Lok Satta
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

- Mahatma Gandhi
Crisis of Governance

- Increasing lawlessness
- Inefficient state apparatus
- Unresponsive bureaucracy
- Ineffective judicial system
- All pervasive corruption
- Marginalization of citizens
- Criminalization of politics
- Money and muscle power in elections
- Over centralization
- Competitive populism
- Political instability
- Erosion of legitimacy of authority
Key to Resolution

Crisis encompasses all organs of state
- Executive
- Legislature
- Judiciary

Most players are victims of a vicious cycle
- Politicians
- Bureaucrats
- Judiciary
- Citizens

- Change in the rules of the game
- Not merely a change of players
- Focus on governance processes
- Not on contentious policy debates
Why is Governance Vital?

- Government spends Rs. 1250 crores every day
- Out of 27 million organised workers, government employs 70%
- Fiscal deficit (Union and States) has reached 12% GDP
- 50% Union tax revenues go toward interest payment
Is Money the Issue?

Sanitation

- 140 million toilets needed
- Cost: Rs 35000 crores
- Equals just one month’s expenditure

School Education

- 2 million class rooms needed
- Cost : Rs 20,000 crores capital
  Rs 8,000 crores recurrent
- Equals 16 days expenditure - capital
  7 days expenditure - recurrence
In a Sane Democracy

- Political process should resolve the crisis
- Parties, elections and public office are the route to reform
- In India a vicious cycle operates
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%)
Dangerously Stable Equilibrium

**Elections - a case - Andhra Pradesh: 1999**

- Expenses of parties: Rs 600 crores
- Returns to Politicians:
  - ROI
  - risk
  - future
  - personal
  - Rs 3000 crores

Actual extortion from citizens:
- rent-seeking at every level: Rs 20,000 crores

Conformity:
- best option individually
- worst option societally
Way Out

- People’s sovereignty
- Fundamental democratic transformation
Can economic reforms 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
Citizens’ initiatives
Guiding principles

- Freedom
- Self-governance
- Empowerment
- Rule of law
- Self-correcting institutions
Possible Initiatives

- **People’s watch for public services**
  - Collective
  - Informal
  - Assertive

- **Local reforms**
  - Right to information
  - Citizen’s charters
  - Local self-governance
  - Stake-holder empowerment
  - Access to school education
  - Rural courts for speedy justice
  - Toilets for every household
Election Watch

- Parties’ internal democracy
- Accountable and transparent funding
- Democratic choice of candidates
- Electoral rolls
- Campaign finance
- Criminalization
- Informed public discourse
- Voter Identity cards
- Monitoring polling
National Movement

- Reform of parties
- Electoral reforms
- Federalism
- Local self-governance
- Accountable Bureaucracy
- Speedy justice
- Separation of powers
- Self-correcting mechanisms
Concern to Action

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

**Requirements**
- 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
Active Citizenship

**Nexus**
- Vote and public good
- Tax and services
- Authority and accountability

**Passive Citizenry**
- Legal plunder
- Constitutional brigandage
- Anonymous tyranny
Window of Opportunity

- Impending fiscal collapse
- Citizens’ disgust
- Unsustainable status-quo
- Relatively sound private economy
- Communications revolution
- Satellite television
- Rising expectations