

Campaign on People's Manifesto

In the year 2008, the KSS along with 38 other organizations and CECOEDECON came together to start a big campaign called the 'People's Manifesto Campaign'. The objective was to democratically draft an agenda, to be called the 'People's Manifesto' (Jan Ghoshna Patra), which essentially reflected demands and needs of the people and stakeholders, to be included in election manifesto of contesting parties.

The year 2013 was significant in this campaign because the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh had the state assembly elections. This provided the people and the civil society a good opportunity to come forward with issues that are plaguing the society along with solutions that the people think are best for them. Sensitization of politicians and inclusion of people to make it participatory democracy is a challenge but can be overcome through campaigns like this. This process of people's manifesto also provides accountability and responsibility of political parties. To redeem the success achieved during the previous election year, this year too CECOEDECON organized consultations and meetings to gather people's voice and influence the election manifesto of political parties. It was accepted that sustainable development and inclusion should be the primary vision of party's manifesto and also the people's manifesto.

The first series of consultations started in Rajasthan in July in 5 places - Tonk, Kota, Jhunjhunu, Jaisalmer and Bikaner. The major issues that came to fore were in areas of agriculture, food security, health, education, women and child development and panchayatiraj. It was also acknowledged that monitoring of policies is extremely important and so is to develop a proper mechanism to do so. Additionally, the manifesto envisions all these demands under the overarching goal of sustainable development.

The demands collected from these local consultations were then consolidated for a state level consultation that was held in Jaipur on 1st August 2013. This consultation was the culmination of all four regional consultations. Prof. V.S. Vyas (Vice Chairman, State Planning Board, Jaipur) delivered keynote address. He appreciated this effort because it brings the issues from the grassroots level to higher level bodies. Participants from various organizations and institutions across Rajasthan discussed on the issues related to Agriculture, Health, Education, Panchayatiraj, Women and child development and good governance.

After the consultations at various levels, a committee was formed for the preparation of the final draft of the people's manifesto.

And after the final approval of this committee, the consolidated charter of demands was submitted to the all political parties and their manifesto committees. They assured to include the demands of people's manifesto in their political manifesto.

Outcome

After a rigorous campaign on peoples manifesto finally 40 demands of peoples manifesto were included in the election manifesto of both the leading parties (Congress and BJP). It's

a big success of civil society organizations and CBOs in making political parties sensitive about their accountability for the people of the state.

The opposition Party (at the time) BJP announced that this time they will also organize various meetings with NGOs, farmers, PRI members and other organizations before finalize their election manifesto. It shows the impact of the people's manifesto that the political parties are also adopting the same process.

Both print and electronic media gave proper space to this campaign and it was very useful in generating awareness among the people.