

People's Manifesto

Kisan Sewa Samiti (KSSM)

CECODECON, along with its partner organizations and the Kisan Sewa Samiti (KSS, farmers' association), initiated the People's Manifesto Campaign in Rajasthan this year, being the election year. Recently, the two major political parties in Rajasthan, Congress and the BJP, released their election manifestos. The party manifestoes tell a success story for this movement and include many demands that were listed in the People's Manifesto. For Rajasthan, the largest Indian state, a desert area and having a majority rural population engaged in agriculture, limiting resources, changing climate, failing government policies and other social evils pose serious threat to development.

CECODECON started this innovative campaign in the year 2008 with the aim of sensitizing politicians and making democracy a truly people's participatory process. The campaign encouraged and ensured inclusiveness of people in development agenda and activities to strengthen democracy and guaranteed that the needs of the people are addressed by the policies and activities of the government. This becomes all the more important as the world and nations move forward towards achieving the MDGs and establish a sustainable development agenda.

In the year 2008, 22 demands from the People's Manifesto were acknowledged and endorsed by political parties. This year, in 2013, the Congress party manifesto contains 29 demands derived from our People's Manifesto. Similarly, BJP included 19 demands in its manifesto based on what the people had demanded. Some of the major areas and issues that received attention from the aforementioned political parties are organic farming, livestock management, crop insurance, agriculture best practices, landless farmers, wind and solar energy, minimum support price, clean drinking water supply, water conservation and management, education, community health, malnutrition, etc.

Some important demands included by the incumbent Congress party in their manifesto include – promoting agriculture and subsidies for organic farming; developing a program for preservation of pasture lands; improving food grain warehousing capacity; effective implementation of the Food Security Bill by establishing proper means of distribution; land allotment to landless farmers; encouraging solar and wind energy production and consumption in villages; introducing schemes for water resources management and water conservation in the state; establishing a 'Dedicated Monitoring Cell' at Panchayat level for monitoring of Right to Education; improving health centers in rural areas; and effective steps against prenatal sex determination and female feticide under the PCPNDT 1994.

The BJP's election manifesto include the following demands from the People's Manifesto – establishing organic farming directorate and pasture land development board in the

state; making efforts to amend the NREGA to include livestock management and activities related to it; new policy for crop insurance scheme after rigorous analysis; developing a mechanism for procurement at MSP; increasing employment opportunities in agriculture sector; clean drinking water supply in villages; reducing school drop out rate and ensuring cent percent attendance in primary schools; developing schemes to stop female feticide; establishing a new mission to fight against malnutrition; and implementing the mandate of gender budgeting.

Consultations on people's manifesto in Madhya Pradesh

After successful campaign in Rajasthan, Cechoedcon and its partner organizations also initiated the Campaign on people's manifesto in Madhya Pradesh. We organized four regional meetings in Tikamgarh(10th sept 2013), Harda (17th sept 2013), Badwani (18th sept 2013)and Ratlam (26th sept 2013).

In all four regional meetings people from academia, farmer organizations, CSOs, CBOs, PRIs, political parties actively participated and identified regional issues related to agriculture, education, health, Dalits, Panchayatiraj and Woman & child development. The major demand which emerged in all regional meetings was to end malnutrition from Madhya Pradesh.

The objective of this campaign is to make the political parties accountable and sensitive towards people's participation in the process of development. The consolidated charter of demands was submitted to the all political parties to include these demands in their respective manifesto.

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

Outcome

After consolidation of the issues identified in the regional meetings, a draft of demands have been prepared and submitted to the political parties at state level. All major political parties assured that they will include these demands in their respective manifestoes and act accordingly.