

LOK SATTA
People Power

Deepening Democracy

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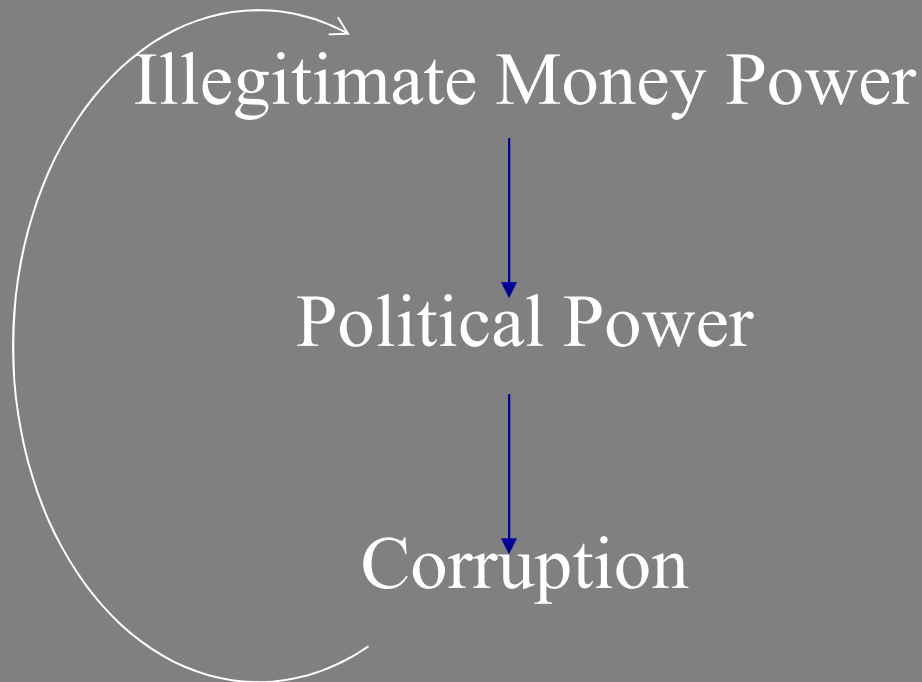
“Politics encircles us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries”

