

"Elections are held to delude the populace into believing that they are participating in government"

-Lieberman, Gerald F.

# STUDENTS' MANIFESTO

## KARNATAKA STATE ELECTIONS

### May 2013



**"Elections are won by men and women chiefly because most people vote against somebody rather than for somebody." - Adams, Franklin P**

**The election is not very far off when a candidate can recognize you across the street."**

**-Hubbard, Kin**

**"The only thing we learn from new elections is we learned nothing from the old."**

**- Proverb, American**

**"Football strategy does not originate in a scrimmage: it is useless to expect solutions in a political campaign." - Lippmann, Walter**

**"The universe is not rich enough to buy the vote of an honest man"**

**-St. Gregory the Great**

**MANIFESTO OF THE STUDENTS'  
FOR  
KARNATAKA STATE ELECTIONS: May 2013**

**W**

e, the students of different colleges of Bangalore, urban and rural, met for a full day on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and several times later in groups to discuss on the socio-economic and political situation of Karnataka in view of the forthcoming elections. Our desire is to make a difference to the politics of the state by actively participating in the coming elections of the state. We critically viewed the last five years of rule of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the light of the Preamble of the Constitution that promised equality, fraternity and justice to all citizens. Though the Party came to power with a promise of making a difference, the party has aggressively attacked the secular, socialist and democratic constitution of the land, making citizens insecure and the poor helpless increasing the gap between the rich and the poor.

**CORRUPTION, COMMUNALISM AND COMMERCIALIZATION**

Right at the start of formation of the government, the party resorted to “Operation Kamal” by buying legislators. The communal face of the party was exposed with violent church attacks in Dakshina Kannada and other places and the enactment of the anti-terrorist law to target innocent young people from the minority community. The corporate corruption of the party was more than evident with the party’s nexus with the Reddy Brothers of Bellary who looted the precious natural resources of the state. Various policies were framed to further the cause of multinational and transnational corporations. A government that was to improve the lot of the poor did nothing for the eradication of poverty and the welfare of the poor. Instead they looted public money and accumulated wealth to satisfy their unending greed. Several legislators were involved in land grab and have been indicted by the Lokayukta. A few others have

**Government spent Rs 8 cr to buy cars, Rs 9 cr on allowances**

Since the BJP came to power in the state in May, 2008, chairmen of various boards and corporations have claimed Rs 9 crore as travelling allowance and dearness allowance and ministers have spent Rs 8 crore to purchase new cars. An RTI query showed that all this money came from the state exchequer. The BJP government in Karnataka purchased 59 new cars at a cost Rs 7.62 crore to the state exchequer when B S Yeddyurappa and D V Sadananda Gowda were chief ministers — from May 30, 2008 to July 10, 2012. Interestingly, when B S Yeddyurappa was the CM, the state government had used more than 72 cars, including a bullet proof Tata Safari which was purchased during his tenure in 2009. C C Patil used three new cars in three years as women and child development minister and parliamentary secretary to Yeddyurappa. He quit the minister’s post for allegedly watching porn in the assembly. Those who have used two new cars are law minister S Suresh Kumar, Kannada and culture minister Govind Karjol, science and technology minister Anand Asnotikar, primary and secondary education minister Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri, municipal administration minister Balchandra Jarkiholi, PWD minister C M Udasi, excise minister MP Renukacharya and former cooperation minister Laxman Savadi — he resigned after TV cameras caught him watching a porn clip in the assembly. MLAs and former MLAs appointed as chairmen to various boards and corporations have claimed whopping sums as their travel allowance and dearness allowance. Former MLA Ashwath, who is the present chairman of Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation, has so far claimed Rs 84 lakh since he assumed office in 2010. Ashwath’s predecessor H Halappa, who resigned as food and civil supplies minister after being accused of rape, claimed Rs 9.34 lakh. Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited chairman Shivananda Naik has claimed 84.13 lakh as honorary salary, fuel bills, traveling allowance and house rent allowances, since he became chairman in 2009. Karnataka Housing Board chairman G T Devegowda has claimed Rs 69 lakh since July 1, 2008, Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation chairman Lalitha Rani, Rs 51 lakh; Karnataka Sheep and Wool Development Board chairman Bhojraj Karudi, Rs 40 lakh; Handloom Development Board chairman M D Laxminarayan, Rs 38 lakh; Mysore Paper Mills chairman Arag Gyanendra, Rs 29 lakh; Temperance Board chairman Sachidanand Hegde, Rs 26 lakh; Mangalore MLA and Industries Development Board chairman N Yogish Bhat claimed Rs 24 lakh while Forest Industries Board chairman Shankargowda Patil claimed Rs 20 lakh; Mysore Electrical Industries chairman G N Nanjundawamy, Rs 38 lakh till March 12, 2009 – his predecessor T Gurusiddegowda claimed Rs 25 lakh since November 25, 2009. ( Bangalore Mirror, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2013)

