



People Power

LOK SATTA

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Janadesh

a national campaign for political reform

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News Letter

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Campaign Against Corruption

The United Nations has declared 9th of December as **International Anti-Corruption** day and gave a call for people and civil society across the world to launch a sustained campaign to weed out corruption. Given the systemic linkages between its governance reform agenda and the fight against corruption, Lok Satta marked the week of 2 - 9 December with various activities aimed at creating awareness about corruption among citizens. The campaign communicated a message to the citizens that there are practical, specific solutions to combat corruption such as Right to Information, Citizen's Charters, False Claims Act etc. As part of the campaign, the grassroots units of Lok Satta throughout Andhra Pradesh took up the following activities:

- Took up advocacy with local media and helped them write extensive articles on corruption in various government departments.
- Printed and distributed tens of thousands of leaflets outlining specific measures for combating corruption.



Students pledging to fight corruption



One of the many anti corruption walks by our volunteers

- Distributed 500,000 badges with anti-corruption messages.
- Held various activities, such as essay-writing competitions etc. to involve youth in this campaign.
- Organized an anti-corruption walk in almost every major town and city of Andhra Pradesh on the 9th of December in which more than 500,000 people participated.

Grassroots Initiatives- A Story To Emulate

Between September and December of 2004, the women residents in Koritapadu area, Guntur pioneered an initiative in active citizen's participation aimed towards solving local problems. In September, the municipal administration of Guntur town announced that if local residents raise 30-40% of the estimated cost of a civic project, they would be provided with the balance funds and also be allowed to execute the project themselves.

These women - all Lok Satta volunteers - formed a People's Estimation Committee (PEC) for overseeing the design, initiation and laying of a concrete road for their street. In India, civic projects such as road laying are preceded by years of public demand followed by a tedious bureaucratic process of estimates, tenders, bids and award of contracts. Had this project too been subjected to the same laborious procedures, it probably would have been bogged down for years and even when executed would have been at an inflated cost with sub-standard quality.

However, Lok Satta Mahila members managed to simplify the entire process by raising the initial sum of Rs. 1,80,000 and directly undertaking the road laying themselves. The key contribution from the municipality came in the form of providing balance funds of Rs. 2,70,000 and technical assistance for quality oversight.

As a result, not only was the road laid on time, but also the residents managed to do it by spending Rs 1,00,000 less than the estimated Rs. 4,50,000! These women pioneers used the savings to lay a new

pipeline for water supply, costing Rs 90,000.

In appreciation of Lok Satta's initiative, the Municipal Commissioner of Guntur has renamed the road as **Lok Satta Road**. Buoyed by this success, the local administration expressed its commitment to replicate this practice of directly empowering citizens in other areas of their municipality.

Post Card Campaign For Right To Information

As many of you are aware, Lok Satta has been campaigning for a long time for the enactment of a sensible Right to Information legislation both at the state and union level. The erstwhile NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government passed a flawed law in 2003, for which the rules were not framed for more than a year! Lok Satta along with civil society partners such as MKSS, CHRI, Parivartan and NCRI (National Campaign for Right to Information) met and put together a vastly improved draft legislation. This issue was taken up by the National Advisory Council (NAC) in one of its early meetings. The NAC (as you are aware, Dr Jayaprakash Narayan is the member of NAC) had forwarded the same to the government with a recommendation to enact legislation on similar lines. In an effort to mobilize public opinion in support of this crucial legislation, Lok Satta undertook a state-wide post card campaign in Andhra Pradesh between 25th October and 10th November. During this period approximately 150,000 citizens from AP sent post cards to the Prime Minister urging him to enact a revised Right to Information law in the Winter session of the Parliament.

P.S: As we go to the press, we regret to inform you that a deeply flawed bill has been introduced in the Parliament. NAC members are taking up the issue to ensure that appropriate amendments are made and a sensible law is enacted.



