

**LOK SATTA**

*People Power*

**Fight Against Corruption - What can Civil Society Do?**

*A LOK SATTA Presentation*

27<sup>th</sup> October, 2002, RIM, Bangalore

# True Swaraj

The real *Swaraj* will come  
not by the acquisition of authority by a few,  
but by the acquisition of the capacity by all  
to resist authority when abused

- *Gandhiji*

## **Main causes of corruption**

- State monopoly
- Faulty, high cost of elections
- Centralization of power
- Absence of accountability
- Unchecked discretion
- No fear of punishment

# Campaign Expenses – Vicious Cycle

- Illegitimate expenses are often 5-10 times the ceiling or more

(Assembly ceiling: Rs 6 lakhs

Lok Sabha ceiling: Rs 15 lakhs)

- Every crore spent illegitimately



Rs 10 crore returns

(to cover ROR, Interest, personal upkeep, supporters, family's future, next election costs)



Rs 100 crore collected through bureaucracy

(for every legislator, there are 2000 employees who need to collect 'rent')



people suffer ten times more.

Payment extorted, on pain of delay, harassment, humiliation, anxiety and greater loss.

# Key Governance Reforms Needed

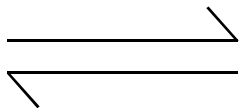
- Comprehensive electoral reforms
- Empowerment of local governments
- Instruments of accountability
- Speedy and efficient justice

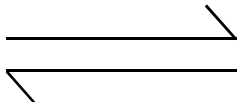
# Electoral Reforms

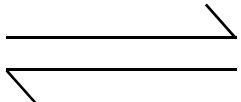
- Process Improvements
  - Preventing polling irregularities
  - Arresting and reversing criminalization of politics
  - Checking abuse of unaccountable money power in elections
  
- System Improvements
  - Political party reform
  - Proportional representation
  - Direct election of Chief Executive at the State level with clear separation of powers

# Empowerment of Local Governments

- Transfer of funds, functions and functionaries to local governments
- Link between

vote  public good

taxes  services

authority  accountability

# Instruments of Accountability

- Right to Information
- Independent crime investigation
- Independent appointment of constitutional functionaries
- Independent and effective anti-corruption agency
- Term limits for public office
- Strict penalties for abuse of office
- Citizen's Charters
- Stakeholder empowerment



# Judicial Reforms

- Limit writ jurisdiction
- Increase number of courts
- Local courts in local language (Gram Nyayalaya)
- Time bound justice
- Independent mechanism for judicial appointments
- Independent crime investigation

# Approaches to Citizens' Action

- Collective Informed Assertion
- Wide Dissemination of Information
- Effective Mass Communication
- Strategic Intervention

## **Lok Satta's Experience – Peoples Watch**

- Collective Informed Assertion
- People's Charters
- Lok Satta as Platform
- Fight against corruption
- Fight for better delivery of public services

## Lok Satta's Experience – Swarajya

- Advocacy & Campaign for specific reform goals
- Choice of Goals
  - Locally achievable
  - No cost/low cost goals
  - Universally acceptable
  - Strategic goals opening many doors

## **Swarajya – Reform Goals**

- Right to Information
- Citizens' Charters
- Empowerment of Local Governments
- Empowerment of Stake Holders
- Universally accessible school education
- Speedy Justice through rural courts
- Toilet for every household

## Lok Satta's Experience – Election Watch

- Voter verification and registration
- Screening of candidates
- Know your candidates
- Common Platforms
- State-Level debates
- Training of volunteers
- Monitoring of polling process

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## **Lok Satta's Experience – Election Watch**

- Does not aim to affect the outcome
- Election time is ripe for awareness campaign
- Focus on remediable flaws
- Pressure on parties and candidates
- Idea of accountability

## Impact of Lok Satta

- Citizen's Charters – introduced in 9 departments by AP government
- Citizen's Charter for Municipalities in A.P. – Lok Satta's creation – provides for compensation of Rs. 50/- day for delay in services – first in India
- Cessation of short delivery at petrol stations all over A.P. – benefit of Rs 1 crore / day
- Stakeholders' empowerment – laws enacted in the State to constitute water user associations and school education committees
- Toilets for every household – largely on Lok Satta's advocacy over 2 million toilets were built in the last 3 years
- Stopped enactment of a restrictive Societies Law and ensured passing of an enabling law contd..  
(in collaboration with CDF)



contd..

## Impact of Lok Satta

- Several local successes
  - eg: Building regularization scheme - Kukatpally / Successful fight against central excise corruption in small industries in AP
- Creating awareness on Right to Information
- Election Watch – arresting growth of criminal elements in politics
  - eg: could influence selection of candidate for ZP chairperson in Kurnool district through public pressure
- Lok Satta's advocacy made common electoral rolls for local, State and national elections a reality
- At State level, Tendered Vote is now accepted as proof of rigging and repolls are ordered
- Lok Satta's surveys influenced Election Commission to make post office nodal agency for voter registration

contd..

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## Impact of Lok Satta

- Lok Satta's work led the movement for candidate disclosures
- Our advocacy of an alternative model for women's representation has altered the national debate and is now widely accepted
- India's leading movement for governance reforms
  - 30 % popular base in A.P.
  - Nationally recognized as a credible, non-partisan, effective platform to fight corruption, and seek better governance
  - Acquired the potential to help build a national movement

# What is Required to Build a Statewide Movement?

- A group of credible persons with excellent track record
- Deep insights into political and governance process
- An agenda that is acceptable to all segments
- Collective informed assertion on specific issues
- Fulltime commitment and professionalism
- Building a platform with brand image

# What can Civil Society in Karnataka do?

## Focus on four areas

- People's Watch – fight against corruption and misgovernance
- Specific local goals of reform
- Election Watch
- National platform building

## Questions to be Answered

- How do we build a nucleus for active citizenship in Karnataka?
- What are the goals and issues to be focused on at state level?
- What are the techniques of citizen assertion to be deployed?

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful  
committed citizens can change the world.  
Indeed it is the only thing that ever did ”

- *Margaret Meade*