- *Mahatma Gandhi*

Failure of Political Process

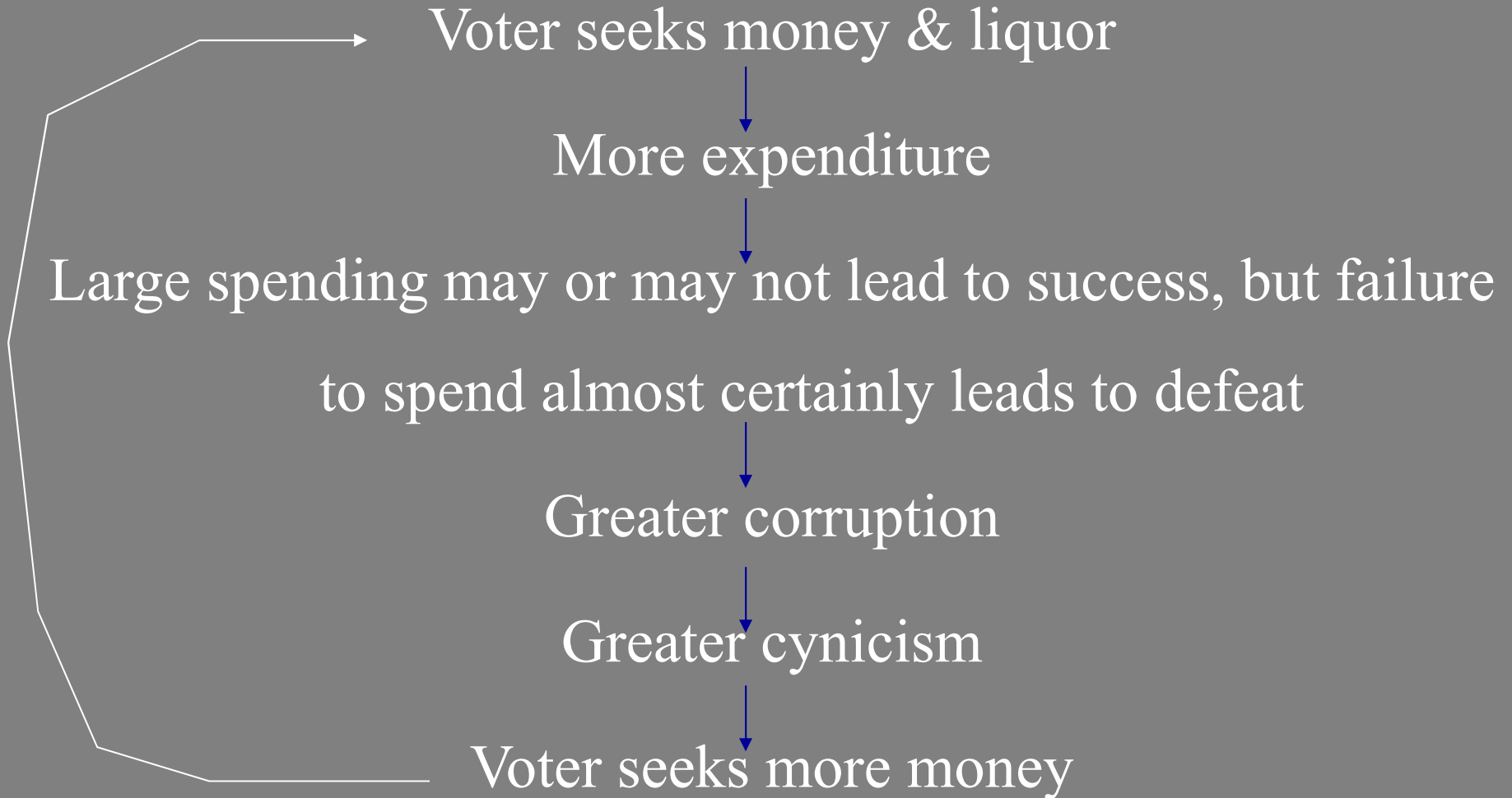
Interlocking vicious cycles

Inexhaustible demand for illegitimate funds



Interlocking Vicious Cycles

Most expenditure is to buy votes



Contd..

Rise of Political Fiefdoms

Need for money, caste and local clout



Parties are helpless in choice of candidates



Rise of political fiefdoms



Absence of internal party democracy



Competition among a few families in most constituencies



Oligopoly at constituency level

Vote delinked from public good

Centralized polity



No matter who wins, people lose



Vote does not promote public good



Voter maximizes short term gain



Money, liquor, caste, emotion and anger become dominant



Vicious cycle is perpetuated

Interlocking Vicious Cycles Taxes delinked from services

Only 16 % of GDP collected as taxes (union & states)

Fiscal deficits and crisis

Higher Taxes

↓
Unacceptable because
of corruption and poor
services

Desubsidization

↓
The poor do not see
alternative benefits for
the subsidies given up

Wage Reduction

↓
Centralization and Art
311 preclude it

↓
Deeper fiscal crisis

↓
Poorer services and public goods

↓
Perpetuation of poverty and backwardness

Contd..