been jailed. Practically, every day of the last five years, we have had stories of scams, scandals and corruption. More than anything else it was a moral collapse of governance in the state.

## UNSTABLE GOVERNMENT

In spite of “Operation Kamal”, the government remained unstable due to internal wrangling among different fractions of castes and individuals. With corruption charges against him Sri. B S Yeddyurappa had to be replaced after two years in Office. While the caste

### Political Instability & Economy

Political instability has been one of the main reasons why business sentiment has taken a beating in Karnataka. But with a new Chief Minister in place the second replacement following Yedyurappa's infamous exit post the illegal mining scam, the question is are things going to change for the better? All eyes are now on Karnataka's new CM Jagadish Shettar. But considering this is the third change of guard the state has seen in the last one year alone, companies doing business in Karnataka are worried. This political instability could disturb the economic climate in the state. Moreover with the state Economic Survey for 2011-12 reporting a near 50% drop in the industrial growth from 6.1% in the previous year to 3.6%, the industry feels that the state government should address these concerns immediately. [http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/cnbc-tv18-comments/political-instability-sours-business-sentimentkarnataka\\_731744.html](http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/cnbc-tv18-comments/political-instability-sours-business-sentimentkarnataka_731744.html))

group was unhappy with the replacement, Yeddiyurappa chose Sri. Sadananda Gowda, a personal loyalist and a member of the Vokkaliga community to replace him with an intention of moving ahead with his agenda. When that choice did not suit the taste of Yeddyurappa, Sri Jagadish Shettar, another Lingayat leader was brought in. With Sri Yeddiyurappa leaving the party and starting his own, the party could not even expel him. With constant shifts in the allocation of Ministers, bureaucrats and police, there was hardly any governance in the state. Various affiliates of the party added to the chaos by choosing to exercise the hidden agenda and ideology of the party in power by violating the rights of citizens. Development has taken a back seat.

## STATUS OF THE OPPOSITION

The Opposition, both the Congress Party and the Janata Dal(S), remained as mute spectators and silently watched when the churches were attacked, women's self-respect was harmed, minorities were assaulted, Dalits were humiliated and women were targeted. There was no articulate opposition by the Opposition parties for the imposition of dress code, restrictions on the rights of women, curtailment of the rights for free expression, violation on the right to food of communities, attack on the media and the secular fabric of the state. The victims had no one in politics to take up their cause and the Opposition either connived or decided to remain silent instead of standing up and fight an ideological battle.

## ATTACKS ON THE YOUNG

What angered us the most was the attack on college going boys and girls and the encouragement the affiliates of the Sangh Parivar received for their anti-social activities. The celebration of “Valentine's day” was banned. Young boys and girls were not allowed to move together in public places even as friends. To divide society on communal lines, boys and girls of one religious community were not even allowed to socialize with girls and boys of another religious community. If boys and girls were found celebrating or socializing, they were physically harmed. The two incidents in Mangalore – of the attacks on the pub and the more recent one on the

