the Hill-lake eco-regime is bound to have grave implications not only to the present ecological and environmental situation but also the future prospects of the whole area. That the tourism industry flourishing in and around the city of Udaipur is primarily because of this nature endowed bounty goes without saying. It is utter dismay and surprise that the catchment areas of various lakes and reservoirs in and around the city of Udaipur are being brazenly disturbed, defaced and their natural gradient being obstructed and altered in utter disregard and clear violation. There is rampant illegal construction even on the steep ascends of the hills. In the Urban agglomeration limit of Udaipur, various hotels, resorts, big residential complexes and farm houses are being constructed while cutting, mutilating and defacing the hills. (e.g.—The cruel defacing of many hills is still continuing on the golf course, in the immediate catchment of Fatehsagar Lake and at many more places in the drainage basin of Udaipur Lakes)

Restoring Ahar as River : The Ahar river is great heritage of the city. But, all attempts have been done to officially convert designate it as Nala. There is need to improve and conserve the catchment area of the Ahar ; and extensive soil and water conservation measures are to be adopted so as to ensure good recharge in the catchment area . This would ensure some flow in the Ahar river.

We believe that restoration of original boundaries of all lakes of Udaipur; strict ban on cutting and defacement of hills surrounding Udaipur ; and restoration of Ahar as River would become the priority in the manifestos of political parties.

- Dr. Anil Mehta



Colgate & Seva Mandir launch Women Empowerment Program



Udaipur: Colgate Palmolive (India) Limited, in partnership with the Udaipur-based NGO, SevaMandir, launched a Women Empowerment Program in Alsigarh village recently.

As a part of this initiative, Colgate & SevaMandir will be working towards women empowerment and their economic development through floriculture and backyard poultry, while also supporting the overall water augmentation in 9 tribal villages of Alsigarh. The program will be benefiting more than 3500 people.

Inaugurating the program at an anicut in Alsigarh, Mr. Issam Bacchalani, Managing Director, Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited, said, "At Colgate, we believe in serving communities where we live and work. Women empowerment is a cause we wholeheartedly support and champion. Along with our NGO partner SevaMandir, we have been working on the social

and economic upliftment of women in the region, and shall continue to do so, as we believe that everyone deserves a future to smile about." Mr. Ronak Shah, Chief Executive, SevaMandir, said, "Women's Empowerment project implemented with Colgate's support has opened new opportunities for women, who can build livelihoods in floriculture and backyard poultry. Program is also supported with water augmentation through construction and renovation of structures to enhance water availability to communities. This is an important milestone in our longstanding partnership with Colgate and will help alleviate rural poverty in Udaipur region." Also present at the occasion were the senior leadership team from Colgate, along with members from SevaMandir including Sh. Ajay Mehta - Board Member, representatives from the Panchayat and several other members from the community.

Backyard poultry and floriculture know-how can offer income enhancements for women and give them control of their finances. The Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have provided them with a platform to encourage in them a habit of regular savings which creates an overall positive impact in the society. The feasibility assessment for the program in this region, which began earlier this year revealed that women have an average literacy rate of 34%, and 76% women have never attended school. Most of these women are unskilled and end up with low-paying jobs, and loans from local money lenders, who often charge an interest rate as high as 120%. The Sevamandir team has so far created 13 SHGs with a total of 250 women members and efforts are being made to train beneficiaries through technical trainings and regular meetings. The backyard poultry program so far has supported beneficiaries with the provision of poultry birds, cage making, vaccinations and floriculture has been supported by giving seedlings of rose and marigold flowers and ensuring, field trainings for the women. Additionally, the renovation of 9 wells, 1 anicut, and the recharge of 21 wells has been accomplished, along with the construction of 1 check dam, 5 water tanks and 10 drip irrigation systems that is ongoing. This will give access to water throughout the year for the communities.

Dr. P.C. Jain: Expectation from newly elected MLA

I expect from the newly elected MLA first ensure that they have rooftop rainwater harvesting in their own houses , borewell or nearby hand pump from their own house to set example. they should also ensure that none of the well , or bawadi in his area will remain without recharge and reuse in his tenure. Local Nagar Parishad or Nagar palika should legally take action for all those people who are not doing any kind of rainwater harvesting and their water and electric supply should be cut off after giving them due time for this purpose including the MLA him self and the members of local self government like panchayat and Nagar palika. No wall to wall road should be constructed and footpath should be left for the person to walk. I expect from my MLA that he should not be an addict of either alcohol, tobacco or any substance so that he can give an example to the people of his area. There are no government de a addiction centre which should be installed soon. Those qualified doctors doing dead-diction should be given free Medicine from government.

Solar cooker and Solar geyser and solar power plants should be promoted and subsidy should be given to all those who are using solar energy. I have been doing the awareness programme on rooftop rainwater harvesting, addiction and solar energy utilisation since last 20 years but only less than 1% people are doing actual groundwater even after my so many years of constant awareness programs. None of the MLA or MP ever replied to my 6000 mails and letters written to them for the above said purposes. I hope the new MLA MPS should quickly reply and act on all the three subjects.

More than 1200 bore Wells, tube Wells hand pumps , defunct Wells and bawadies are recharged under my supervision. More than 600 people have been de addicted for all kinds of addiction including alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. More than hundred people are using the solar power in the form of solar cooker and Solar geyser and power station. I have been awarded by Indian Medical association for the national award for social services donr by an individual . Dalmia Award, Bhaskar award, Rotary award and many awards given to me in these years.