LOK SATTA

People Power

State and Liberty

Constitutional Values vs Colonial Instruments

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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*
State and Liberty

- **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
State vs Citizen

- Strong State → authoritarianism
- Weak State → anarchy
- Citizen-centered enabling state

Diagram:
- Individual & Family
- Community of Stakeholders
- Local government
- State government
- Federal government
Components of Democracy

- Liberty
- Self governance
- Empowerment
- Rule of law
- Self-correcting institutions
Tools of State Power

Laws

3000 central laws

30000 state laws

Personnel – 20 million employees -> 70% of organized workers

Public Money

– Rs.1800 crores/day

– only 5% GDP spent on education, health and social security
Distortions of State Power

• Positive Power restricted
  Negative power unchecked

• All organs are dysfunctional

• A system of alibis
  Victims of a vicious cycle

• Change of players
  No change in the rules of the game

• Political process ought to be the solution
  But has become the problem itself
Is Liberalization Enough?

State’s role:

– Rule of law
– Public order
– Education
– Justice
– Health care
– Infrastructure
– Sustainable (Natural Resource Development)

Unintended consequences

– Corruption shifted to sovereign spheres
– One-time corruption – golden goose effect
– Abdication of state in critical areas
Key Concerns

- **Electoral Process**
  - Unaccounted money power
  - Criminalization
  - Polling irregularities
  - Autocratic parties
  - Distortions of FPTP system
  - Problem of disguised executive

- **Centralization**

- **Failure of Rule of Law** (25 million cases pending)

- **No Accountability**
Freedom-enhancing Reforms

- Electoral reforms
  - Political funding
  - Decriminalization
  - Fair polling
  - Regulation of parties
  - Proportional representation
  - Separation of powers

Contd..
Freedom-enhancing Reforms

- Decentralization
  - Vote $\iff$ Public good
  - Taxes $\iff$ Services
  - Authority $\iff$ Accountability

- Rule of law
  - Independent crime investigation
  - Speedy justice
  - Accessible justice
Contd..

Freedom-enhancing Reforms

- Accountability
  - Right to information
  - Citizen’s Charters
  - Empowerment of stakeholders
  - Independent crime investigation
  - Independent appointment of constitutional functionaries
  - Independent and effective anti-corruption mechanism
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
How do we Enlarge Freedoms?

- Citizen-centered governance
- Efficient and focused government
- Accountability
- Participative political culture
- Leadership development
- Conditions conducive to liberty
- Steps to promote human dignity
Gandhiji’s Talisman

“Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away”

- Gandhiji