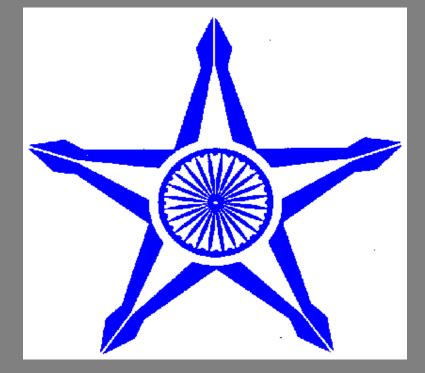
LOK SATTA



#### **LOK SATTA** *People Power*

#### **Indian Political Dynamics**

Global Leadership Program for Boeing

September 23, 2005

401 Nirmal Towers, Dwarakapuri Colony, Punjagutta, Hyderabad – 500 082; Tel: 91 40 23352487; Fax: 91 40 23350783; email: loksatta@satyam.net.in; url: www.loksatta.org

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

or people to do good and difficult to do evil.

#### William Gladstone

## **Democracy – Myron Weiner's Four Conditions**

- Competitive elections
- Political freedoms for all
- Peaceful transfer of power and no retribution

• Real power with elected governments

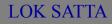
# **Elements of Democracy**

- Liberty
- Self governance
- Rule of law
- Empowerment
- Self-correcting mechanisms

### **Nature of Our Democracy**

#### Genuine

- Elections
- Liberty
- Change of governments
- Political contention
- Independent judiciary



# **Nature of Our Democracy**

#### Deep rooted

- 1977 verdict
- Peaceful transfer of power
- Dalit and OBC empowerment
- Balanced federalism
- Local governments taking root

#### Contd..

# **Nature of Our Democracy**

## Stable

- Constitutional authorities
- Strong bureaucracy
- Tradition of neutrality of civil services
- Impressive administrative infrastructure
- Bipolarity in most states
- Stable conditions at the Union level
- Broad consensus on most policies

#### **Free and Fair Elections**

- Disaggregate volatility
- Broadly reflective of public opinion
- Ruling parties and powerful candidates do lose
- Rejection vote common
- Strength of Election Commission
- No state-sponsored rigging
- Neutrality of civil servants
- Compensatory errors even when there are defects

# **Big Political Questions**

#### Communal divide

- Transient
- System has resilience
- Bombay 1993 and 2003 are symbols of India – not Gujarat 2002
- Judiciary is strong
- Civil society is vigorous
- Political process is safeguard

#### Contd..

# **Big Political Questions**

#### **Economic Reform**

- Political consensus available
- Process irreversible
- Continuity of policy
- Stridency not to be confused with substance
- Young Indians (71% below 34 yrs of age) in favour of markets
- Rule of Law and sanctity of contracts record is mixed
- Political games do cause delays (eg. disinvestment)

Contd..



#### **Big Political Questions**

## Regional divide

- North and East lagging behind South and West
- But problems not intractable
- Effective rule of law, population control and infrastructure will alter the scenario

# Corruption

- Rooted in electoral funding problems
- Centralization
- Slow and tortuous judicial process
- Poor accountability systems



## **But Things are Improving**

- Telecom sector
- Railway freight
- Improved highways rapid execution
- 5-6% growth still sustained
- 20% of all judges removed in Maharashtra
- Population control in Tamil Nadu, AP etc
- Governance and control of corruption are on the agenda
- States competing for investment and growth
- Young people are ambitious, educated and hungry for success

## **Recent Political Reform Initiatives**

- Disclosure of candidate details
- Political Funding Reform Law
- Changes in Rajya Sabha election
- Strong anti-defection provisions
- Limiting the size of the council of ministers
- Women's representation in legislatures
- Empowered local governments
- Balanced Federalism
- Improvements in voter registration etc.
- National Judicial Commission

# **Recent Political Reform Initiatives**

- Removal of corrupt judges
- Right to Information Law
- Citizen's charters with compensation for delays
- E-governance and convergence of services
- Reigning in bureaucracy
- Fast track courts
- Local courts for speedy justice
- Procedural reform in Law

# **Window of Opportunity**

- Demand for reform
- Relatively sound private economy
- Demographic changes
- Large, skilled, young, low-cost manpower
- Communications revolution
- Improved transport
- Power sector reforms in progress
- Road blocks to growth being removed
- Stable polity
- Mature financial system
- National mood upbeat

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

- Mahatma Gandhi