### Moral Policing of the Young

“Around 40 goons of the ‘Sri Ram Sene’ entered a pub, assaulted people there, dragged women by the hair, molesting them and lifting up their blouses and skirts. They claimed to be righteous defenders of ‘Indian morality,’ incensed by ‘women boozing’ and ‘pub culture.’ Since these scenes came to people's notice through national TV, there was widespread outrage, and after a delay of many days, finally, some of the perpetrators were arrested. The Chief of the Sri Ram Sene PV Muthalik, is yet to be booked for masterminding this assault – though he has been taken into custody on some other charges. The ruling BJP and even the Sangh Parivar (RSS) has tried to distance itself from the Sri Ram Sene. Today, there are many attempts to turn the story upside down. The perpetrators are being painted as ‘rescuers.’ The targets of the assault – the women – are being projected as the villains. Their crime? They were spreading ‘pub culture,’ says CM Yeddyurappa, and ‘pub culture,’ ‘boozing’ etc are ‘against Indian culture.’ The Chief Minister is echoing the words of Muthalik, the leader of the outfit that attacked women. The ‘seer’ of the Udupi Pejawar math has also tacitly encouraged the attack, saying that if women provoke religious sensitivities by visiting pubs, it is natural for “everybody to protest.” Is the pub incident a sudden one that happened because innocent men were ‘provoked’ by ‘semi nude dancing’ and ‘boozing’? Have saffron Sangh Parivar outfits never attacked women before? Let us recollect some facts about events in Karnataka: On December 12, 2008, a college bus, on an official trip from Mangalore to Mysore, was stoned by the Bajrang Dal, an outfit of the sangh Parivar, a sister organization of the BJP that rules the state. Several students were injured. The Bajrang Dal defended the attack, saying that allowing Hindu girls to travel with fellow students, especially boys, who were Muslim or Christian, was ‘against Indian culture’. (See *The Hindu*, Dec 12, 2008)

Between July and September 2008, there were at least ten incidents recorded with the district police – of attacks on young people in Dakshina Kannada district. The Bajrang Dal claimed responsibility for seven of these incidents – which included assaults on a young woman who visited a friend (another young woman) from another community; on a group of friends including a Hindu girl with her Hindu and Muslim male friends at a hotel in Mangalore; a similar group of young friends who were “laughing and talking loudly in a public place”; a young woman with her Muslim fiancé travelling in a bus; a young Hindu man who brought medicines for his Muslim friend who had been suffering from malaria; Muslim school boys carrying school bags of their classmates who were Hindu girls etc... According to the Bajrang Dal, socializing between communities was an “immoral act.” **The Bajrang Dal head of Dakshina Kannada district, Sudarshan Moodabidri, said “Sometimes it becomes necessary to use force. Fear of such action should deter such misadventures. Girls reform themselves once they are thrashed and humiliated in public, but boys are tougher to control.”** (See *The Hindu*, Sep 07, 2008)

Indian women have won their rights and freedoms – to education, to choose partners of their choice; against child marriage; against being burnt for sati; to equality in the workplace – through hard struggle: a struggle they have to fight daily. We will not surrender these rights to the diktats of the Sanghi terrorists, the saffron Taliban! Let us raise our voice loud and clear against the BJP regime in Karnataka and all other self-appointed custodians of ‘morality.’ Let us say – the only morality we uphold is one which respects women’s unfettered freedom, and rights to decide their own education, jobs, sexual preferences and partners, and lifestyle; on which abhors any attempts to poison the relationships between communities. (Rati Rao, President, [rachelchitra.wordpress.com/tag/sangh-parivar-outfits/](http://rachelchitra.wordpress.com/tag/sangh-parivar-outfits/))

birthday party where even women were not spared physical harm are still alive in the minds and memories of the people of the state. The North East students were made to feel insecure and thousands had to flee the city for a few weeks.

## LACK OF DIALOGUE

Instead of amicably settling issues, everything was politicized. The Cauveri dispute is used to divide people linguistically. The garbage issue that is affecting the health of the people has yet to find a solution due to vested interests. The government remained totally unconcerned about farmers’ suicides. The saffronisation of the educational system was imposed to create hostility among different cultural communities. These developments in the state have deeply disturbed citizens. The party showed absolutely no concern to the plight of the poor. When the farmers were in distress and the northern parts of the state were in famine, the Ministers were on a foreign tour with tax payers’ money that could have been effectively used for helping the debt-driven farmers and the famine affected peasants. The Pourakarmikars were not offered a regular wage in spite of several agitations. The poor were displaced by allowing corporate houses to acquire land. While a ray of hope for farmers was offered by a separate budget and children with midday meals, it was a dismal government where the ordinary people suffered the most. While the corporations were allowed to loot, there was no concern and compassion to the poor and the deprived.

