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People Power
Promoting National Good Governance
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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*
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
Role of State

- **Defend Freedom**
  - Laws to regulate conduct
  - Laws to protect liberty (child labor etc.)

- **Common Services**

- **Facilitate Enjoyment of Freedom**
  - Public order and peace
  - Education
  - Health care
  - Elimination of drudgery
  - Conditions for economic growth
Irreducible Role of Government

- Public order
- Rule of law
- Justice
- School education
- Healthcare
- Infrastructure
- Natural resource development
Crisis of Governance

- Increasing lawlessness
- Inefficient state apparatus
- Unresponsive bureaucracy
- Ineffective judicial system
- All pervasive corruption
- Criminalization of politics
- Money and muscle power in elections
- Political instability
- Erosion of legitimacy of authority
What Does the Citizen Expect?

- Justice
- Dignity
- Vertical mobility
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
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
Distortions of State Power

- Positive power restricted
  Negative power unchecked

- All organs are dysfunctional

- Crisis is systemic

- Political process ought to be the solution
  But has become the problem itself
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
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
Electoral Reforms

- **Process Improvements**
  - Preventing polling irregularities
  - Arresting and reversing criminalization of politics
  - Checking abuse of unaccountable money power in elections

- **System Improvements**
  - Political party reform
  - Proportional representation
  - Direct election of Chief Executive at the State level with clear separation of powers
Empowerment of Local Governments

- Transfer of funds, functions and functionaries to local governments

- Link between

  - vote \[\rightsquigarrow\] public good
  - taxes \[\rightsquigarrow\] services
  - authority \[\rightsquigarrow\] accountability
Instruments of Accountability

- Right to Information
- Independent crime investigation
- Independent appointment of constitutional functionaries
- Independent and effective anti-corruption agency
- Term limits for public office
- Strict penalties for abuse of office
- Citizen’s Charters
- Stakeholder empowerment
Judicial Reforms

- Limit writ jurisdiction
- Increase number of courts
- Local courts in local language (Gram Nyayalaya)
- Time bound justice
- Independent mechanism for judicial appointments
- Independent crime investigation
Dangers of Status Quo

- Fiscal collapse
- Anarchy
- Authoritarianism
- Balkanization
- Unfulfilled potential
- Avoidable suffering
Society’s Follies

Absence of

- Sense of equality
- Trust
- Sense of common fate
Keys to Good Governance

- Citizen-centered governance
- Efficient and focused government
- Accountability
- Participative political culture
- Leadership development
- Conditions conducive to liberty
- Steps to promote human dignity
Why No Action So Far

- Ignorance
- Fear
- Inhibition (elitism)
- Lack of common platform

How Can We Overcome

- Trust
- Sense of equality
- Common fate
- Knowledge
- Credible common platform
Keys to Action

- Day-to-day personal relevance
- Tangible, easy action
- Precise knowledge guiding action
- Meticulous preparation
- Wide dissemination
- High credibility
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
Window of Opportunity

- Economic, social & political convulsions preparing the ground
  - Impending fiscal collapse
  - Citizens' disgust / Concern
  - Unsustainable status-quo
  - Relatively sound private economy
  - Communications revolution & satellite television
  - Rising expectations
  - Political instability
Two Paths – Choice is Ours

- German example vs
  - Freedom-enhancing
  - Democratic
  - Orderly
  - Integrating

- USSR Example
  - Tyrannical
  - Chaotic
  - Disintegrating
Keys to Transformation

- Forces of history
- Triggering events
- People's initiatives
- Concerted action
- Clarity of goals
- Consensus on reforms
- National platform with synergies
“The punishment suffered by the wise who refuse to take part in the government, is to live under the government of bad men”

- Plato