



LOK SATTA
People Power

Voter Registration

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“At the bottom of all the tributes paid to democracy is the little man, walking into the little booth, with a little pencil, making a little cross on a little bit of paper.....”

- *Churchill*

Macro Perspective of Indian Polity

- Disaggregate volatility
- Broadly reflective of public opinion
- Ruling parties and powerful candidates do lose
- Rejection/Negative vote pretty common

Micro Perspective of Indian Polity

- Money power dominant
- Criminalization rampant
- Voting irregularities frequent
- People take money to vote
- Caste and divisive impulses are prominent

How is Democracy Surviving?

- A system of compensatory errors (competing distortions neutralize each other)
- Strength of Election Commission
- Tradition of neutrality of officials
- Pre-Polling process scrupulously fair (nominations, ballot papers, appointment of polling officials, etc.)
- Post-polling process - completely non-partisan (transport, storage and counting of ballots, and declaration of results)

What is Wrong With Elections?

- Flawed electoral rolls
- Polling irregularities
- Unaccounted and illegitimate use of money power
- Rampant criminalization
- Autocratic political parties

Defective Electoral Rolls

- 1999 Sample Surveys: 15% errors in villages
40% errors in towns.
- 2004 Sample Surveys: 5.25% errors in villages
12.15% errors in towns.

Verification of Voters' Lists in Andhra Pradesh

Survey of Polling Stations in AP 1999

| Details of electoral rolls verified | | Deletions Required (Errors of Commission) | | | | | | Additions Required (Errors of Omission) | | | | Total Errors | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------|
| | | Moved out of the area | Death | Other | Total | % of vote | Attained 18 years of age | Moved into the area | Total | % of voters | | | |
| District | No. of Polling Stations | No. of Voters | | | | | | | | | | Total number | % of voters registered |
| Rural | 29 | 22297 | 1634 | 488 | 184 | 2306 | 10.34 | 447 | 592 | 1039 | 4.7 | 3345 | 15.1 |
| Urban | 27 | 18102 | 4218 | 273 | 211 | 4702 | 26.00 | 653 | 2761 | 3414 | 18.9 | 8116 | 44.8 |
| Rural+ Urban | 56 | 40399 | 5852 | 761 | 395 | 7008 | 17.30 | 1100 | 3353 | 4453 | 11.0 | 11461 | 28.4 |

Election Watch – 2004 – Pre-Poll Survey

| Location | No. of Constituencies | No. of Polling Stations | Total No. of Voters | Additions required | Deletions required | Total No. of Additions & Deletions | |
|----------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| | | | | | | No. | As % of total Voters |
| RURAL | 37 | 71 | 70848 | 1634 (2.3) | 2086 (2.94) | 3720 | 5.25 |
| URBAN | 22 | 41 | 41042 | 2205 (5.37) | 2782 (6.77) | 4987 | 12.15 |
| TOTAL: | 59 | 112 | 1,11,890 | 3839 (3.43) | 4868(4.35) | 8707 | 7.78 |

Simple Solution

- Post office as Nodal Agency for registration
 - Voters list on display
 - Sale of electoral rolls
 - Statutory forms supply and sale
 - Verification of applications
 - Registration / deletion / correction
 - Provision for appeal

Verification of Electoral Rolls

How to Access Voters' Lists?

- Electoral rolls are available to all citizens
 - MROs offices
 - Municipal offices in twin cities
- They can be purchased for a price
 - 0 – 95ps / page
 - 1.35ps / a sheet of 2 pages
- Head of account
 - Districts : 0070 – 02 – 101
 - Hyderabad: 0033 – 03 – 101

How to Add or Delete Names

- Simple applications:
 - Form 6 : Addition
 - Form 7 : Objection to a name & deletion
 - Form 8B : Deletion
 - Form 8 : Corrections
 - Form 8A : Change of polling booth
- Form 6 – Voter should apply
- Form 7 & 8B – Any other voter can apply

Additions / Deletions / Changes

- Application in duplicate to MRO
(Municipal Officials in Hyderabad)
- Receipt given to applicant – No fee
- Application published by MRO.
(on Notice Board)
- 7 days notice for objections, if any
- Summary enquiry & decision
- Decision communicated to applicant

Recent Developments – Post Office as Nodal Agency

- Post office
 - Display of electoral rolls
 - Receiving of applications
 - Ascertaining residential address
- Modalities
 - Designated officer in all delivery offices
 - Forms supplied
 - Forms received only from the citizen or family member
 - No bulk applications
 - Checking report by Post Office (address)