We as Students and first time voters do not want this situation to carry on. As concerned individuals and as part of the student community we would like every political party to assure citizens in their party manifesto the following if they desire to gain support from the young and the not-so-young.

## EDUCATIONAL SPHERE

More than any other sector, education affects us the most. We would like all the parties to assure to all the students the following:

- Improve the quality of education in government and aided schools and colleges by a commitment to improve the infrastructure by providing labs, computers, libraries, playgrounds, sanitation and health facilities and by bringing in greater accountability among the teachers who teach. All vacancies in all institutions, state or aided, have to be filled on a priority basis.

### Saffronise Schools

Karnataka BJP president K S Eshwarappa stirred up a hornet's nest, advising education minister Visvesvara Hegde Kageri to saffronise schools. Eshwarappa said: "Children's books should have a lot of thoughts on religion and culture. It is essential to preserve religion and culture. There is an allegation of saffronization. I advise the education minister to continue saffronisation in Karnataka's 70,000 schools. I wish him good luck in this." (Times of India, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012)

Education is the future of the state. A quality education for all would enhance the quality of life of citizens in a decade or two.

- Fees in private colleges should be regulated and educational institutions should not be allowed to commercialize education.

In providing aid, no distinction should be made between the aided and unaided courses. Education is a public good. A public good should be fully funded and regulated by the state without curbing innovativeness.

- Educational corruption is one of the highest in the state. At the administrative level stringent action should be initiated on officials who take bribes for approval of appointment of teaching and administrative staff in schools and colleges. While teachers should not be appointed on considerations of caste and community, all appointments should be based on reservation and merit. The menace of donations and capitation fees should be put an end. Vice-chancellors, Registrars and faculty members have failed to uphold professional ethics and have become victims of politics as a result of unethical norms in their appointments. In the changing global situation, promotion of English as a language for communication and employment is necessary. All efforts have to be made especially in state schools to promote English while giving equal importance to Kannada, the cultural and administrative language of the people of the state.
- To improve government schools, the state should enact a law to make it mandatory to send the children of all state officials and politicians to government schools.
- Students from poorer backgrounds should be provided with life skills, communication skills and encouraged in sports, games, crafts and art.
- All poor children belonging to “*Below Poverty Line*” families should be provided transportation to schools and colleges. The budgetary allocation to education has to be raised to 6% of the budget.
- Attempts should be made to reduce the present drop-out rates especially in rural schools. The enrolled students could even be paid a stipend so that the parents do not lose out the income children would have brought if they were not in schools.
- The state should go all out to appoint counselors, to establish e-cells, start vocational courses in every district of the state to make the young employable and provide social awareness programs in all schools and colleges.
- Private universities need to be regulated. Bodies without any educational credentials determined to make use of education for business should not be allowed to start Universities.
- A Bill should be introduced to stop privatization of education and to make education compulsory till the age of 18 years
- A body of experts and competent persons who are committed to the ideals of the Constitution should be set up to prevent saffronisation of text books and to make education secular and rational.

## CULTURAL SPHERE

The slogan of one people, one language, one religion and one culture is against the constitutional norms of pluralism and diversity. Every effort should be made not to mix religion with politics. We would like all parties to include in their manifestos the following:

- Commitment to abolish the Cow Slaughter Bill since it goes against the right to food of majority of the people of the state – the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, the Other Backward Classes and the Minorities. No group should be allowed to dictate the food habits of other communities.
- Withdrawal of anti-terrorism bill that has been passed to terrorise members of the minority community. We believe there are enough of ordinary laws to handle all cases of terror without resorting to such draconian laws.

