

## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL MANIFESTOS IN SRI LANKA’S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: FROM CHANDRIKA KUMARATUNGA TO GOTABAYA RAJAPAKSA 1994-2019

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Political manifestos are key elements in modern democratic countries and they give shapes to their guidelines and visions of political parties and candidates. Not only Sri Lanka but also throughout the world this concept is practiced less or more. Correspondingly in Sri Lanka, since the establishment of the executive presidency, presidential candidates have consistently offered platforms to communicate their governance priorities and process of directions. However, a significant disparity often exists between the promises articulated in these documents and their actual implementation. This study investigates into the presidential manifestos from Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga (1994) to Gotabaya Rajapaksa (2019), analyzing their content, periodic themes, and the extent to which they were translated into policy action. Key areas of focus include economic development, governance reforms, national reconciliation, education, and social welfare. The study employs a qualitative content analysis approach, focusing on the presidential manifestos of Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga (1994, 1999), Mahinda Rajapaksa (2005, 2010), Maithripala Sirisena (2015), and Gotabaya Rajapaksa (2019). The manifestos are analyzed to identify key themes and promises in areas such as economic development, governance reforms, national reconciliation, education, and social welfare. Notable milestones in Sri Lanka’s presidential manifesto history include: 1. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga focused on peacebuilding, economic reforms, and poverty alleviation. Her promise to resolve the ethnic conflict through devolution marked a significant shift in political discourse. Next Mahinda Rajapaksa promoted the “Mahinda Chintana,” which emphasized infrastructure development, national security, and post-war reconstruction then Maithripala Sirisena manifesto prioritized governance reforms, abolishing the executive presidency, and fighting corruption. Then Gotabaya Rajapaksa focused on economic development, national security, and modernizing infrastructure under the “Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour.”

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