LOK SATTA

People Power

Presentation made to Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha

4th January, 2003, Hyderabad
Mission

To promote peaceful, democratic transformation of Indian Governance process and enable India to achieve full potential through good governance
Why is Governance Vital?

- Governments spend Rs. 1800 crores every day
- Out of 27 million organised workers, government employs 70%
- Fiscal deficit (Union and States) has reached 10% of GDP
- 50% Union tax revenues go towards interest payment
- Only 5% of GDP spent on Health, Education and Social Security
Is Money the Issue?

Sanitation

- 140 million toilets needed
- Cost: Rs 35000 crores
- Equals just 20 days expenditure

School Education

- 1.6 million class rooms needed
- Capital cost : Rs 16,000 crores – 9 days govt. expenditure
- Recurring expenditure : Rs.8000 crores – 5 days govt. expenditure
Failure of Political Process

- **Parties**
  - Autocratic and unaccountable
  - Repel the best
  - A problem, not solution
  - Choice - Tweedledom & Tweedledee

- **Elections**
  - Change of players
  - No change of rules of game
  - Criminalization
  - Money power
  - Flawed process
    - Electoral rolls (40% errors)
    - Bogus voting (22%)
Campaign Expenditure – Vicious Cycle

- Illegitimate expenses are often 5-10 times the ceiling or more
  (Assembly ceiling: Rs 6 lakhs
  Lok Sabha ceiling: Rs 15 lakhs)
- Every crore spent illegitimately

  Rs 10 crore returns
  (to cover ROR, Interest, personal upkeep, supporters, family’s future, next election costs)

  Rs 100 crore collected through bureaucracy
  (for every legislator, there are 2000 employees who need to collect ‘rent’)

  people suffer ten times more.
  (Extortion, harassment, humiliation, pain of delay, anxiety of greater loss)
Can Economic Reforms Alone Deliver?

- Smaller and more focussed government will help
- But government still has large role

Irreducible Role of Government

- Law and order
- Justice
- Rule of law
- School education
- Primary health care
- Basic infrastructure
What Does the Citizen Expect?

- Justice
- Dignity
- Vertical mobility
Keys to Resolution

- Change of players not enough, a change in rules of the game needed
- Values are not the issue, institutions are the key
- Most players are victims of a vicious cycle
- Resources are not a problem, the way they are deployed is the key
Way Out

- Assert people’s sovereignty
- Fundamental democratic transformation
- People centered governance
Key Governance Reforms

- Comprehensive electoral reforms
- Empowerment of local governments
- Instruments of accountability
- Speedy and efficient justice
Approaches to Citizens’ Action

- Collective Informed Assertion
- Wide Dissemination of Information
- Effective Mass Communication
- Strategic Intervention
Methods of Citizens’ Action – Peoples Watch

- Collective Informed Assertion
- People’s Charters
- Lok Satta as Platform
- Fight against corruption
- Fight for better delivery of public services
Impact of Lok Satta

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

contd..
**Impact of Lok Satta**

- Cessation of short delivery at petrol stations all over A.P. – benefit of Rs 1 crore / day

- Stakeholders’ empowerment – laws enacted in the State to constitute water user associations and school education committees

- Toilets for every household – largely on Lok Satta’s advocacy over 2 million toilets were built in the last 3 years

- Stopped enactment of a restrictive Societies Law and ensured passing of an enabling law (in collaboration with CDF)
Impact of Lok Satta

• Several local successes
  eg: Building regularization scheme - Kukatpally / Successful fight against central excise corruption in small industries in AP

• Creating awareness on Right to Information

• Election Watch – arresting growth of criminal elements in politics
  eg: could influence selection of candidate for ZP chairperson in Kurnool district through public pressure

• Lok Satta’s advocacy made common electoral rolls for local, State and national elections a reality

• At State level, Tendered Vote is now accepted as proof of rigging and repolls are ordered

• Lok Satta’s surveys influenced Election Commission to make post office nodal agency for voter registration

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Impact of Lok Satta

- Lok Satta’s work led to Delhi High Court judgment on criminal record of candidates
- Our advocacy of an alternative model for women’s representation has altered the national debate and is now widely accepted
- India’s leading movement for governance reforms
  - 20% popular base in A.P.
  - Nationally recognized as a credible, non-partisan, effective platform to fight corruption, and seek better governance
  - Acquired the potential to help build a national movement
How to Build a State-wide Movement?

- A group of credible persons with excellent track record
- Deep insights into political and governance process
- An agenda that is acceptable to all segments
- Collective informed assertion on specific issues
- Fulltime commitment and professionalism
- Building a platform with brand image
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