### Vigilante Groups

An act of moral policing in Puttur in Dakshina Kannada district brought Hindu and Muslim vigilante groups face to face on March 17 leading to a communal flare-up. Communal violence rocked Bhatkal, and Mundagod in Uttara Kannada district and Kaup in Udupi district after elections to the Lok Sabha were announced. The region witnessed a series of attacks on churches since September 2008 in protest against alleged conversions by evangelical groups. There is now a heightened sense of alienation among Christians, who were earlier not targeted by communal forces. Hatred based on religion is not limited to organised groups of fundamentalists. It has spread across the social canvas and enveloped large sections of the police, bureaucracy and media. It is not difficult to find voters on the street who say religion will be a factor while voting. Everyone seems to have a story about friends breaking up because of religion. The same evening when over one lakh frenzied people turned up for the Hindu Samajothsava on March 15 at Mangalore, communal violence flared at Kaup in Udupi district, landing many in hospital. A Hindu youth among a group of cricketers had to show his sacred thread and his pierced ears to save his life from a group returning from the Samajothsava. (Hindu, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2009)

- Abolish the practice of Made Snana, Ajlu (where lower caste people are compelled to eat nail and hair clippings of the higher caste people) and other social evils in the name of religion.

- Enact a law to ban all donations and assistance for the conduct of religious rituals and religious activities. The state should not patronize any religion or heads of any religious mutts. All poojas in the premises of Vidhana Soudha should be banned and all religious pictures and statues of gods and goddesses should be removed in all government establishments to maintain the secular character of the institutions of the state.
- Karnataka is a plural state. All parties should assure voters that they would respect the culture of all communities with a promise to make all communities safe and secure in the state.
- Stringent actions should be initiated on police personnel who act on the orders of the politicians in cases of communalism and corruption or in targeting communities and spreading or inculcating venom.
- A law should be enacted to put an end to “home grown terror” groups and their activities that have been creating division in society

## HEALTH CARE

The issues of health have been much neglected in the state. With the closure of many primary health care centers, the poor are left to look after themselves. They are unable to go into private hospitals since they are expensive. We urge all the parties to assure citizens of the state the following:

- Stop privatization of health care services and encourage public private participation with accountability along with strengthening of public health care systems.
- Reduce Infant and maternal mortality rate by providing proper nutrition during pregnancy and post pregnancy and increase the efficiency of midwives for safe delivery. Ensure the availability of prenatal and postnatal care for mothers
- Increase the number of health care and paramedical centers and train local community health workers
- Give incentives for medical professionals willing to work in rural areas and introduce a system of monitoring of health care

### Poor healthcare ailing Karnataka

The health status of the vulnerable communities in Karnataka is poor and the existing health care delivery system is inadequate. Poverty, illiteracy and ignorance, malnutrition, inadequacy of potable water, lack of personal hygiene, poor sanitation, and inadequate Hospital coverage and poor quality of Health care services are the major reasons for unsatisfactory health status of these communities. The common health problems perceived by the community are malaria, tuberculosis and respiratory disorders. The problems like snakebites, dog bites and scorpion bites were also found to be common in rural areas. It was reported that children mostly suffer from acute respiratory infections (ARI), diarrhea and fever. Many respondents were aware that their health problems are due to poor availability of safe drinking water and poor sanitary conditions. Women in these communities commonly suffer from reproductive tract infections (RTIs) and backache. The deliveries are mostly conducted at homes. Adolescents in these communities have a low level of awareness on sexual and reproductive health. As a result, they are vulnerable to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). They get married early and have early pregnancies for which there are a number of social, cultural and economic reasons. A barrier for the utilization of government facilities was reported to be poor accessibility due to lack of public transport system, especially during night. The women, children and emergency cases face problem in accessing these facilities. The tribal settlements are small and isolated and are difficult to reach by service providers. Many tribes live in small hamlets. The community has a stereotypical image about government hospitals i.e. they are dirty and overcrowded, there are long waiting hours, behavior of the staff are rude and the treatment is not very effective. A large number of positions of doctors and ANMs were reported to be lying vacant. The service timings of these hospitals are considered to be inconvenient. Women and adolescents reported lack of privacy and confidentiality as one of the reasons for their not utilizing government facilities. The SC and the ST community also perceived discrimination by staff at the health centers. Corruption and private practice by the doctors were found to be important causes of dissatisfaction among clients. Despite all these negative perceptions, the poor and other disadvantaged groups are forced to avail treatment from government hospitals because of their economic compulsions and free availability of treatment in these hospitals. (<http://www.bangalore.iihmr.org/Research/frmStrengtheningstatel.aspx>)

centers, clinics, and hospitals to reduce avoidable deaths.

