

CRITIQUE

Centre for Training, Knowledge Development & Advocacy



All is not over. There is still hope !

Every day one is confronted with new challenges. Last night I received messages from my friends: Are you aware that Stan's name is used for collecting money? Deeply hurt by this development I issued a note disowning the campaign on behalf of the Jesuits, probably a well-intended campaign but turned out to be nasty due to the involvement of some mischievous elements. "For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light." An emotional connection with Stan, who paid a price for working for the rights of the Adivasis, was used cunningly to gain currency using unethical means.

In India, elections, in general, pose new challenges to the electorate and the forthcoming election in Karnataka is not an exception. Every political party is inventing 'unethical' new strategies, to woo the voters. The mantra is 'Maximum votes at any cost, even at the cost of ideologies and values.' It is another matter that hardly one finds a political party today premised on a value system or an ideology. One of the crooked games being played out is the long-tested plan of 'dividing the voters.' It begins with the analysis of the caste and religious composition of the electorate in a constituency. Three factors influence the identification of the contestants, caste, religion and his or her ability to 'spend/throw out money'. While the power of money is a common denominator, the caste and religion of the candidate are correlated with the demographic profile of the constituency, with sophisticated analysis. Then what happens to the voters? Whip up their emotions based on caste, including sub-caste and religion. The caste-religious composition analysis is done up to the booth level. The unemployed youth are trained and used as foot soldiers for a paltry sum, to divide the voters at the booth level and to ensure that every vote is a 'negative' or 'hate' vote.

Against this backdrop, public-spirited individuals and Civil Society Organisations continue to work towards elections that will be free and fair, as they perceive elections as an important moment in a democracy to give voice to the voiceless. Under the banner of 'save electoral democracy', these forces continue to work at the grassroots to strengthen democratic culture and institutions. But it is a herculean task. One must also admit that in the last few years, the autonomous space treasured by the CSOs is shrinking. These organisations know that they are watched and live in fear of high-handed actions by the junta. Some strongly believe that an election is a ritual.

Do we still have hope? A cursory look at the history of elections shows that whenever there has been a groundswell the direction of political democracy has changed. When the public felt an increase in unemployment, corruption, growing inequality, politics of hate, increasing caste atrocities, human rights violations etc they had said boldly and courageously 'Enough is enough'. What is the mood of Karnataka voters? Do they feel that they are safe, or will they say, 'Your time is over'. Our future hope lies in the enlightened electorate. We are called to do our bit, by having deep faith in humanity and the future.

HAPPY EASTER!

Dr. Joseph Xavier SJ
 Director

Recent Events

I have a role to play in building a vibrant democracy

I am a citizen of India. Do I know the Constitution? As a student I studied the Constitution of India for the sake of passing in the examination but now I realise that I am learning it as a responsible citizen.



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I am alive again!



After a week I regained my memory and I wanted to call my brother at home. I could reach him. Looking at my pathetic condition, the Police Inspector of Palakkad took pity on me and contacted the Jeevika MOS team in Kozhikode. Fr. Renny SJ from Jeevika immediately contacted the mental hospital authorities and visited me the following day. Through his help, I could contact my brother at home. My brother reached the hospital a week later and with the help of Fr. Renny I was discharged from the hospital.

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Running a small shop has given me big hopes

My husband, Mr. Louis, was working overseas in Dubai since 2010. His salary was low. He moved to various places in Qatar, and Kuwait in search of a better salary. After working in Qatar for four years, unable to find a decent job, he returned to India and started painting work in the village. That is when a contract agency in Nagercoil gave him an offer to work in Cambodia. We arranged and paid the agent Rs. 2,80,000 to get his visa and work permit. The agent had promised to place him in an office as a supervisor but finally, he was put in menial jobs with a low salary.



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What more can I ask for?



I, Mr. Sanjay Pintu, along with my wife Ms. Radha Pintu and three children decided to travel to Chennai from Odisha, in 2021 to earn our livelihood by engaging in construction work. There was no job available in and around our Adivasi hamlet. My 2-year-old second child, Santosh was diagnosed of a tumour in the spinal cord in 2020, at the government hospital in Malkangiri, Odisha.

