



For the Favour of Publication

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Me & My VOTE are NOT for SALE campaign reaches more than 15,000 people directly ahead of the General Elections 2019

The cure for an ill functioning democracy is a larger dose of democracy - Nandana Reddy, Convenor, Grama Panchayat Hakkottaya Andolana and Founder, The Concerned for Working Children

About the Campaign:

Me & My VOTE Are NOT for SALE is a public campaign that celebrates the honour of the voter. It empowers each one of us as citizens to reclaim democracy. A democracy functions at its best when the citizens and the elected representatives, both, actively participate and engage in shaping the country - during elections and after it. The campaign, launched on March 7th 2019, aims to bring on board a large number of youngsters to vocally assert their political dissent with the current situation where votes are bought through the exchange of material or monetary benefits which results in the moral subjugation of the citizen.

Glimpses of the campaign in 2019:

The campaign has reached close to 15,000 people directly. It has specifically focused the youth population, keeping in mind their presence among the larger voting population. It has also focused on women belonging to vulnerable communities and has aimed at sensitizing them to the importance of voting and supporting corruption free elections. It has reached youth across several institutions in Udupi, Tumkur, Bellary and Bangalore districts. The campaign has also reached several youth in collaboration with Bangalore Rural Educational And Development Society (BREADS) Bangalore and Rotaract Club of Rotary District 3190. Organisations such as The Association of People with Disability (APD), Ondede: Dignity – Voice - Sexuality, Sanchalana, Belaku, Jagruthi Mahila Okkuta and the Association for Promoting Social Action (APSA) and several colleges and universities have collaborated with us to help us spread the message to the persons with disabilities, LGBTQ and other communities and civil society groups that they work with.

Along with several partners, collaborators and civil society groups, the campaign has reached the larger public through creating awareness regarding voting being a constitutional right and to urge voters to vote without being lured towards any monetary benefits in exchange of a vote and also promote the same in their circles. The campaign has also reached several people through door - to - door campaigning and providing essential information handouts and campaign publicity materials such as posters, stickers and badges to ensure widespread reach of the campaign. The campaign will also reach out to the larger public at bus stands, railway stations, through cycle/bike rallies, formation of human chains, staging of street

1 | Visit our Campaign page on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MeandMyVOTEareNOTforSale/> and on Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/vote_not_for_sale/?hl=en and Our Webpage: <http://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2019/04/me-and-my-vote-are-not-for-sale/>



plays and using satirical cartoons to create awareness on the importance and sanctity of voting in a democracy.

GPHA has also collaborated with several marginalized groups such as working children, children's groups, women's groups and migrant labourers union in order to draft their manifesto to be submitted to the various candidates contesting in the upcoming general elections 2019. GPHA has collaborated with Bhima Sangha, Karnataka and Mahila Samakhya, Karnataka in this process. The Bhima Sangha and the Grama Panchayat Hakkottaya Andolana have already released their manifestos. We are also in talks with several regional and national print media houses to cover the events happening in various places and provide publicity and widespread awareness among the larger public. The campaign also reaches out to candidates contesting in the elections to pledge towards propagating corruption free elections and urges them to express their binding to the demands put forth by various groups by signing across the manifestos, stating that they will abide by them and fulfil them during their term of power.

The campaign has also reached several districts such as Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Chitradurga, Bidar, Yadgir, Mysore, Ramanagara, Belgaum, Tumkur, Raichur, Bijapur, Koppal, Davangere, Gulbarga, Udupi, Bangalore and Bellary. GPHA has also collaborated with the SVEEP programme of Udupi and Bellary districts and conducted awareness campaigns with more than 200 MGNREGA workers. Several sellers and buyers at weekly markets held at Kundapur and interaction with fisherman at the daily fish market at Malpe, Udupi and the dwellers of migrant settlements in Udupi district, have extended their solidarity to the campaign by wearing badges, pasting the sticker 'Me & My VOTE are NOT for SALE' on their trucks, cars, bikes, weighing scales, vegetable baskets, doors and walls of their homes. They have even put up posters showcasing interesting slogans like 'Vegetables are for Sale but NOT our Votes!' One of the fisherman at the market said, "They spend money to contest in elections only to increase their assets. We have to vote for someone who does not spend money to contest in the elections. Only then will they work for the people!"

The campaign was conducted yesterday at Kolva Beach, Goa, en route the Konkan Railway Line from Kundapur to Madgaon, Goa. Tea / Coffee, sellers, vendors and passengers expressed their solidarity to the campaign. Nearly 1300 people were reached as a part of the campaign and about 650 of them purchased and wore the barge, proclaiming not to sell themselves and their vote. A passenger on the train said, "We may choose to accept about Rs. 500 - Rs.1000 to sell our vote, but if we divide that by the number of days in 5 years, it will not even come up to a rupee every day. We do not realise this while accepting to be lured for materialistic benefits in exchange for our vote"., Kanne from Honnavar said, "I will take the sticker and paste it on my front door back home. Many people come to us asking for votes and ready to buy our vote. I will give them a strong message saying that *Me & My VOTE are NOT for SALE*".

"If we cast our votes upon accepting their money, we will have to bow our heads before them!" said Rathamma, who participated in the campaign held in Srinivasapura, Kolar. "Till today, I have not accepted money for casting my vote. I will continue the same henceforth too. I will continue to vote till I am alive!" said a lady selling chickpeas in the weekly market in Kundapur, Udupi district. At a time when



the rights of citizens are being jeopardized, such statements from voters instill faith in democracy and real power in the hands of the citizens.

Reach of the campaign:

The campaign, ME & MY VOTE ARE NOT FOR SALE, gained the focus from several media and print houses nationally. The campaign has reached more than 2 lakh people directly and indirectly and reached across 5 states of the country. The campaign was staged in the national media by the show called “Satyamev Jayate” in an episode showcasing the Criminalisation of Politics, in 2014. Several regional and national print houses took the opportunity to cover it in their publications. Hosadigantha, a Kannada newspaper, published several articles on the campaign as part of their series on ‘Inclusive, Accessible and Ethical Elections’. Receiving nationwide support from the media houses, the campaign traced its path to All India Radio (AIR) and was broadcasted even in Doordarshan state wide and nationwide. Currently, the campaign is reaching close to 1,500 people around the country through social media platforms Facebook and Instagram.

About GPHA and the emergence of the campaign:

The GPHA is a movement of representatives of Gram panchayats and gram sabhas of Karnataka state, devoted to secure and safeguard the provisions of democratic decentralisation and devolution of power enshrined in the Constitution. The movement serves to strengthen these institutions, especially at the grassroots level, by empowering the people’s representatives to become effective instruments of development and social justice. The Concerned for Working Children (CWC) is a secular, democratic private development agency that has been thrice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012, 2013, and 2014 for its work in child participation, is the secretariat of the GPHA.

The GPHA launched the ME AND MY VOTE ARE NOT FOR SALE campaign in 2010, standing against corruption, bribing and unfair means used in the elections to buy the votes of the people who can get easily. The campaign urges the voters to participate actively in the democracy as a citizen of the country and celebrates the honor of the voters. Our campaign is not affiliated to any political party and is also not against any political party. It aims to restore the dignity of us, as voters and citizens, by reasserting our right to demand accountability of our elected representatives and uphold the sanctity of electoral democracy.

For more details, please contact:

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