

Proceedings



9th National Conference on Electoral & Political Reforms

22nd & 23rd March 2013 / Jaipur, Rajasthan

ADR

ASSOCIATION FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORMS

9th ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE
on
‘ELECTORAL & POLITICAL REFORMS’

Organised by

Rajasthan Election Watch (REW)
&
Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)

Venue: Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj Sansthan

Date: 23rd March & 24th March

चुनाव पर आयकर विभाग की भी नजर

जयपुर

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देश के मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त वी.एस. सम्पत ने चुनाव में धनबल बढ़ाने पर चिंता जाहिर की। उन्होंने कहा कि ज्यादा चुनाव खर्च वाले इलाकों को संवेदनशील माना जाएगा और उन पर विशेष नजर रखी जाएगी। हर राज्य में चुनाव से पहले पूरा आयोग वरिष्ठ आयकर अधिकारियों से बात करेगा।

वे रविवार को जयपुर में एसोसिएशन फॉर डेमोक्रेटिक रिफॉर्म व नेशनल इलेक्शन वॉच की ओर से आयोजित दो दिवसीय चुनाव सुधार सम्बन्धी कार्यशाला में आए थे। उन्होंने कहा कि धनबल, सत्ता और बाहुबल निष्पक्ष चुनाव में दिक्कत पैदा कर रहे हैं। राजनीतिक दलों पर निबंधन के लिए कानून की आवश्यकता जताते हुए कहा कि आयोग इस मुद्दे को देखा रखे है, दलों को मिलने वाले कारपोरेट चंदे व कूपन से धन जुटाने की व्यवस्था में सुधार के लिए विधि मंत्रालय से राय ली जा रही है। राजनीति में अपराधियों को रोकने के मसले पर विधि आयोग विचार कर रहा है। चुनाव में काला धन आ रहा है, खर्च पर नजर रखने व धन का दुरुपयोग रोकने के लिए बड़ी तादाद में आब्जर्वर लगाए जाएंगे। सम्पत ने राजनीतिक दलों में आंतरिक लोकतंत्र बढ़ाने व गलत शपथ पत्र देने वालों पर कार्रवाई में लाचारी जताते हुए कहा कि अभी शपथ पत्र सही भरवाने पर जोर रहेगा।

पेड न्यूज पर चिंतित



मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त ने पेड न्यूज पर चिंता जताते हुए कहा कि यह चुनाव अपराध तो नहीं है, लेकिन इसे प्रत्याशी के खर्च के संदर्भ में देखते हुए नोटिस भेजे जा रहे हैं। मीडिया पर कार्रवाई के लिए प्रेस काउन्सिल को लिखा जाएगा, चुनाव खर्च पर निगरानी के लिए जिला व राज्य स्तर पर कमेटी बनाई जाएगी। पेड न्यूज पर 24 घंटे में कार्रवाई की जाएगी।

भूमाफिया तैयारी में

इस मौके पर राष्ट्रीय सलाहकार परिषद की सदस्य अरुणा राय ने कहा कि खान मालिक व भूमाफियाओं के चुनाव मैदान में आने की तैयारी कर रहे हैं। राज्य आयोजना बोर्ड के उपाध्यक्ष प्रो. वीएस व्यास, प्रो. त्रिलोचन शास्त्री, राज्य निर्वाचन आयुक्त एके पाण्डे, राज्य के मुख्य निर्वाचन अधिकारी अशोक जैन व सामाजिक कार्यकर्ता निखिल डे ने भी विचार रखे।

ये भी आए सुझाव

- राजनीतिक दलों को मिलने वाले चंदे पर कर लगे
- जनप्रतिनिधियों की शैक्षणिक योग्यता तय हो
- नामांकन सम्बन्धी पूरी प्रक्रिया व वोटिंग ऑनलाइन हो
- मतदाता को भत्ता दिया जाए
- मतदाता को एक से अधिक मत देने से रोका जाए
- कोर्ट के प्रसंज्ञन लेने पर पांच साल की सजा का अंदेश हो तो चुनाव लड़ने से रोका जाए
- प्रत्याशियों को लोकसेवक माना जाए, ताकि फ्रीबी कार्रवाई कर सके
- आंतरिक लोकतंत्र के लिए पार्टी प्रमुख का चुनाव आवश्यक हो

छिपाते हैं खर्च

चुनाव आयोग में संयुक्त निदेशक भारत भूषण गर्ग ने कहा कि दिखावे को आधे से ज्यादा प्रत्याशी तय खर्च सीमा का आधा खर्च ही बता रहे हैं। बांटने के लिए कोई पैसा ले जाते पकड़ा जाएगा तो राशि जब्त करने के साथ ही प्रत्याशी को गिरफ्तार किया जाएगा। कार्यशाला में यह भी कहा गया कि अनुमान के मुताबिक चुनावों में अभी तय सीमा से 81 हजार करोड़ रुपए अधिक खर्च हो रहे हैं।



Sampath favours new law to regulate parties

Chief Election Commissioner V.S. Sampath called on Sunday for a new legislation to better regulate the activities of political parties.

