

LOK SATTA  
*People Power*

# Political Reforms in India

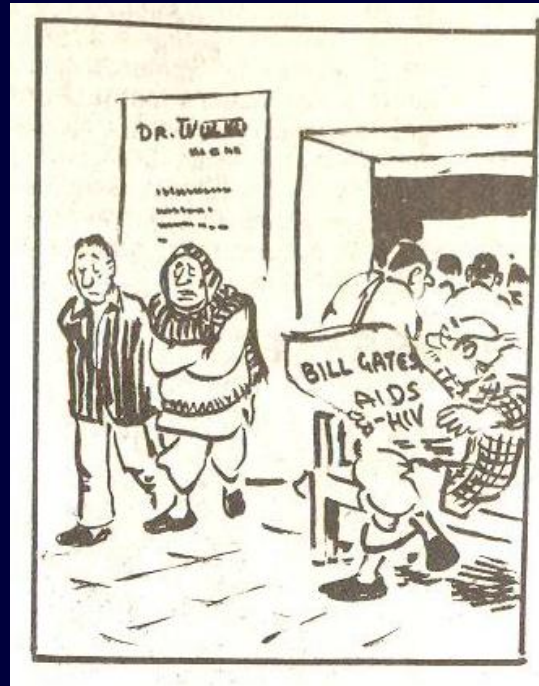
*IT IS TIME...*

The purpose of a government is to make it easy for  
people to do good and difficult to do evil.

**William Gladstone**

# Recent Developments

- Health care to rural poor
- Towards a comprehensive Right to Information law
- Reforms in Judiciary
- Strengthening of cooperatives and rural credit flow
- Local Governments Empowerment
- Elections to Municipal Governments in AP
- Federation of women reps from local govts in AP



*Rs 30 just to say I've cough and cold and Rs 20 for two pills! I hope Bill Gates will one day take up eradication of cough and cold!*

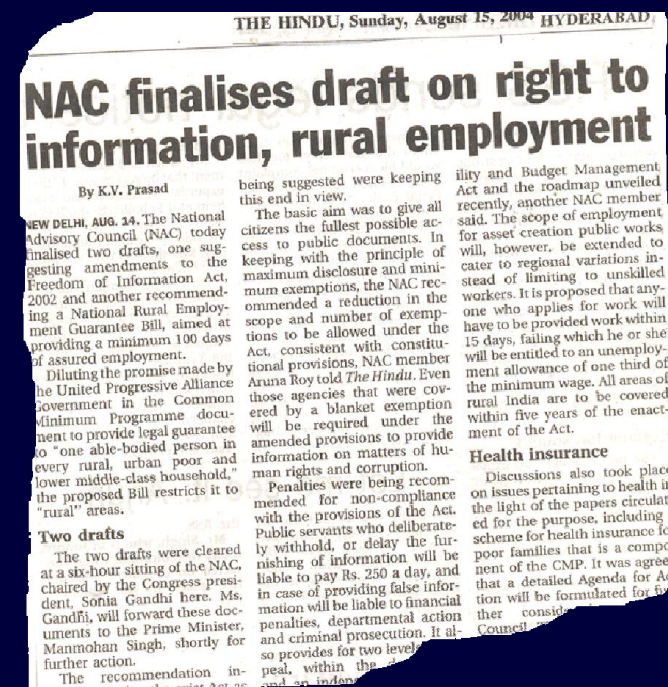
## 1. National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) launched

- MoH&FW's Rs. 6510 crore-mission
- Decentralization to village and district level; district health funds
- 400,000 trained workers ('ASHAs')
- Primary health care centers to be first referral units
- PM invites Lok Satta to the Mission Steering Group
- Vertical integration of all programs
- Phase I covers 18 most backward states
- Phase II of NHRM by 2006; to cover rest of India



## 2. Comprehensive Right to Information (RTI)

- Comprehensive coverage - union, state and local governments included
- Compensation provision of *Rs. 250 per day*
- Stringent penalties for non-disclosure/delay
- The onus shifts to the provider of information
- Key role by Lok Satta in NAC and with the Parliamentary Standing Committee