Lok Satta volunteers with post cards that were sent to the Prime Minister

Sri Mamidi Bhoj Reddy Endowment Award 2004

As reported earlier in these columns, Lok Satta and Foundation for Democratic Reforms (FDR) instituted an award in memory of Sri Mamidi Bhoj Reddy for recognizing significant contributions to the cause of local government empowerment. Lok Satta and FDR's board of management has chosen to honor Sri MY Ghorpade, former Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister for Karnataka with Sri Mamidi Bhoj Reddy Endowment Award 2004. Sri Ghorpade served as Karnataka's Minister for Panchayat Raj between 1992 - 94 and again during 1999 - 2004 and was instrumental in ensuring significant devolution of powers to local governments. He is widely recognized for his integrity and commitment for strengthening local governance. In a public function held in Hyderabad on the 13th of October, Sri Digvijay Singh, the former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister presented the award to

Sri Ghorpade. In his acceptance speech, Sri Ghorpade stressed the need for following a principle of *Subsidiarity* as a guide for devolution of powers. At the same function, Sri C Hanumantha Rao, a distinguished economist and former Member of the Planning Commission released Lok Satta's report on Empowerment of Local Governments. The publication of the report was made possible by funding from Sri Chalasani Satyanarayana Civil Society Endowment. A copy of the report can be accessed at: www.loksatta.org/lgrep.pdf



Sri Digvijay Singh delivering the EV Ram Reddi Endowment Lecture

Sri EV Ram Reddi Endowment Lecture 2004

As many of you are aware, Lok Satta and FDR have instituted an endowment lecture in the memory of Sri EV Ram Reddi, a distinguished civil servant from Andhra Pradesh. The first lecture was delivered by Sri Suresh Prabhu in 2003. Lok Satta and FDR's board of management have invited Sri Digvijay Singh to deliver the 2004 EV Ram Reddi endowment lecture on a topic of his choice. In the same function held on 13th of October for presenting the Mamidi Bhoj Reddy Endowment award, Sri Singh, spoke on *Administrative Reforms and Enhancing Public Service Delivery Systems*. A copy of his lecture can be accessed at:

www.loksatta.org/arepsds.pdf

Lok Satta Organisational Elections

The bi-annual organizational elections for Lok Satta took place between August - October 2004. Hundreds of new primary units were formed throughout the state. New office bearers to the district committees as well as the Apex Committee (Lok Satta's General Body) were elected at various levels. The newly elected representatives to the Apex Committee as well as the co-opted members participated in the Annual General Body Meeting of Lok Satta held in Hyderabad on the 17th of October. Representatives of Lok Satta Maharashtra, the newly formed affiliate also participated in the meeting. The General Body of the organization unanimously reelected Sri DVVS Varma as the Campaign Coordinator for Andhra Pradesh and Dr Jayaprakash Narayan as the National Coordinator of the Lok Satta movement.

The General Body elected a 51-member Coordination committee to guide the regular functioning of the organization. The new coordination committee has re-nominated Sri B Ankaiah as the State General Secretary and in addition has nominated Sri Kodanda Ramarao as Secretary Training, Sri B Satyanarayana as Secretary Organization, Sri MBNVV Prasad as Treasurer and Sri D Somasundar as Editor for Janabalam. The General Body reviewed the organization's activities in the past one year and charted a course of action for 2005.



Dr JP addressing the Annual General Body Meeting of Lok Satta at Surana Auditorium, Hyderabad

Training Of Civil Society Activists

Lok Satta in collaboration with Centre for Good Governance (CGG), Hyderabad, took up a program for training civil society activists at the district level with an aim to empower them with knowledge on ways to enhance transparency and accountability in governance and techniques of collective assertion. As a first step, a 2-day workshop for training the resource persons who will subsequently take up the district level programmes was held in Hyderabad between the 26-27 of October. Sri VK Parigi, head of the Good Governance stream at CGG addressed the participants on various instruments to enhance transparency and accountability such as citizen's charters, right to information, consumer laws etc. Sri DVVS Varma, Campaign Coordinator of Lok Satta talked about the linkages between human development and good governance. Sanjay, our head of the Research Wing, presented comparative data on key human development parameters. The participants also benefited from the presentation of Prof Ramabrahmam of Hyderabad Central University on the nature of relationship between good governance, citizen and role of civil society. Sri M Sridhar, a distinguished faculty member of National Law School, Hyderabad threw light on the citizen rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Lok Satta and CGG will be conducting district-level programmes for training civil society activists in the near future.

