

**LOK SATTA**

*People Power*

**Right to Information and People's Charter**

**Workshop on Strengthening Civil Society's Role in  
Development in Orissa**

2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2002, CYSD, Bhubaneswar

# 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*

# Citizens' Initiatives – Guiding Principles

- Freedom
- Self- Governance
- Empowerment
- Rule of Law
- Self-correcting institutions and Instruments of  
Accountability

# Need of the Hour

## **Informed Citizenry with the capacity to:**

- Resist mis-governance
- Check corruption
- Influence public discourse
- Channelize resources
- Enforce better services

**All these require information**

# What is Right to Information

In the Indian context:

- Right to have access to information
- Right to be informed

# Right to Information

On all matters involving exercise of public authority:

- Public money & utilization
- Laws and enforcement
- Policies and decisions
- Employees
- Delivery of services

## Key Features of Lok Satta's Draft Bill

- Provision for periodic reporting
- Proactive disclosure provision
- Reasonable time-frame
- Reasonable fee
- Automatic appeal in case of refusal
- Independent appellate process

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## **Key Features of Lok Satta's Draft Bill**

- Penalties for non-compliance
- Clearly defined minimum exemptions
- Access to information available to legislature
- Placing all refusals before the legislature and the public
- Protection for public interest disclosures
- Strictly limited to – State subjects (list II of 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule)



# People's Charter – Reform Goals

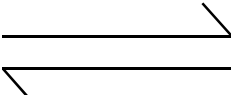
- Right to Information
- Citizen's Charters
- Empowerment of local governments
- Empowerment of stake holders
- Universally accessible school education
- Speedy justice through rural courts
- Toilet for every household

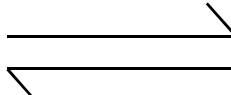
# Citizens' Charters – Andhra Experience

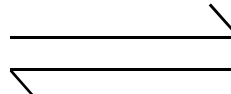
- Citizen's Charters – introduced in 9 departments by AP government
  - State Electricity Board
  - Road Transport Corporation
  - Transport Department
  - Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board
  - Employment Exchanges
  - Commercial Taxes Department
  - Registration Department
- Citizen's Charter for Municipalities in A.P. – Lok Satta's creation – provides for compensation of Rs. 50/- day for delay in services – first in India

# Empowerment of Local Governments

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

vote  public good

taxes  services

authority  accountability

# Stake Holder Empowerment

- Water Users Associations
- School Education Committees
- Ward Committees

## Speedy Justice

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

# A Toilet for Every Household

- 70 % households have no sanitation
- Average cost no more than Rs.3000
- SEBs annual losses are more than cost of toilets for all households
- A crash programme in 5 years with people's participation

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

- *Plato*