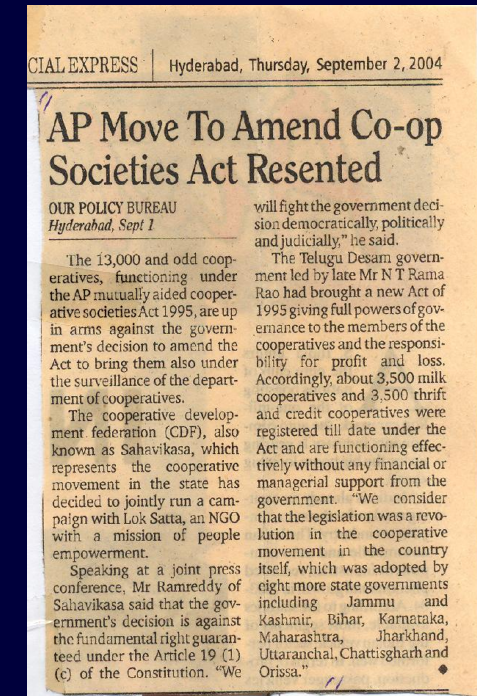
**Present Status:** RTI draft bill passes through Standing Committee after necessary amendments. Final draft submitted to Parliament.

## 3. Cooperatives

- NAC for preserving autonomy of cooperatives, under Article 19(1) - Right to Freedom of Expression
- Constitutional amendment for right to form and run cooperatives, free of state control
- For increasing rural cooperative credit and institutional lending to farmers. Vital for reviving rural sector
- Public campaign by Lok Satta in AP, opposing the curbs on State MACS Act.

## 4. Judicial Reforms

- NAC to consider creation of All India Judicial Service for Subordinate Judiciary - under Article 312
- Creation of National Judicial Council for Higher Judiciary
- Local Courts for timely and easy access to justice



## *5. Empowerment of Local Governments*

- Fiscal devolution directly from the Union to Local levels
- Implementation of programs by Local governments.
- To own, manage, monitor and control all new programmes, schemes and missions.
- State Finance Commission recommendations as binding
- 'Principle of Subsidiarity' to guide allocation of subjects
- Task force for identifying inconsistencies in Union and State laws – linked to Articles 243N and 243ZF of Constitution





“ In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man;  
if you want anything done, ask a woman ”

**Margaret Thatcher**

## 6. Federation of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) from Local Governments

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- Federation of 300 EWRs in Andhra Pradesh across all tiers of local governments, both rural and urban.
- Towards building capacity of EWRs
- Part of the effort towards broader goal of empowerment of local governments
- Singamma Sreenivasan Foundation (SSF)-supported field activities on pilot scale

## HC admits writ on civic polls

**By OUR LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**

**Hyderabad, March 30:** The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Wednesday admitted a writ petition seeking early conduct of municipal polls.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Devinder Gupta and Justice B. Seshasayana Reddy admitted the public interest litigation filed by Mr. B Ankaiah, general secretary of Lok Satta.

The petitioner accused the government and the State Election Commission of de-

laying the elections to corporations, Zilla Parishads, municipalities and mandal parishads.

The delay in conducting polls amounted to a negation of democratic principles, he said. The bench posted the matter to April 4.

**DIRECTIVE ON SPONGE IRON UNITS**

The AP High Court directed the Pollution Control Board to stop the functioning of sponge iron industrial units

**IN AP HIGH COURT**

in Jadcherla which did not possess the required consent for operation.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Devinder Gupta and Justice B. Seshasayana Reddy gave these interim directions in a public interest litigation filed by Veerendranath Prasad, practising advocate.