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Be a lawyer by choice!

Senior Advocate, Prof. Ravi Varma Kumar, appreciated the contributions of professionals in fighting caste violence and prejudices. He motivated the participants by highlighting the contributions of Basavanna, Periyar and Narayana Guru to work towards building an equal, dignified and just society for all.



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My voice is heard. When is yours?



Indian Social Institute witnessed threefold celebrations on the occasion of International Women's Day in collaboration with St. Aloysius Collage, Cox Town, then with CSOs and women domestic workers and later in a nearby slum. Ms. Sharada Siddi, a woman from Siddi community, who has achieved a great milestone was honoured.

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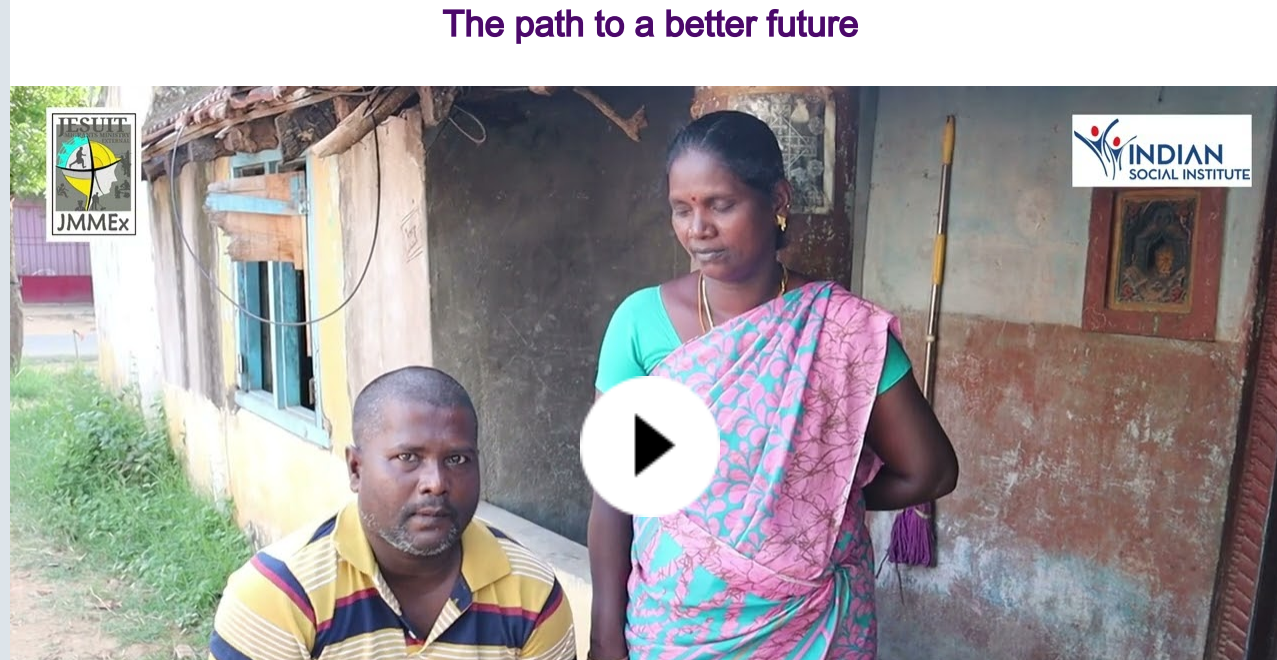
We are the new models of our community

"We mustered courage and spoke to Mr. Debdulal Mondal, the field coordinator from Ashirvad, a Jesuit NGO. We appealed to support us with sewing machines. The Jesuits of Ashirvad, supported by Caritas Germany and the Indian Social Institute gave us new sewing machines. We have now started getting local orders for stitching children's clothes and women's garments. We now see a ray of hope", said Ms. Hashiya Bibi.



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The path to a better future



Livelihood support transformed my life

