



LOK SATTA PARTY

New Politics for the New Generation

E-Governance from Virtual to Real

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A Few Critical Questions?

- Is information technology meant to:
 - Centralize or decentralize governance?
 - Encourage tyranny or promote liberty in society?
- Is it a substitute for effective action by the government or is it a tool for more sensible policy and decision-making?

Digital Divide

- 42 million internet users in India (2007) – 3.7 % of population
 - Approximately 30.32 million users are in urban areas
- Digital Opportunity Index
 - China (77), Sri Lanka (114), India (124)
- Non-Technological factors:
 - Literacy Rate: 65.38%
 - Real literacy is much lower
- Large sections unable to reap benefits of globalization
- “A new type of poverty – Information Poverty”

Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and Corruption

- Benefits:
 - Ticketing system in the Indian Railways
 - Proliferation of Mobile phone operators
- Limitations:
 - Cannot prevent large-scale predatory corruption that has roots in the current political process

ICT and Democracy

- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are amoral
- Small fragment of population now has a new medium to set the agenda
- Large sections cannot access the Govt. services and products that are available online
- e-governance tends to target the English-educated and techno-savvy populace but not to the illiterate poor

ICT and Democracy

- ICT provides one more tool of surveillance for the authoritarian regimes
- The leaders of political parties, by using ICT, can now directly interact and mobilize the citizenry
- ICT cannot be substitutes for effective and sensible action

ICT and Public Policy

- ICT are necessary, but not sufficient for sound policy or effective implementation
 - Census - wonderful data has not made a significant impact on population control
 - National Sample Survey - rich and wonderful information has not made a significant impact on our economic policies
 - Power sector – no dearth of data, and yet we continue to blunder even today
 - Computerization of Land Records – absence of accurate information on land holdings/records

ICT and Public Policy

- ICT should result in:
 - Transparency and accountability
 - Information flows resulting in better decision making environment
 - Participative decision-making processes

What Needs to be Done

- Better information has to be generated
 - Ex: Land Records
- Focus on citizen-friendly models
 - Ex: Voter Registration
- Use available infrastructure
 - Ex: Post Office and Voter registration
- Convergence of services:
 - German model: Passports and Municipal office
- Introduction of ICT amidst a culture of secrecy will not help

What Needs to be done

- Create IT enabling environments
 - Nine lakh employees directly employed by Govt. of Andhra Pradesh – half are clerks, drivers and peons
- Technology if wisely used in public interest, it can decentralize administration, and will make democracy a real meaningful experience

*“If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because
politics encircles us today like the coil of a snake
... I wish therefore to wrestle with the snake.”*

– Mahatma Gandhi