The petitioner contended that the sponge iron units were causing air pollution at affecting its residence

**WRITS FILED BY BAR OWNERS ADMITTED**

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Devinder Gupta and Justice B. Seshasayana Reddy admitted a bunch of writs filed by owners of bars and restaurants challenging the Police Commissioner's decision not to renew amusement

Writ petition filed in AP High Court over postponement of elections to Municipal Governments in AP – under Articles 243E and 243U

Plea to declare 62-A of Municipalities Act, 1965 as unconstitutional – linked to Article 243ZF

**మున్సిపల్ ఎన్నికల రిట్ హైకోర్టు స్వీకరణ**

హైదరాబాద్, మార్చి 30, ప్రభాతపాఠ్ర

మున్సిపల్ ఎన్నికలను వాయిదా వేయడాన్ని సవాల్ చేస్తూ లోక్ సత్తా దాఖలు చేసిన రిట్ పిటిషన్ ను హైకోర్టు విచారణకు స్వీకరించింది. ప్రధాన న్యాయమూర్తి డి.వేందర్ గుప్తా, న్యాయమూర్తి శేషశయానారెడ్డిలతో కూడిన ధర్మాసనం ఎదుట బుధవారం ఈ కేసు విచారణకు వచ్చింది. ప్రతివాదులైన మున్సిపల్, పంచాయతీశాఖల ప్రిన్సిపల్ సెక్రటరీలకు, రాష్ట్ర ఎన్నికల సంఘానికి నోటీసులు జారీ చేసింది. ప్రత్యేకాధికారులకు బదులుగా మున్సిపల్ చైర్మన్లను కొనసాగించాలన్న కేసుతోపాటు ఈ కేసును కూడా 4న మరో ధర్మాసనం విచారించిస్తుంది.

**వార్త**

రువారం 31, మార్చి 2005

## 8. Towards Collective, Informed Assertion by Ordinary Citizens

- 80,189 persons across 23 districts of AP trained to be ‘Active Citizens’ (2001-2004)
- Focus on catalyzing collective, informed action on local issues of concern. Training as a tool for genuine empowerment.  
E.g.: illegal occupation of public land (worth Rs. 1.5 crore) prevented by ordinary citizens in Qutbullapur, Rangareddy District
- Training activities supported by Sir Ratan Tata Trust (RTT)

## 9. An International Perspective...

- **Delegation of British MPs visits Lok Satta (October, 2004)**
- **The Commonwealth invites Lok Satta as observer for the Maldives Elections (January, 2005)**

Team of observers led by Cassam Uteem (fmr. President of Mauritius), Lok Satta represented by G. Pratibha Rao

**...all are improvements and +ve steps, but clearly not sufficient.**

**Fundamental problems at systemic political and electoral level.**

# Why Political Reforms? Why now?

- India has an excellent track record of democratic politics. But, only at a macro-level. Severe structural defects manifest at constituency level.
- These defects directly affect nearly every aspect in the lives of Indians  
Eg: pervasive corruption, ineffective and unsatisfactory governance
- Systemic flaws in political system holding back India's progress.  
Economy, public health, infrastructure, security and other sectors critically linked to the nature of our political system
- The time is ripe; biggest opportunity since 1947

## Inexhaustible appetite for illegitimate funds

- Telgi stamp scam
- Satyendra Kumar Dubey's murder
- CAT exam papers' leak
- Warrant against President Kalam and Chief Justice VN Khare
- CGHS scam



# System Caught in a Vicious Cycle

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- Inexhaustible demand for illegitimate funds
- Most expenditure incurred for vote buying
- Rise of political fiefdoms
- Vote delinked from public good
- Taxes delinked from services
- Political survival and honesty incompatible
- Social divisions exacerbated
- Competence and integrity excluded
- National parties marginalized



**A non-partisan, pro-political people's movement  
for systemic reforms**

# What is **VOTE**INDIA?

Dis-incentivization of corruption, criminalization and divisive politics

Better, fairer representation of diverse views

Reduced wastage of votes, better choice for voters

Proportional Representation  
in Legislatures

Separation of executive and legislative roles at state level - stable governments

'Demand side' curb on electoral corruption

Executive authority fused with accountability

Direct election to head of  
government at state level

Transparent and democratic procedures in political parties for selecting electoral candidates and office bearers

Internal party democracy  
by law

## 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

## Choice of candidates

- By members at constituency level through secret ballot
- By elected delegates through secret ballot
- Central leadership cannot nominate candidates