He made the pitch while speaking on the concluding day of the ninth annual conference on electoral and political reforms, organised here by the Association of Democratic Reforms and National Election Watch.

He said the Election Commission had succeeded in eliminating booth capturing and hooliganism. Now, it was working to regulate the excessive use of money power. It had set up a poll expenditure monitoring committee.

The Commission could not act against media houses over paid news; only the Press Council of India could do it.

On Sunday, the final day of the conference, elected representatives of the panchayati raj institutions narrated their success stories.

Sarpanch Rukmi Devi spoke of her experience of defeating a rich candidate by spending only Rs. 2,000 on her campaign. Another Sarpanch Kalu Ram spent a mere Rs. 654.

Noting that the panchayati raj institutions were riddled with problems, Mazdoor Kishan Shakti Sangathan leader Nikhil Dey admitted that the system had provided women and the poor with opportunities of mobility.

Rajasthan Chief Electoral Officer Ashok Jain said that providing security to women candidates in panchayat elections had emerged as a major concern.

सिटी @ SUNDAY

राजनीतिक दलों पर भी हो नियंत्रण

[सुनाव सुधार] देशभर में संघर्षरत कार्यकर्ताओं ने जाहिर की यह राय

जयपुर

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लोकतंत्र चुनाव खर्च बेकाबू होने का खामियाजा भुगत रहा है, चुनाव कारपोरेट घरानों के कब्जे में है और अच्छे आदमी खर्च के कारण चुनाव से डरते हैं। शनिवार को नेशनल इलेक्शन रीफॉर्म और एमोसिएशन फॉर डेमोक्रेटिक रीफॉर्म की ओर से इन्दिरा गांधी पंचायती राज संस्थान में शुरू हुई दो दिवसीय राष्ट्रीय कॉन्फ्रेंस में ऐसे ही कई अहम मुद्दों पर चर्चा हुई।

सीपीआई की राष्ट्रीय सचिव अमरजीत बौर ने तो यहाँ तक कह दिया कि पहले कोई राजनीति में आता तो कहते थे कि अब घर के बर्तन बिक जायेंगे, लेकिन आज किसी के पास काम नहीं होता तो लोग कहते हैं कि किसी नेता के साथ लगा तो घर बन जाएगा। राष्ट्रीय सलाहकार परिषद की सदस्य अरुणा राव ने कहा कि चुनाव को कारपोरेट घराने कंट्रोल कर रहे हैं। पैसे के पीछे से नीतियाँ तैयार हो रही हैं। चुनाव सुधार अभियान चला रहे प्रो. त्रिलोचन शास्त्री ने कहा कि पहले चुनावों में पैसे की भूमिका सीमित थी, अब यह फाजूल व शासन तक में दिखने लगी है।

राजनीति दलों के प्रतिनिधि पहुंचे

सीपीआई की राष्ट्रीय सचिव अमरजीत बौर, कांग्रेस के प्रदेश महासचिव सुरील शर्मा व प्रवक्ता अर्चना शर्मा व माकपा के दुर्धंत ने विचार व्यक्त किए। इनके अलावा अन्य दलों के प्रतिनिधि नहीं पहुंचे। देश के मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त वी.एस. शर्मा शनिवार को जयपुर आएंगे।



सुनाव सुधार पर चर्चा करते राजनीतिक कार्यकर्ता अरुणा राव व अमरजीत बौर

यह भी आए सुझाव

- राजनीति में एलजीओ कार्यकर्ता भी आए
- क्षेत्रीय पार्टियों को बढ़ाने से रोकना जाए
- राजनीतिक दलों पर नियंत्रण के लिए कानून लाया जाए
- राजनीतिक दलों के लिए वोटें संदिग्ध बननी चाहिए
- जाति-धर्म आधारित राजनीति नहीं होनी चाहिए
- विजयी के खिलाफ चालान फेंक तो उसे चुनाव लड़ने से रोकना जाए
- जी वोट ऑप्शन होना चाहिए
- राजनीतिक दलों को आर्टीआई के दब्बे में लाया जाए
- चुनावी घंटे में पारदर्शिता लाई जाए और कारपोरेट से घंटे पर रोक लगे
- चुनाव का खर्च चुनाव आयोग ही उठाए
- महिलाओं का एक तिहाई आरक्षण लागू किया जाए
- चुनाव सम्बन्धी विकासित फास्ट ट्रैक चर्चे में सुनी जाए
- राजनीतिक दल राजनीतिक आंदोलनों को समीक्षा किए से देखें

Raj ministers lag behind in declaring their assets

DNA Correspondent

Four ministers in Rajasthan—Brij Kishore Sharma (primary and secondary education), Bharat Singh (PWD), Rajendra Singh Gudha (MoS Independent charge civil defence) and Mangilal Garasia (MoS Independent charge labour and employment)—did not declare their assets in 2012, against the mandatory code of conduct for ministers. Of these, Gudha had last made his declaration in 2010.

