



**LOK SATTA**

*People Power*

**Presentation made to Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha**

**4<sup>th</sup> 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

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## 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)

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## 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*