

**Targeting Human Rights, the Rule of Law, and Democracy
“Perspectives for Non-Governmental Organisations”**

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**NGOs and Political Parties –
Competitors or Counterparts**

A Presentation by

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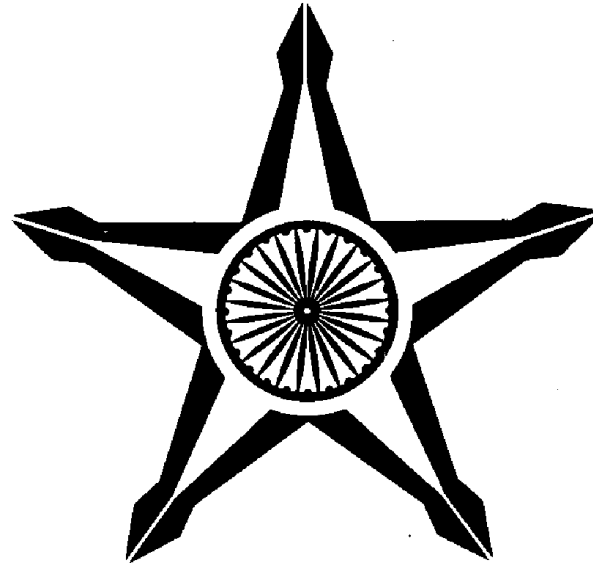
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People Power

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**“Never doubt that a group of thoughtful,
committed individuals can change the world.**

Indeed it is the only thing that ever did”

Margaret Mead

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Governance and Human Rights

Three Key Goals

Goals	Components	State Action
Human Dignity	Freedom from child labour, drudgery, hunger and public defecation	Strong policies, Effective laws. Resources
Accessible justice	Local courts, fair processes, just compensation for rights violations, and speedy resolution	Rule of Law, Local Courts, Judge-population ratio, Procedural changes, Accent on rights of poor
Opportunities for vertical mobility	School education, primary healthcare, basic amenities - water	Resource allocation, Sensible policies, Effective delivery systems, Accountability, Decentralization

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Political Process vs Civil Society

Nature of Society	Role of Political Process	Role of Civil Society
Mature Democracies	Solution	Specific Advocacy
Flawed Democracies	Problem	Movement for Reform
Dictatorships	Non-existent	Movement for Democracy

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Flawed Political Process

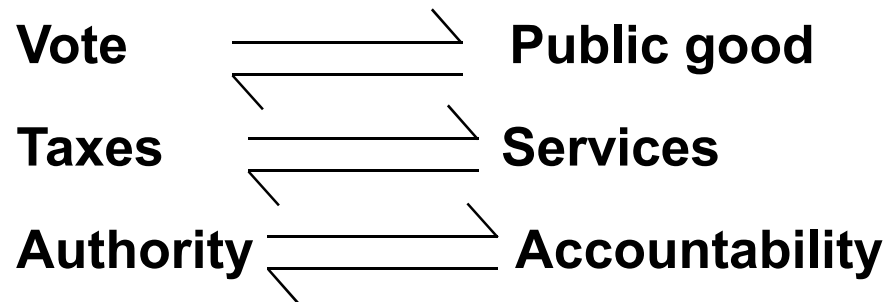
Institutional rigidities

System of alibis

Change of players vs rules of the game

Honesty & survival not compatible

Overcentralization



Incapacity to institutionalize innovations

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Flawed Democracies - Elections

Macro perspectives	Micro perspectives
Disaggregate volatility	Oligopoly of parties
Broadly reflective of public opinion	Local voting irregularities and fraud
Ruling parties & powerful candidates are voted out	Only players change, no change in rules of game
Rejection vote common	Issues and candidate merits are largely irrelevant

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What is Wrong with Electoral Process?

India

Illegitimate and unaccounted money power (10-50 times legal ceiling)

Criminalization of politics (700/4072)

Voting irregularities

Caste and divisive impulses

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SATTA Voter Registration Irregularities

India

	No. of polling stations	No. of voters	Deletions required (errors of commission)		Additions required (errors of omission)		Variation	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Rural	29	22297	2306	10.4 %	1039	4.7 %	3345	15.1 %
Urban	27	18102	4702	26 %	3414	18.9 %	8116	44.8 %
Total	56	40399	7008	17.3 %	4453	11.0 %	11461	28.4 %

Post-polling Survey

India

No. of polling stations	Votes registered	Votes polled	No. identified and confirmed as 'voted'	Fraudulent and Doubtful votes				
				Not voted	Shifted residence	Out of city, country etc	Total	%
5	4706	2483	1945	104	348	86	538	21.7 %

SATTA **Political Parties vs Societies**

Political Parties	Societies
Monopoly or oligopoly	Free choice
Represent history, memories, aspirations of millions	Mere organisations of convenience
Seek power over all people	Pursue members' collective goals
Cannot be easily formed or built	Can be formed and dissolved at will
People and members have no realistic alternatives	Members have multiple options
Vehicles for political participation of citizens	Vehicles for voluntary pursuit of individual/group goals

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SATTA Political Party – What Reforms?

Membership	Free, open and voluntary
	Uniform, objective conditions/no restrictions
	No arbitrary expulsion
	Due process for disciplinary action
Leadership choice	By regular, periodic, free and secret ballot
	Opportunity to challenge leadership through formal procedures with no risk of being penalised

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Choice of Candidates

By members at constituency level through secret ballot

By elected delegates through secret ballot

Central leadership cannot nominate candidates

Political Funding

Full disclosures

Public auditing and accountability

Incentives for contributions

Partial public funding

Campaign Expenses – Vicious Cycle

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

(Assembly ceiling: Rs 0.6 mn

Lok Sabha ceiling: Rs 1.5 mn)

Every crore spent illegitimately



Rs 100 mn returns

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



Rs 1 bn 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.

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SATTA Key Reforms

Key reforms	Funding
	Criminalization
	Voting irregularities
System	Proportional Representation
	Separation of Powers
Decentralization	Local Governments
Rule of Law	Judicial reforms
Accountability	Right to information
	Citizens' charters
	Independent crime investigation

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Civil Society's Role

Mobilize people for reforms

- Local**
- National**

Strengthen democratic processes

Adversarial and collaborative

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Illustrations of Engagement

Election Watch - Non partisan activism

impact on criminalization (facilitatory + exposure)

Candidate disclosures - Adversarial activism

Right to information - Advocacy and mass mobilization

Funding reform - Collaborative activism

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Approaches to Citizens' Activism

Collective informed assertion

Wide dissemination of information

Effective mass communication

Strategic intervention

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“The punishment suffered by the wise who refuse to take part in the government, is to suffer under the government of bad men.”

Plato

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Thank You