On the other hand, four ministers—Rajendra Pareek, Hemaram Chaudhury, Virendra Beniwal, Murarilal Meena and Rajkumar Sharma—have gone an extra mile and voluntarily made their income tax returns public, along with their asset declarations for 2012.

This was disclosed by the Association for Democratic

राजस्थान

इलेक्शन वॉच



Reforms (ADR) and Rajasthan Election Watch at a press conference on Thursday. According to the analysis, which compared the immovable and financial assets held by ministers between 2008

(filed at the time of elections) and 2012, 23 ministers in Rajasthan now hold 229 properties

between them, working out to an average of 10 properties per minister. The highest increase in the number of properties comes from Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya who held 25 properties in 2012 compared to 15 in 2008. State minister Manju

Money MATTERS

Ministers Brij Kishore Sharma, Bharat Singh, Rajendra Singh Gudha and Mangilal Garasia have not declared their assets in 2012

Devi's properties have increased from 7 to 14 in this period, while that of Ashok Bairwa has gone up from 8 to 13. Minister of state for health Rajkumar Sharma was the only one who declared he had no immovable property either in 2008 or 2012.

The ADR analysis also revealed that the Rajasthan Assembly sat for just 97 days over 9 sessions in the four year period 2009-2012. On average, it sat for just 24 days (or 4 weeks) in an entire year faring worse than states like Gujarat (31 days of sitting/year) and Himachal Pradesh (26 days/year).

DNA
DAILY NEWS & ANALYSIS

JAIPUR
FRIDAY,
MARCH 22, 2013

Nothing official about party funds

REGULAR

Manjul

NGOs look up IT records to reveal donors; find incredibly low donations

DNA Correspondent • JAIPUR

The Congress party received merely Rs 88.21 lakh as donations from 65 donors contributing over Rs20,000 each in Rajasthan in a near-decade long period between 2003-04 and 2011-12, while the BJP received Rs98.89 lakh worth of donations from just 19 donors in that period.

The total income of the Congress coinciding roughly with this period was Rs2008 crore and that of BJP, Rs994 crore. The figures sound unbelievably low, but are based on the only official records - IT returns



and list of donors over Rs 20,000 - available on political party funding provided by the income tax department to Delhi-based organisation

Association for Democratic Reform (ADR) and Rajasthan Election Watch, which presented these findings in Jaipur on Wednesday.

The top donor to both parties from Rajasthan was CK Birla group company National Engineering Industries Ltd (known as NBC) which bestowed Rs 37.5 lakh on each party in 2009-10. Sanjay Singhal's Secure Meters Ltd. in Udaipur, which has international operations in UK also figured on both parties' donor lists, contributing Rs 1 lakh to Congress and Rs 1.7 lakh to BJP. Shree Cements has donated Rs 2 lakh to the Congress



no one will be spared. The #*#@*# law take its own course

• Turn to

Cong earned double than BJP in 7 years, says NGO

Cong Made ₹2000cr, BJP ₹995cr, Finds RTI

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Jaipur: The ruling Congress earned over Rs 2,000 crores — more than double the amount that the main opposition BJP earned — in the past seven financial years from 2004-05 to 2010-11. During the same period, the BJP earned around Rs 995 crores,

► Vedanta group top donor, P 4

the BSP over Rs 438 crores, the CPM over Rs 417 crores, the SP over Rs 278 crores and the Janata Dal just about Rs 27 crores.

The earning and expenditure figures of the political parties were released here by the NGOs, National Election Watch and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and its state unit the Rajasthan Election Watch (REC) on Thursday.

As per the information gathered by the ADR under the Right to Information Act, the Congress has shown its maximum income from sale of coupons, followed by donations and interest earnings. The top

CM top donor to state Cong

From Rajasthan, the Congress received Rs 88,21,381 through 65 donors, while the BJP received Rs 98,89,000 through 19 donors between 2004-05 and 2011-12. Further, three of the top five donors to both the parties in Rajasthan are same — National Engineering Industries Ltd, PI Industries Ltd and Shree Cement.

Among the politicians, chief minister Ashok Gehlot is the top donor to the Congress, followed by cabinet minister Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya. P 4

sources of income for BJP, BSP, SP, CPM and the JD were 'voluntary' contributions and membership fees.

From foreign donations, the BJP received over Rs 19.42 crores and the Congress received over Rs 9.83 crores. In the year 2006-07, the BJP's top four foreign donors included the Dow Chemical International Pvt Ltd, which took over the Union Carbide Corporation from whose Bhopal plant a poisonous gas killed thousands in December 1984.