Visit By British Parliamentarians

Members of the **International Development Committee comprising of British Parliamentarians were on a tour of India. They were entrusted with the task of evaluating the effectiveness of DFID's (the British government's Department for International Development) assistance to India.** As DFID has a significant aid component to Andhra Pradesh, the team visiting Hyderabad sought an interaction with Lok Satta's leadership to elicit its views. The International Development Committee was headed by Mr. Tony Baldry, (Conservative MP, Banbury) and included Mr. John Battle, MP, (Labour, Leeds West), Mr. Tony Colman, MP, (Labour, Putney), Mr. Piara S Khabra, MP, (Labour, Ealing Southall), Mr. Andrew Robathan, MP, (Conservative, Blaby) and Mr. Alistair Doherty, Clerk of the Committee.

Campaign For Taxation With Transparency

The first major Janadesh campaign for political and a governance reform was launched in Bangalore by Janagraha, a major civil society organization in that city and a key partner in Janadesh. Dr Jayaprakash Narayan moderated the panel discussion on

"Taxation with Transparency - Sustainable Solutions". Dr. Vyasulu (Centre for Budget and Policy Studies), Ms. Madhu Kishwar (Manushi, New Delhi), Sri Raghunandan (Panchayat Raj Secretary, Karnataka), Sri Neela Narendra Babu (Legislator) and Sri Ramesh Ramanathan (Janaagraha) participated in the panel discussion. All the panelists unequivocally supported the call for transparency and accountability in municipal taxation and stressed the need for civil society initiative in enhancing the quality of governance. Moderating the discussion, Dr Narayan stressed on the need for empowerment of local governments and stated that the link between taxes paid and services received can only be established at the local level.

Healthcare Reform - National Advisory Committee Meeting

Dr Jayaprakash Narayan, (as was reported in previous issue) was asked to come up with specific reform proposals on healthcare by the National Advisory Council. He drafted a comprehensive reform agenda and circulated it to the members of the NAC towards the end of September. The NAC took up the subject for a formal discussion in its meeting held on the 20th of October. Based on the deliberations of the council, the NAC chairperson, Mrs Gandhi forwarded to the government a set of recommendations for overhauling the country's healthcare system. Dr Narayan subsequently interacted with the Planning Commission and its Deputy Chairman Sri Montek Singh Ahluwalia, and briefed them on the contours of the proposed healthcare reform. As we are going to the press, the government is actively contemplating incorporation of some of the proposals in its National Healthcare Mission. The gist of the reform proposals and the NAC chairperson's letter to the Prime Minister can be accessed at: www.loksatta.org/nacmat.pdf

Talk By Graham Johnson

Mr Graham Johnson, Chairman of the International Council on Government Ethics Laws, Langley, WA, USA was on a visit to several cities in India to deliver a series of lectures. Being informed of Lok Satta's advocacy for Accountability in Governance, the US Council thought it appropriate to organize an interactive session on "Transparency and Accountability in Governance" between Mr. Graham Johnson and Lok Satta members. The following issues were discussed:

- ◆ Freedom of information
- ◆ Legislative ethics
- ◆ Judicial accountability
- ◆ Evolution of transparency