- Increase awareness on health schemes for the people in rural and urban areas, sanitation facilities, mental health and illness and motivate public to maintain hygiene.
- Make contraceptives available, create awareness and encourage public to use them.
- Prevent stagnation of water and dumping of waste and garbage in public places to prevent the spread of water borne diseases
- Make available nutrition facilities for Anganwadis, provide for medical insurance and increase budgetary allocation for governmental health care.
- Make medicines affordable by establishing Research and Development centers and primary health care centres in every dis-

trict of the state.

- Introduce a special package for strengthening health services for the marginalized communities who suffer from malnutrition, lack of proteins and various diseases.

## POLITICAL SPHERE

- Encourage the youth to enter into politics through a quota system and allow only those candidates with no criminal antecedents to contest elections.
- Politicians against whom cases are pending should not be allowed to contest elections. There could be special courts to try them so that cases can be speedily handled and resolved prior to filing nominations.
- An autonomous body with persons of integrity and professionalism can be set up to scrutinize all nominations for elections and every person who desires to contest the elections should be publicly interviewed.
- It should be mandatory for elected representatives to spend minimum of 150 days in their respective constituency.
- Strict rules should be introduced to maintain the decorum of both the house of the state assembly so that legislators do not boycott the houses. Legislators should be made to forego their salaries and perks when sessions are boycotted or a legislator decides not to attend the sessions due to his/her personal works.
- Complaint box to be kept for people of the constituency to reach out to their representatives. The elected representatives should look into the issues of the people within a time frame of 7-14 days.
- The retirement for all politicians should be at the age of 60. Like all other professions, politicians too should retire.
- Since politics is all about public service, they should be paid only that amount that is required for their daily expenses. They should not be allowed to make laws on their salaries. No pension should be offered to legislators if they have not served for less than 15 years. An autonomous body should be set up to make laws pertaining to salaries of legislators. Legislators should not be sent on foreign tours at the expense of the people.
- All Politicians should be asked to explain the annual growth in their wealth to a committee established for the purpose so that elected representatives do not accumulate wealth by using their office and status.

### Corruption among Ministers

In an escalating war of words with the ruling BJP, Karnataka Governor H R Bhardwaj Wednesday said he has a list of corrupt people in the state and offered to furnish it to those interested. "I have given the list to Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa also," he told reporters. Bhardwaj's fresh attack comes a few days after he shot off two letters to Yeddyurappa seeking his response to land scam charges against him and also on illegal mining allegedly involving three ministers — G Janardhana Reddy, G Karunakara Reddy and B Sreeramulu. The Governor had expressed displeasure over Yeddyurappa's replies, in which he had defended himself against corruption charges by dismissing them as baseless. The BJP had accused the Governor of behaving like an opposition leader and a Congress agent. Asked about the NDA's nationwide anti-corruption rally on Wednesday, Bhardwaj said "I only want to say that I invite anybody who want the list of corrupt people to come to Raj Bhavan to take the list." (Indian Express, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2010)

- Appoint a person of high integrity as Lokayukta and other officials there so that corruption charges are handled with impartiality and with speed.

## RIGHTS OF CHILDREN, WOMEN, DALITS AND TRIBALS AND THE OTHERS

- Stringent laws have to be introduced for the protection of children against abuse in schools, houses and public spaces.
- Politicians, village leaders and parents who promote child marriage should be jailed for a definite number of years
- Action should be taken on people who demand, accept and give dowry.
- Formulate and strictly implement laws for protection of women against violence. Perpetrators of violence against women should be punished and imprisoned.
- The bill to provide not 33% but 50% reservation for women in all levels of governance structure should be introduced. We need a society and state of gender equality and we believe without equal representation we cannot create that society.
- Education for Dalits and Tribals should receive further impetus. Specialized institutions for their education, training in self-

esteem and human development should be established without delay so that they are helped to reach the levels of equality and