7 साल में कांग्रेस को 2000 करोड़ रु. और भाजपा को 994 करोड़ रु. चंदा मिला

भाजपा ने लिया डाउ कैमिकल से चंदा, पार्टियों को चंदे की मोटी रकम देने के लिए बड़ी कंपनियों ने बनाए ट्रस्ट, वेदांता समूह चंदा देने में सबसे आगे

विदेश से चंदा बढ़ाया | जयपुर

और एसोसिएशन ऑफ डेमोक्रेटिक रिफॉर्म के अनिल वैरवाल, रेणुका प्रमेश और कमला टाक ने आरटीआई से हरिसिल दस्तावेजों के जरिये गुजरात को यह खुलासा हुआ है। राजनीतिक दलों के आयकर विवरण के विश्लेषण के बाद यह खुलासा हुआ है कि कांग्रेस और भाजपा देश में सबसे ज्यादा आय वाले राजनीतिक दल हैं। 04-05 से 10-11 को अर्बों में कांग्रेस को 2008.71 करोड़ रुपए की आय हुई। इस अवधि में भाजपा को 994.76 करोड़, बसपा को 438.39 करोड़, माकापा को 417.26 करोड़, सपा को 278.55 करोड़ और वेदांता को 26.67 करोड़ रुपए की आय हुई है। पार्टियों को यह आय चंदे, दान और अन्य स्रोतों से हुई है।

राजस्थान से कांग्रेस को दान देने वाले बड़े दानदाता

दानदाता	दान की रकम	वर्ष
नेकम इंडियन इंडस्ट्रीज लि.	37.50 लाख	09-10
सिक्वोर मीटर लिमिटेड	10 लाख	09-10
वैल केम इंडिया लिमिटेड	10 लाख	09-10
पैजर्स इंडस्ट्रीज लि.	05 लाख	09-10
श्री सीमेंट लिमिटेड	2.50 लाख	04-05 तक

राजस्थान से भाजपा को दान देने वाले बड़े दानदाता

दानदाता	दान की रकम	वर्ष
नेकम इंडियन इंडस्ट्रीज लि.	37.50 लाख	09-10
श्री सीमेंट लिमिटेड	25 लाख	04-05
राजेश ट्रेडिंग कंपनी	10 लाख	07-08
पैजर्स इंडस्ट्रीज लिमिटेड	9.70 लाख	09-06
वेन केम इंडिया लिमिटेड	04 लाख	04-06
सिक्वोर मीटर लिमिटेड	1.70 लाख	03-04
सिक्वोर एलस्टिक	1.31 लाख	03-04

विदेश से चंदा लेने में भाजपा कांग्रेस से आगे

कांग्रेस को मिलने जो 2011 में विदेशों से 9.83 करोड़ रुपए का चंदा मिला, जिसका ज्यादातर दस्तावेजों में पार्टी ने उल्लेख किया है। कांग्रेस को वेदांता की सहजक कंपनी स्टारफाइटर इंडस्ट्रीज इंडिया लिमिटेड ने 6 करोड़, सेल गेज लिमिटेड ने 2.78 करोड़, सोलरीज लिमिटेड ने 1 करोड़ और हवाल सीमेंटी ने 5 लाख रु. दिए। विदेशों से मिला 19.42 करोड़ का चंदा विदेशों से चंदा व कल का पैसा लेने में भाजपा आगे रही है। भाजपा ने 2008-07 में छप कैमिकल से 1 लाख रुपए का चंदा लिया। वह वहीं कंपनी है जिसने भोपाल गैस त्रासदी की जिम्मेदार यूनिफ़ाइन कार्बाइड का अधिग्रहण किया था। भाजपा को 03-04 से 11-12 के बीच विदेशों से 19.42 करोड़ रुपए की पहिलिया मिली। पहिलिया एंड पॉलिटेकनल अवेयरनेस ट्रस्ट ने 14.50 करोड़, कैमला व मण्डल एल्यूमिनियम कंपनी लिमिटेड कंपनी से 3.80 करोड़, सेल गेज लिमिटेड ने 1.41 करोड़ का विदेशी चंदा मिला।

कांग्रेस ने कूपन बेचकर जुटाया पैसा

अधिकांश दिनों में विदेशी विदेश के अजुबान कांग्रेस ने कूपन बेचकर 1563.77 करोड़ की उच्च अर्जित की, भाजपा ने स्थैतिक सहयोग से 820 करोड़ जुटाए। भाजपा ने एप्रैल 02 से 35.7 करोड़, जनवरी में 188.89 करोड़, दांच किया।