Lectures, Seminars, Meetings And Workshops

- Invited to address a session on "**Vision for India's Sustainable Development**", Hyderabad, October 2
- Invited to address members of Rotary Club of Bombay on **Governance and Growth** on 5th October
- Invited to address the members of the Indian Merchants Chamber, Mumbai on **Economic Growth and Political Reforms- The Next Decade**, Mumbai, October 6th
- Invited to interact with the participants of FOCUS Workshop on Information Gathering and Dissemination - The LOK SATTAs Experience, organised by Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad, Oct 15-16
- Invited to address the Post Masters General on **Potential Role of India Posts in the Electoral Process** at Bella Vista,

Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad, October 27th

- Invited as a panel speaker on **Citizen Charter: International Experiences on Fourth Innovation and Quality in the Public Administration Forum** organised by the Government of Mexico, Mexico City November 8 - 13
- Invited to attend the first meeting of the **Vigilance Advisory Council** New Delhi, November 17
- Invited to attend the Indira Gandhi Conference on. **India: The Next Decade** organized by Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust, New Delhi, November 19 - 21st
- Invited to deliver a talk at **Liberty and Society Seminar** in Mumbai on **Democracy and Governance: Challenges** organised by **Centre for Civil Society**, November 25th
- Invited to make a presentation on Healthcare Reform titled **Towards A National Health Service** to the Planning Commission, New Delhi, November 26th
- Dr Jayaprakash Narayan was invited to deliver the First Yarlagadda Sreeramulu Endowment Lecture on **Democracy, Populism and Free Lunches**, Hyderabad, December 4th
- Invited to make a presentation on **Electoral Reforms** to the Cabinet Secretariat - Government of India, New Delhi, December 7th
- Invited for a breakfast meeting with Parliamentarians and made a presentation on **Politician-A Villain or Victim: A Plea for Electoral Reforms** organised by Centre for Civil Society, New Delhi, December 8th
- Invited to be a panel member in the plenary session of the symposium on the theme of **Governance Reforms and Development with a focus on the Civil Society in India**, Anand, Gujarat, December 15th
- Invited for an interaction on **Healthcare Reform** with Sri Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, New Delhi, December 21

Honours

Dr Jayaprakash Narayan was honoured with the **Dr Pinnamaneni and Smt Seetha Devi Foundation Award 2004** on the 16th of December at a function held in Vijayawada.

New Publications

Popular Sovereignty vs Responsible Government

This paper, written by Dr Jayaprakash Narayan for Mexico Innova Week deals with how institutions like Citizen's Charters can be effective in ensuring transparency and accountability.

This paper can be accessed at: www.loksatta.org/psovereign.pdf

Political Reforms and Economic Prosperity

This paper, written by Dr Jayaprakash Narayan for Indira Gandhi Conference organized by Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, deals with the link between political reforms and economic prosperity.

This paper can be accessed at: www.loksatta.org/prep.pdf

Empowering Women and Reinventing Politics

This paper, written by Dr Jayaprakash Narayan for the Institute for Human Science and Service, deals with how women are not allowed space to actively participate in the political process and suggests measures to address this problem. This paper can be accessed at: www.loksatta.org/emp.pdf

Democracy, Populism and Free Lunches

This paper, written by Dr Jayaprakash Narayan and delivered as the First Yarlagadda Sreeramulu Endowment Lecture, deals with the causes and consequences of populist policies that have come to characterize our democracy. This paper can be accessed at: www.loksatta.org/populism.pdf

Governance Reforms, Development and Civil Society

This paper, written by Dr Jayaprakash Narayan for IRMA, Anand as a part of its Silver Jubilee Symposium on **Governance in Development: Issues, Challenges, Strategies** looks at the relationship between governance and development and goes on to examine the role of civil society in bringing about governance reforms through collective and informed assertion.

This paper can be accessed at: www.loksatta.org/civilsociety.pdf

Making Democracy Work for the Poor

This paper written by Dr Jayaprakash Narayan and delivered as a lecture for Dr Pinnamaneni & Smt Seethadevi Foundation looks at how education, health and justice can be made accessible to the poor. This paper can be accessed at: www.loksatta.org/demopoor.pdf

Your Contributions Can Make A Difference

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