Political survival and honesty not compatible

Parliamentary executive

Government survival depends on legislative majority

Legislators spend a lot of money to get elected

They need multiple returns to sustain the system

Corruption and misgovernance endemic

Government has to yield to legislators' demands

Corruption is perpetuated even if government has the will

Honesty not compatible with survival

In a Sane Democracy

- Political process should resolve the crisis
- Parties, elections and public office are the route to reform
- In India a vicious cycle operates

Keys to Resolution

- Crisis is systemic
- Most players are victims of a vicious cycle
- Change of players not enough
- Change of rules of the game needed
- Institutions are the key
- Resources are not a problem
- The way they are deployed is the key

Mission

To promote peaceful, democratic transformation of Indian governance process and enable India to achieve full potential through good governance

Key Reforms

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

Approaches to Citizens' Action

- Collective informed assertion
 - Wide dissemination of information
 - Effective mass communication
 - Strategic intervention
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Methods of Citizens' Action – People's Watch

- Collective informed assertion
- People's charter
- Lok Satta as platform
- Fight against corruption
- Fight for better delivery of public services

Methods of Citizens' Action – Swarajya

- Advocacy and campaign for specific reform goals
 - Choice of goals
 - Locally achievable
 - No cost / low cost
 - Universally acceptable
 - Strategic goals opening many doors
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Swarajya – 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
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Methods of Citizens' Action – 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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Methods of Citizens' Action – 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
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Impact of LOK SATTA

India's leading civil society initiative

- About 30 % support base in AP
- Known virtually in every village
- Could mobilize 10 million signatures for local government empowerment in AP alone
- Could organize people's ballots with participation of one million citizens with 3 days' notice in favour of disclosure of candidate details

Impact of LOK SATTA

Several local and state level successes

- 9 citizen's charters in AP
- First charters providing for compensation of Rs 50 per day in select municipal services
- Cessation of short delivery at 1500 petrol stations – benefit of Rs 1crore/day
- Stake-holder empowerment – laws enacted to constitute water users' associations and school education committees
- Toilets for every household – Lok Satta's advocacy resulted in a major initiative by the state

Several local and state level successes

- Stopped enactment of a restrictive societies law, and ensured passing of an enabling law in collaboration with CDF
 - Curb corruption at micro level - building regularization; fight against central excise corruption in small industries sector; check on corruption in registration and transport dept. etc, in various places
 - Awareness on right to information
 - Focus on health care and school education reform
 - Advocacy and drafting of a bill for local courts – likely to be enacted as law soon
 - Successful advocacy for decentralized power distribution management
 - Built effective tools for citizen action
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Impact of LOK SATTA

Election related successes

- Election watch became a nation-wide instrument for non-partisan citizen engagement. Support to groups in TN, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, West Bengal and Chattisgarh
- Arrested growth of criminal elements in politics
- Could prevent election of a notorious faction leader with violent record from becoming a Zilla Parishad Chairman
- Common electoral rolls for local, state and national elections have become a reality
- In local elections, Tendered vote is now accepted as proof of rigging and repolls are ordered

Impact of LOK SATTA

National successes

- A National Campaign for Electoral and Governance Reforms is now in place
- The disclosure campaign led to institutionalization of disclosure of candidate details
- The alternative model for women's representation has altered the national debate and is now widely accepted
- Post-office as a nodal agency for voter registration is close to reality
- Political funding reform is now in place, and a law has been enacted by Parliament

National Scene - Recent Reform Initiatives

- Disclosure of candidate details
 - Changes in Rajya Sabha Election
 - Anti-defection Law changes
 - Limiting the Size of Council of Ministers
 - Women's Reservation in legislatures
 - Post office as nodal agency for voter registration
 - National Judicial Commission
 - Right to Information
 - Political Funding law
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Two Key Reforms- Proportional Representation

- German model mixing with constituency election
 - 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 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
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Two Key Reforms- Direct election

- Direct election of head of government at State and local levels
 - 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
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National Communication Campaign

- What are the reforms needed and why
- What is there in it for me as a citizen
- How can I participate
- In all major languages
- Taking advantage of Radio and Cable TV penetration

Two Big Challenges

- How do we get media time (as public broadcasting service)
- What is the response capture mechanism (infrastructure of institutions)

Two Paths - Choice is Ours

German example vs USSR example

- Freedom enhancing
- Democratic
- Orderly
- Integrating
- Growth-oriented
- Tyrannical
- Chaotic
- Disintegrating
- Debilitating

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

- *Sun Tzu*