राजनीतिक दलों को पहिलिया करने के लिए देश के बड़े कॉर्पोरेट समूहों ने बाकायदा ट्रस्ट बना लिए हैं। इन ट्रस्टों के जरिए कंपनियों ने बड़े राजनीतिक दलों को पहिलिया की है। बड़ी कंपनियों के इन ट्रस्टों में वेदांता समूह का पब्लिक एंड पॉलिटेकनल अवेयरनेस ट्रस्ट, जनरल इलेक्ट्रॉनल ट्रस्ट, एक्टेल का भारतीय इलेक्ट्रॉनल ट्रस्ट है। जनरल इलेक्ट्रॉनल ट्रस्ट ने 2004-05 से 2010-11 तक कांग्रेस को 36.41 करोड़ रुपए, भाजपा को 26.57 करोड़ रुपए, पब्लिक एंड पॉलिटेकनल अवेयरनेस ट्रस्ट ने कांग्रेस को 14.50 करोड़ रुपए, भारतीय इलेक्ट्रॉनल ट्रस्ट ने कांग्रेस को 14.50 करोड़ रुपए दिए। नेशनल इलेक्ट्रॉनल वा

Assets of Rajasthan ministers have gone up since 2008 State Assembly polls

Mahim Pratap Singh

JAIPUR: The total number of immovable assets owned by ministers of the Rajasthan Government has gone up since the 2008 State Assembly elections, according to Rajasthan Election Watch, part of the non-profit poll watch organisation, Association of Democratic Reforms.

While Rural Development Minister Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya leads the pack with 25 properties, up from 15 in 2008, other gainers include Minister of State for Agriculture Murari Lal Meena (+7), Minister of State for Women & Child Development Manju Devi (+7) and Minister of State for Panchayati Raj Vinod Lilawali (+6).

Interestingly, while Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot declared one additional immovable asset, four ministers of his Cabinet actually reported

a decrease in the number of immovable assets owned by them.

Minister of State for Higher Education Daya Ram Parmar reported the biggest loss of property, down to 12 from 18. Similarly, Minister of State for Cooperatives Brijendra Singh Ola (-6), Water Resources Minister Hema Ram Choudhary (-3) and Tourism Minister Bina Kak (-2) reported a decrease in their immovable assets since 2008.

Amid all the gainers and losers, Science & Technology Minister Rajkumar Sharma reported owning no immovable assets at all, same as in 2008.

On the other hand, six ministers reported the same number of assets in 2012 as they did in 2008. They include Rajendra Pareek (4), Ameen Khan (3), Parsadi Lal Meena (3), Jitendra Singh (7), Aimaduddin Ahmad (9)

and Shanti Dhariwal (7).

While Rajasthan Election Watch says all 23 ministers "appear to be *crorepatis*", five of them had declared the asset value of their properties in 2008 which indeed run in crores. This group is led by Minister of State for Agricultural Marketing Gurmeet Singh Kunnar (Rs.8.78 crore), Urban Development Minister Shanti Dhariwal (Rs.5.51 crore), Health Minister Aimaduddin Ahmad (3.67 crore), Revenue Minister Hema Ram Choudhary (Rs.2.69 crore) and Energy Minister Jitendra Singh (Rs.2.2 crore).

However, none of these ministers declared the value of their assets in 2012.

Of the 23 ministers in the Gehlot Cabinet, five displayed a greater degree of transparency by declaring their income tax returns, said Rajasthan Election Watch. They were: Murari Lal Meena

(annual income Rs.6.5 lakh), Rajkumar Sharma (Rs.5.08 lakh), Rajendra Pareek (Rs.4.8 lakh), Hema Ram Choudhary (Rs.3.0 lakh) and Virendra Beniwal (Rs. 2.04 lakh).

According to Rajasthan Election Watch, while several ministers moved up the property ladder in the last four years, the State Assembly held an abysmally low number of meetings during this period. In 2009-12, the Assembly met only on 97 days spread across nine sessions -- an average of merely 24 sittings a year.

This figure was 31 for Gujarat (5 years), 26 for Himachal Pradesh (5 years), 24 for Manipur (4.5 years) and 22 for Uttar Pradesh (four years). The Assemblies in Punjab (4 years), Uttarakhand (3.5 years) and Goa (4.5 years) met on 19, 19 and 18 days, respectively, on an average.

With ₹2,009 cr, state Cong is richest of all

HT Correspondent
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JAIPUR: The total income of the Congress party from financial year 2004-05 to 2010-11 was ₹2,00,871.74 lakh while in the same period the BJP's income was a distant ₹99,476.67 lakh, according to the Rajasthan Election Watch.

The Congress party in Rajasthan received donations of ₹88,21,381 between 2003-4 and 2011-12 while the BJP received ₹98,89,000 in the same period, Renuka Pamecha of Rajasthan Election Watch said.

The Bahujan Samaj Party's total income was ₹48,428.51 lakhs, the Samajwadi Party got ₹27,856.65 lakh and the Janata Dal(United) ₹2667.81 lakh.

For the Congress, National Engineering Industries Ltd of Jaipur donated the maximum amount of ₹37,50,000 followed by Secure Meters Ltd of Udaipur with an amount of ₹10,00,000.