#### Humiliation of Dalits

Chief minister B. S. Yeddyurappa landed himself in trouble after he allegedly insulted Dalits and the state police while addressing a BJP rally in Davanagere, a central town in Karnataka. According to the Dalit Sangharsh Samithi (DSS), the CM termed its activists as "Congress agents" and "useless people" when they tried to approach him at the rally for fulfilment of their demands. The CM also reportedly called the police "donkey grazers" for not controlling the protesting Dalits. Enraged by Yeddyurappa's sudden outburst, the Dalits planned to lodge an FIR. But the police convinced them not to complain against the CM. DSS activist K. Sannappanavar said the organisation would now launch a state-wide agitation in protest. The drama unfolded soon after the rally started. The DSS activists stormed the venue demanding an end to manual scavenging, which is widely prevalent in central Karnataka. The issue had come into prominence after the Dalits highlighted the evil practice by immersing themselves in human waste two weeks ago in Savanur. Since then, they had been trying to meet the CM in vain. At the rally, the activists raised slogans against the CM and the BJP government for neglecting their problems. Their commotion attracted the attention of Yeddyurappa, who snatched the microphone on the dais and started hurling abuses. (India Today, August 3, 2010)

are able to compete with other communities.

- The state should start or assist institutions for the Physically disabled and challenged and they should be provided with reservation in both private and public sector.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture has suffered in the last two decades due to the policies of corporatization. Farmers have been committing suicide. A large section of them have been under stress due to loans and failure of crops. Agriculture has been the backbone of the state's economy. It is unfortunate that the sector has not been given the importance it should have in the economy of the state. We urge all parties to include the following in their manifestos:

- Enact laws to protect farmers from getting into debt trap and direct banks to be soft on farm loans. Put an end to all money lenders who charge exorbitant interest on loans and cause a section of suicides.
- Promote local industries by providing grants to silk worm industry, weaving, poultry, fishing and dairy; enact laws that guarantees finances for small and medium enterprises and women self-help groups; encourage Income Generation Activities for women and marginalized communities and offer subsidy for export oriented small and medium Enterprises Encourage and develop more local companies and entrepreneurs rather than Multi National and Trans National Companies's
- Enact a stringent land acquisition bill that does not permit taking away of agricultural land for non agricultural purposes.
- Introduce special taxation policy to promote the manufacturing sector in order to make the economy self-sufficient.

#### Karnataka Economic Survey

Although the state government has kicked off various measures in the past fiscal year, agriculture and allied sectors have witnessed 2.9% slowdown, according to the Karnataka economic survey report. This was released on the eve of presentation of the state budget for 2012-13. The growth rate of industries too is projected to have slipped to 3.6% during the financial year 2011-12. (<http://news.indiamart.com/story/agriculture-sector-witnesses-slowdown-karnataka-economic-survey-157033.html>)

- Set up and revive state government run public sector units and do not privatise them. Do not sell stakes in the public sector to private corporations.
- Strengthen existing labour laws and ensure social and economical security to working class
- Provide online tender in government departments and institutions and strengthen the regulatory bodies to monitor the corporate affairs
- Increase budgetary allocation for gram panchayats to develop infrastructure
- Introduce laws for efficient and effective PDS and stringent laws for any malpractices in it with IT support for tracking distribution effectively
- Take stringent measures against illegal mining; extend licenses only for credible companies with proven track record; implement laws to protect our natural resources; do not privatize water
- Enact legislations to ensure the right to food, right to housing to those below poverty line, right to employment.
- Do not introduce Foreign Direct Investment in the state since that would destroy opportunities to farmers and small traders.

- The state should relook at the spread of Naxals/Maoists in the state, not as an issue of terrorism but one of development and make attempts to lift people from impoverishment.
- Given the threats of nuclear projects for human and environmental security all parties should promise not to establish nuclear plants in the state and work for alternative forms of energy.

