

Reetika Khera: **Abstract**

An interesting fact of the 2014 elections was that the party that was swept to power released its manifesto on 6 April 2014, the day before voting began on 7 April 2014. Social policy was scarcely mentioned – on food security, it only promises to implement an act that has already been passed while reiterating their commitment to universal food security; for children reference is made to “effective implementation” of the right to education act 2010; also a promise to “revitalize the mid-day meals scheme in terms of management and delivery”. For health sector, the promise is to reduce out of pocket expenditure with the help of state governments (p. 25). Perhaps the only concrete promise related to social policy in the 52-page document, with a clearly specified deadline is the promise of a pucca house with basic amenities (water, electricity, toilets etc) for everyone by 2022.

The manifesto itself should have raised some apprehensions of what was to follow. In my presentation, I will dwell upon the National Food Security Act (NFSA), National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and Unique Identification (UID). Though the party did not want new legislation to create new entitlements, it promised to ensure that “the right to food does not remain an act on paper or a political rhetoric” and to initiate community kitchens through voluntary organizations. The prime minister had attacked the UID project saying how the Supreme Court had to step in to stall it. The manifesto was silent on NREGA, whereas the government has been anything but. Flip-flops, paralysis and a lack of coherence have been the defining feature in all three.