Among other donors are chief minister Ashok Gehlot who gave ₹1,44,800, as well as a host of other ministers and leaders in the party.

Interestingly, National Engineering Industries Ltd was also the largest donor to the BJP giving a matching amount of ₹37,50,000 followed by Secure Meters Ltd with an amount of ₹25,00,000.

Anil Bairwal of Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said the information had been gleaned through RTI after a lot of effort as the political parties were reluctant to give out details about donations and funding and declaration of assets.

"Big companies have formed electoral trusts through which they funded political parties. Moreover, parties cannot get foreign funding but they have been receiving such funds."

The Congress has said its top source of income (₹1,55,377.18 lakh) has been from sale of coupons which accounted for 77.35% of its total income between fiscal year 2004-05 to 2010-11.

The BJP's top income source has been voluntary contributions (₹82,000.50 lakhs) accounting for 82.43% of its total income.

The maximum expenditure between fiscal year 2004-05



Members of Rajasthan Election Watch address a press conference in Jaipur on Thursday. HT PHOTO

Foreign funding of parties

JAIPUR: Both the Congress and BJP received foreign funding from various sources. Between 2003-04 and 2011-12, the Congress got ₹893.50 lakh and the BJP got ₹1,942.50 lakh from foreign funding, according to Rajasthan Election Watch. Among the

donors are Anil Agarwal's Vedanta Group, Public and Political Awareness Trust of Vedanta, Hyatt Regency and Dow Chemicals which was responsible for the Bhopal Gas tragedy. Vedanta and its subsidiaries are the top donors to both parties. HTC

to 2010-11 for the Congress has been towards election expenses accounting for 55.7% of total expenditure while for the BJP it has been advertising and publicity, 44.09% of the total.

The Rajasthan Election Watch along with Delhi-based ADR will hold its annual conference on Electoral and Political Reforms on March 23 and 24 here.

MLAs not doing enough work

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan assembly has averaged a poor record of only 24 sittings per year during 2009 and 2012, according to the Rajasthan Election Watch.

Kamal Tak of Rajasthan Election Watch said between 2009 and 2012, nine sessions of the assembly were held with 97 days of sittings which averaged to 24 days of sittings per year.

He said a private member bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 2008 seeking to make 120 days of sitting per year for the parliament and 60 days for the state assemblies. However, while all other parties supported the bill, the ruling Congress did not give its support to the bill. HTC

Vedanta group top donor to Cong, BJP

► Continued from Page 1

Jaipur: The Vedanta group is the top donor to both, the Congress and the BJP. The group's subsidiary, Sterilite Industries donated Rs 6 crores and Sesa Goa Ltd donated over Rs 2.78 crore to the Congress, while its Public and Political Awareness Trust donated Rs 1.45 crore and the Madras Aluminium Co Ltd donated Rs 3.5 crore to the BJP between 2004-05 and 2010-11.

"BJP tops the list of maximum donations (domestic and foreign) collected between 2004-05 and 2010-11 with Rs 820 crores, which is 82.43% of its total income, while the Congress received donations of over Rs 272 crores, which is 13.57% of its income in the same period," said Anil Bairwal, the ADR's national coordinator. For JD, 97.48% of its total income was from donations, while BSP received 70.1% (or Rs 307.3 crores) of its income from donations.

"In spite of a total income of Rs 2008.71 crore, the

Congress has declared that only 8.85% of its income is covered by donations above Rs 20,000. Similarly, of the BJP's total income of Rs 994.76 crore, only 19.46% is coming from donations above Rs 20,000. And strangely enough, the BSP with a total 'donations' of Rs 307.31 crore, has not a single donation of above Rs 20,000," Bairwal said.

FLOW OF MONEY

Pointing to the political parties' reluctance for transparency over their sources of funding, the ADR representative said, "Even though the parties claim income tax exemptions on donations above Rs 20,000, they do not disclose sources of these donations." It has been noted that some political parties were formed just to claim income tax rebates. "There are more than 1300 registered political parties in India, but only around 100 of these contest elections. Two parties were found to be formed only to avail income

tax concessions," Bairwal said. The ADR has demanded that the political parties' incomes should be audited by the CAG approved auditors.

In what raises suspicions on the parties' disclosures about their sources of incomes, the ADR revealed that the BJP declared the maximum number of its contributors were in 2011-12. "Their number stood at 1104 and they donated nearly Rs 33 crore for BJP. For the same financial year, the Congress had 342 donors who contributed around Rs 9 crore," Bairwal said.

The Congress claimed it spent most of its earnings on election expenses, the BJP and BSP said they spent on advertising and publicity. The CPM's maximum expenditure was on salaries, while that of SP was on travelling and conveyance. The JD spent it on 'contribution' to candidates and donations. CPM is the only other party whose top three expenditures include spending by way of donations.