# Why exactly 'Direct Election of Head of Government in States'?

- No one can buy a whole state electorate
- Image and agenda of leader will be decisive
- With separation of powers, there will be no incentive to overspend for legislative office
- At state level, there is no fear of authoritarianism as Union government, Election Commission, Supreme Court etc., will act as checks
- Once survival of the executive for a fixed term is guaranteed, there will be no need for compromise and corruption

# Why Proportional Representation?

- Competent and honest persons can be inducted into the cabinet
- Incentive to buy votes in a constituency will disappear
- Interests of local candidate will run counter to party's need to maximise overall vote
- Will give representation to small parties, scattered minorities and legitimate reform groups, forcing change
- Voting will be based on party image and agenda, not local expenditure
- Ignored sections will find voice and get representation
- A party's image and platform, not local clout and money power, matter
- Genuine competition among political groups and ideas

- Illegitimate money power in elections (supply side)
- Voter seeks money and liquor (supply side)
- Political fiefdoms (marginal vote not critical)
- Representational distortions (Vote share, not local concentration, matters. No wasted votes)
- Competence and integrity excluded (decent candidates can win in list system)
- National parties/ reform parties marginalised (vote share gives representation - not constituency victory alone)

# What will Direct Election address?

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- Illegitimate money power and corruption (supply side)
- Voter seeking money (demand side)
- Rise of political fiefdoms (Legislative office and local clout have no bearing on executive)
- Vote delinked from public good (executive unencumbered)
- Deepening fiscal crisis (free from vested interests)
- Political dynasties (term limitations)
- Honesty and survival incompatible (survival depends on people's mandate alone)
- Competence and integrity excluded (State wide appeal matters. Cabinet from outside legislature)



- Political fiefdoms will be replaced by candidates determined by members
- Political dynasties will lose their (currently excessive) significance
- Honest and competent candidates will be able to win nomination
- Political process will gain legitimacy

- Mixed, compensatory Proportional Representation
- A threshold of, say 10% vote in a major state for PR
- State as a unit for representation
  
- 50% seats filled through FPTP system.
- Balance seats filled such that final composition reflects voting percentages of each party – compensatory PR
- Parties with less than 10% vote will be disqualified, and the qualifying parties will share the 50% seats
- Independents, or candidates of small parties (below threshold) may be elected through FPTP. In such cases, those seats will be extra, and supernumerary seats will be created to accommodate them

- Citizens have two votes - one for a candidate in the constituency; one for the party of their choice.
- Party vote determines overall seat share. The party gets seats allocated from the list (Its seat share less seats elected in constituencies)
- In states, citizens directly elect the head of state, who forms a cabinet of his choice, and has a fixed term. There will be term limitations.
- Citizens vote for a party based on its image, platform and the slate of candidates presented in the local electoral district (say, 5-10 seats)