What More Needs to be Done

- Permanent mechanism at Post Offices
 - Display and Sale of Electoral Rolls
 - Voter registration on application at Post Offices
 - Assist EC in revision of electoral rolls on permanent basis
 - Access, transparency and appeal to check abuses
 - Mass communication campaign for public education

Revenue Possibilities

- Sale of voters list for each polling station
- Sale of slips containing – serial number, name, address, and other details of voters
 - standard price: Re 1 for every slip
 - commission for postal employees: 0.50 ps for every slip.
 - Expected benefit for postal department: Rs 50-100 crores per annum
- Sale of forms pertaining to:
 - Inclusion, deletion, correction of particulars, etc., (forms 6, 7, 8, 8A and 8B)
 - Price of forms: Re.1 for 2 copies
 - The bulk printing cost will not exceed 10ps

Revenue Possibilities

- Post office can act as the authority for:
 - Addition, deletion, or correction of names
 - Fee: Rs. 2 per case
- Assist political parties in distribution of voter slips – for a fee / advertising possibilities
- Revision of electoral rolls – Post office can collect Re 1 for every name verified

What Needs to be Done

- Amendment of electoral registration rules
- Launch a programme in all delivery Post Offices with EC's approval
- Launch massive campaign on television to educate voters.

Benefits of Post Office as Nodal Agency

- Access and transparency in voter registration
- While revision of rolls continues as now, the burden of ensuring accuracy shifts to the community
- Abuses can be checked by access, transparency, and appeal
- Postal department can earn decent revenues
- Public satisfaction and credibility of electoral process will improve significantly

Other Polling Irregularities

- Bogus voting rampant
- Personation of voters is the commonest method.
- EVMs cannot prevent false voting
- Voter identity card is a vast improvement, but not a safeguard against collusion or coercion.
- In certain pockets, non-Indians registered as voters

Post Poll Survey – Andhra Pradesh – 1999

1999 Assembly and Parliamentary Polls, Hyderabad, AP

| Assembly Constituency / Polling Booth No., | No. of voters | No. of votes polled | No. who reported that they actually 'voted' | No. not voted or doubtful cases | | | | Percentage of doubtful and 'not voted' votes |
|--|---------------|---------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|------------|--|
| | | | | Residing in the area but not voted | Left the area but residing within the city | Left the city/ country etc | Total | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 207/173 | 1143 | 625 | 483 | 5 | 91 | 46 | 142 | 22.7 |
| 207/176 | 956 | 459 | 377 | 15 | 41 | 26 | 82 | 17.9 |
| 209/93 | 725 | 428 | 306 | 20 | 95 | 7 | 122 | 28.5 |
| 209/75 | 989 | 495 | 380 | 42 | 72 | 1 | 115 | 23.2 |
| 210/426 | 893 | 476 | 399 | 22 | 49 | 6 | 77 | 16.2 |
| Total | 4706 | 2483 | 1945 | 104 | 348 | 86 | 538 | 21.7 |

Election Watch 2004 – Post-Poll Survey

| Location | No. of Constituencies | No. of polling Stations | Votes Polled | Bogus Votes | |
|----------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|
| | | | | No. | As % of votes polled |
| RURAL | 16 | 29 | 18069 | 169 | 0.9 |
| URBAN | 9 | 16 | 8894 | 168 | 1.9 |
| TOTAL: | 25 | 45 | 26963 | 337 | 1.2 |

West Bengal – 2001

| | | |
|--|-----|-------|
| Total number of voter complaints | 519 | % |
| No name specified | 72 | 13.87 |
| No part number | 137 | 26.4 |
| Complaints type | | |
| a) Vote already cast | 197 | 37.96 |
| b) Long queue of voters / very slow vote | 12 | 2.31 |
| c) Bombs thrown / fight broke out | 32 | 6.17 |
| d) Others | 278 | 53.56 |
| Total | 519 | 100 |

What Can be Done

- 100% voter identity cards
- Amend rules to ensure mandatory repoll if tendered votes exceed 1% of votes polled. (Tendered vote is proof of false voting)
- Wide publicity to tendered vote
- Citizen ID cards wherever illegal immigrants are in large numbers

“Politics encircles us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries”

- Mahatma Gandhi