4

TIMES CITY

Almost all ministers of Gehlot are crorepatis; have 10 properties each

At Least One Of The Properties Was Acquired In The Past Four Years

TIMES-NEWS NETWORK

Jaipur: Even as Rajasthan figures among the poor states of the country, almost each of its ministers is a millionaire. An analysis of the assets of the Gehlot government's 23 ministers, who made declarations in 2012, shows that on an average each one of them has 10 immovable properties, at least one of which was acquired in the past four years.

And the highest increase in number of properties from 2008 to 2012 has been recorded by minister for tribal area and rural development Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya. From 15 immovable assets in 2008, the minister now has 25 properties, with all new assets being declared in the name of his spouse/dependents.

The National Election Watch (NEW), which analyzed the 23 ministers' asset declarations from 2008 to 2012, found that our law makers share



Chief minister Ashok Gehlot now has eight immovable properties

229 immovable properties among themselves. The analysis was released jointly by the NEW, ADR and the Rajasthan Election Watch on Thursday.

Assets of four ministers—Bharat Singh, Brij Kishore Sharma, Mangi Lal Garasia and Rajendra Singh Gud-

ha—whose declarations were unavailable are not included in the analysis.

The key gainers in the Gehlot ministry include minister of state for PWD, Murari Lal Meena, (properties increased from 11 in 2008 to 18 in 2012), minister of state for women and child development Manju Devi Meghwal (properties increased from seven in 2008 to 14 in 2012) and minister of state for rural development and panchayati raj, Vinod Kumar Lilawali (properties increased from 11 in 2008 to 17 in 2012).

Chief minister Ashok Gehlot has shown an increase of single property (he now has eight).

Interestingly, tourism minister Bina Kak's properties have registered a decrease. As per her asset declarations in the past four years, Kak had seven properties in 2008, but now she has just five of them. "She lost properties as a minister. Is that really

so?" wondered Anil Bairwal, the ADR national coordinator, who released the analysis report at a press conference.

Properties of revenue and water resources minister Hemaraj Chaudhary, minister of state with independent charge of disaster management and relief Brijendra Ojha and minister of state with independent charge of higher education Dayaram Parmar, too, have registered decrease in their properties in the four years.

Cabinet ministers Rajendra Prasad, Jitendra Singh, Parsadi Lal Meena, AA Khan, Shanti Dhariwal and minister of state Amin Khan are the six whose properties registered no change during this time.

Minister of state for health Rajkumar Sharma is the only among the Gehlot ministers who has consistently claimed in 2008 and 2012 that he owns no immovable assets.

सात साल का ब्योरा | कांग्रेस की आय दो हजार करोड़ तो भाजपा की 994 करोड़, डाऊ केमिकल्स से भी लिया

विदेशों से चंदा लेने में भी दल अब्वल

जयपुर

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देश के प्रमुख राजनीतिक दल विदेशी संस्थाओं से भी चंदा ले रहे हैं। भाजपा ने तो भोपाल गैस कांड के लिए दोषी यूनिपन कार्बाइड कम्पनी खरीदने वाली डाऊ केमिकल्स इंटरनेशनल प्राइवेट लिमिटेड से भी एक लाख रुपए का चंदा लिया है। 2003-04 से 11-12 के बीच कांग्रेस की विदेशी फंडिंग के रूप में 1942.50 लाख और भाजपा को 983.50 लाख रुपए मिले। पिछले सात साल में कांग्रेस की कुल दो हजार करोड़ से ज्यादा और भाजपा को 994 करोड़ रुपए से ज्यादा की आय हुई।

राजनीतिक दलों की आय और कामकाज पर नजर रखने वाली स्वयंसेवी संस्था नेशनल इन्वेस्टिगेशन वॉच और एसोसिएशन फॉर डेमोक्रेटिक रिफॉर्म (एडीआर) ने ये आंकड़े पेश किए हैं। संस्था के राष्ट्रीय



समन्वयक अनिल चेरवाल, रेणुका पामेचा और कमल टाक ने प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस में गुरुवार को दावा किया कि उन्होंने ये जानकारी आपकर विभाग से सूचना के अधिकार के तहत इकट्ठा की है। इन संगठनों ने सभी प्रमुख राजनीतिक दलों द्वारा लिए गए चंदे के आंकड़े, राजस्थान के मंत्रियों की पिछले चार वर्ष की सम्पत्ति और विधानसभा के कामकाज की रिपोर्ट भी जारी की।