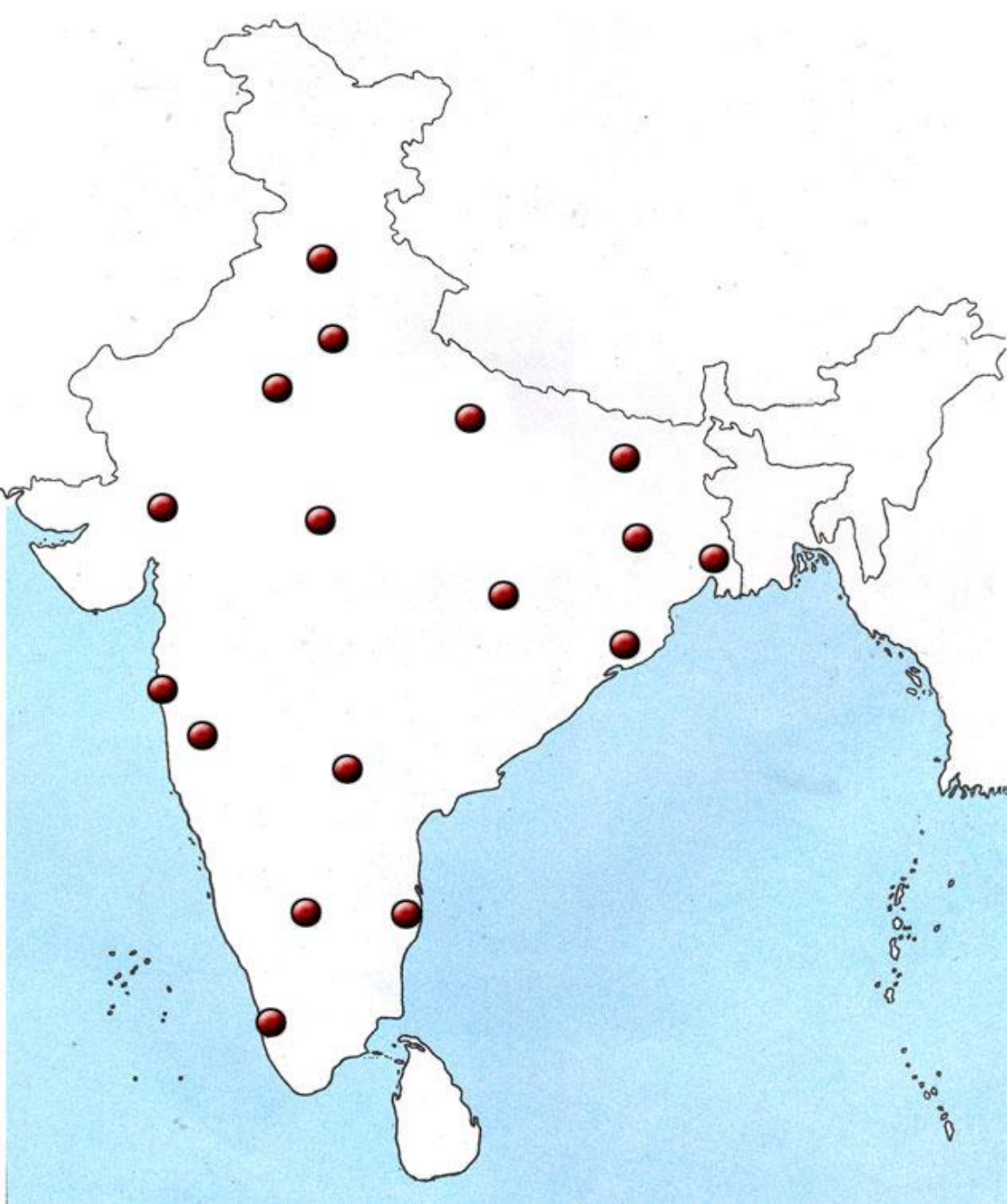
# The **VOTE**INDIA Approach

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- Communication Campaign
  - positive, unique, inclusive message through various channels
  - political systemic reform as objective
- Establishment of state/regional chapters and their expansion
  - formation of region-wise core groups
  - memberships and co-option of public minded groups and individuals
- Regional/Local activities and events
  - focus on proximate reform issues with wider/national implications
  - activities as entry points for participation in national campaign
- Overall political strategy

**VOTEINDIA**

## Regional Chapters



### Phase I

Ahmedabad  
Mumbai  
Pune  
Bangalore  
Chennai  
Hyderabad  
Kolkata  
Patna  
Lucknow  
Delhi  
Jaipur

### Phase II

Kochi  
Raipur  
Bhubaneshwar  
Bhopal  
Ranchi  
Chandigarh



## The Citizen's Initiative on Voters' ID List (CIVIL)

- National campaign for cleansing of electoral rolls and improving their integrity
- Flagged off on April 15 in Bangalore; led by JANAAGRAHA; inaugurated by the CEC TS Krishnamurthy
- A citizen-led initiative.  
High local importance and easy initiation  
Long-term and national significance

VOTEINDIA will provide platform and tools for expansion of CIVIL across all major regions and states in India



## Central Excise, CVC , CBIT – Industry - Lok Satta

- Reform initiative towards transparent and citizen friendly procedures in Central Excise and Customs.
- In collaboration with the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes (CBIT)
- Public hearings will be held in Hyderabad and Mumbai between the Industry and the CVC, CBIT, Excise & Customs.
- Hearings facilitated by Lok Satta
- Initiative will be expanded to other centers across India

**“Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory.  
Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat ”**

**- *Sun Tzu***