## MEDIA

### Harassment to independent media in Karnataka

A letter written to Mr Justice Markandeya Katju, Chairperson, Press Council of India by **Sri B V Seetaram**, *Editor-in-Chief of Karval Ale on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012*

Respected Sir,

I am the *Chief Editor* of **Karavali Ale** newspaper group from Mangalore. I am writing this letter to you on a day when the pressmen in Bangalore were brutally attacked (without provocation) by the advocates, in court premises throughout the day. The *hungama* went on for the entire day and the government had practically done nothing to prevent the situation from worsening and protect the lives of the electronic media journalists, a number of whom were grievously injured by the mauling advocates. There obviously is a pattern in this. One suspects the hands of the BJP government in the state, which has a love-hate relationship with the media in the state. The attack on journalists came in the wake of the Legislature Committee, effectively comprising only of ruling BJP members, issuing notices to the media persons. This was for telecasting the video showing three ministers viewing porn stuff in the house. The committee tried to find fault with the pressmen even before it asked the three worthies (former ministers) to come and depose before it. The BJP government, which had earlier pampered the media by releasing more than one thousand crores of rupees advertisements during the past 42 months of its rule, is now cut up with the media for asking questions on various issues. The government obviously wants to teach the media a 'lesson' – an unforgettable one, for crossing it. Let me also bring to your kind attention that the Bangalore Police recently harassed a blogger journalist, a certain Ramesh Perla, who has worked for important media houses so far, and who is committed to secular ideals and given to progressive thinking. He had proved himself to be a fly in the ointment of the rulers. The Central Police station in Bangalore, acted on a silly complaint of blog misuse, forcing the journalist to take anticipatory bail. In contrast, my own complaint to the Cyber Police in Bangalore, the jurisdictional Surathkal police in Mangalore, the DGP and Home Secretary of the State on misuse of blogging by the late and former Home Minister VS Acharya's family was conveniently ignored.

Our own newspaper **Karavali Ale** Kannada daily from Mangalore, a member of the Indian Newspaper Society at Delhi, which has the distinction of having been recognised by illustrious institutions like Transparency International Karnataka Chapter (with Justice MF Saldanha as its President), Friendship of India Society at Delhi, which has exposed various omissions and commissions of the BJP government, is sought to be penalised by the government. The Government is using the District Deputy Commissioner and the Mangalore City Police Commissioner to cause us trouble. The Deputy Commissioner keeps on sending notices to us for silly reasons, and the Police Commissioner has even gone to the extent of picking two of our administration executives for offences which they never committed. They were made to stay in prison for a week. Earlier, the circulation network of our newspaper was disturbed by the Bajrang and RSS goons in the state, our press was torched twice. I was arrested on filmsy charges and the Karnataka High Court had declared my arrest illegal and slapped a fine on the government. The Mangalore police, who are doing everything to protect the Sangh Parivar goons, are likely to cause us more trouble as we have asked questions to the Police Commissioner on his Tughlaq style functioning. Your comments on Press Freedom being threatened in the BJP ruled states are very apt, and what we are witnessing in Karnataka certainly goes to back your statement. Thanking you and with kind regards

- Prevent the media from becoming spokes persons of the corporations and communalists and enact laws to make it an instrument of social change.
- Guarantee freedom of expression to the media in terms of investigative journalism and reporting and stop targeting of journalists who do not further the cause of politicians and the corporations.
- Regulate corporate media and setup a censorship board to curtail paid news and protect whistle blowers and RTI activists. The present attitude of the state government to attack the media and media personnel has not only to be checked, attempts should be made that such incidents do not take place in the future.
- Make media more democratic and representative. All appointments in the media industry, private or public - should follow the reservation guidelines so that all communities are represented in reporting, editing and presenting news and views of society. There is a need to bring people from discriminated, marginalized and minority communities into the media so that media becomes inclusive.
- Enact legislation to try the media houses and journalists for defamation of people who are representatives of civil society and provide alternative vision for a new society.
- While making every effort to keep the media autonomous, bring in regulations so that media remains responsive to the needs of society.

## CONCLUSION

We as young citizens of the nation wish to be the change makers. We are making these proposals because we think it is time for us to speak. We cannot allow society to move ahead in the path of corruption, injustice, communalism and discrimination. It is our culture of silence that has strengthened the forces inimical to society. We hereby request all political parties longing to come to power to consider the above mentioned recommendations and add them in your manifestos.

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**We Thank**  
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**rendered.**

When the leaders choose to make themselves bidders at an auction of popularity, their talents in the construction of the state, will be of no service. They will become flatterers instead of legislators; the instruments, not the guides, of the people." - Burke, Edmund

Mankind will never see an end of trouble until... lovers of wisdom come to hold political power, or the holders of power... become lovers of wisdom. -Plato, *The Republic*

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