ट्रस्ट बनाकर दान

दान देने के लिए बड़ी कम्पनियां ट्रस्ट बनाती हैं। दोनों दलों को दान देने वाले प्रमुख ट्रस्टों में जनरल इलेक्टोरल ट्रस्ट, भारतीय इलेक्टोरल ट्रस्ट, पब्लिक और पॉलिटेकल अवेयरनेस ट्रस्ट और टोरेंट पावर हैं। ये ट्रस्ट दोनों प्रमुख दलों के अलावा समाजवादी पार्टी और बसपा जैसे दलों को भी दान देते हैं। बिड़ला समूह, एयरटेल, वेदांता जैसी कम्पनियों ने ऐसे ट्रस्ट बनाए हुए हैं।

प्रदेश में भाजपा आगे

2003-04 से 11-12 के बीच राजस्थान में कांग्रेस को 84.82 लाख और भाजपा को 90.49 लाख रुपए का चंदा मिला। वहां कांग्रेस को 85 लोगों ने 20,000 से ज्यादा चंदा दिया, वहीं भाजपा के चिन्ह 19 नामजद दानदाता थे। दोनों दलों को सबसे बड़ा 37.50 लाख का दान मेकलन इंजीनियरिंग इंस्टीट्यूट लिमिटेड ने दिया। मुख्यमंत्री अशोक गहलोत ने अपनी पार्टी को 1.44 लाख रुपए दान में दिए।

गिनती के नामजद दानदाता

राजनीतिक दलों को 20,000 रुपए से ज्यादा दान देने वालों के नाम आपकर विभाग को देने होते हैं, लेकिन दलों ने ऐसे बहुत कम नाम दे रखे हैं। इसके बजाय कृपण व्यक्तियों का नाम दे रखा है, जिनके तहत दानदाताओं से नकद राशि ली जाती है। ऐसे में दानदाता को पहचानना मुश्किल होता है। कांग्रेस ने इस दौरान 342 नामजद दानदाता घोषित किए हैं, जबकि भाजपा ने 1104 दानदाताओं के नाम सार्वजनिक किए। कांग्रेस को कुल से कुल अब का 77.35 प्रतिशत मिला।

किस दल को कितना

कांग्रेस - 200871.74 लाख
 नामजद दानदाताओं से मिली - 8.85 प्रतिशत
 भाजपा - 99478.87 लाख
 नामजद दानदाताओं से मिली - 19.48 प्रतिशत
 बहुजन समाज पार्टी - 43839.84 लाख
 नामजद दानदाताओं से मिली - 0 प्रतिशत

सकपा - 41726.16 लाख
 नामजद दानदाताओं से मिली - 0.80 प्रतिशत
 समाजवादी पार्टी - 27855.85 लाख
 नामजद दानदाताओं से मिली - 1.39 प्रतिशत
 जनता दल यूनाइटेड - 2667.81 लाख
 नामजद दानदाताओं से - 25.80 प्रतिशत
 सध: कांग्रेस का सबसे ज्यादा 925 करोड़ चुनाव पर जबकि भाजपा का सबसे ज्यादा 357 करोड़ सध: विधानसभा पर हुआ।

(2004-05 से 10-11 तक आंकड़े)

Contents

Acknowledgement.....	1
Summary	2
Agenda	3
Documents distributed to the delegates	6
Inaugural Address.....	7
Experience Sharing by State Election Watch teams	8
People’s Movements and Elections.....	11
Political Party Reforms	14
Need for a Bill to regulate functioning of political parties	14
Challenges for Marginalized Communities	16
Issues in Panchayat Elections.....	19
Open session on conducting free and fair elections.....	22
Resolutions and ‘Next Steps for NEW’	24
Address by Chief Election Commissioner Shri. V. S. Sampath	26

Acknowledgement

We take this opportunity to thank Ms. Aruna Roy, Mr. Nikhil Dey and the Rajasthan Election Watch team for making the 9th National Conference on Electoral and Political Reforms held at Indira Gandhi Panchyati Raj Sansthan (IGPRS), Jaipur on 23rd and 24th March, a grand success. We would also like to thank Mr. Kamal Tank, Mr. Mukesh Goswami and Mr. Laxman Singh for their dedicated efforts in making this conference happen.

The conference wouldn't have been possible without our distinguished speakers and participants; we thank them for their priceless participation. We express our sincere gratitude towards the entire team of Mazdoor Kissan Shakti Sangathan, RTI Manch and National Campaign for People's Right to Information whose sincere efforts made this conference a fine event. Special thanks to the media and journalists who have always been very supportive of our work and have been one of our strongest medium to reach the masses.

We are obliged by Mr. V. S. Sampath's presence and inputs at the conference and the ECI's constant support to our efforts. We would also like to thank all the other dignitaries, whose participation made the event rich in content.

Last but not the least we are deeply grateful to all our partners across India whose support helps us reach out to the citizens of India. We conclude by thanking the management of IGPRS, Jaipur for their insistent support during this event.

Association for Democratic Reforms & National Election Watch

Summary

The purpose of organising the 9th National Conference on Electoral & Political Reforms was to bring together all stakeholders in political and electoral reforms, share experiences and renew strength and strategy towards the same.

The 9th National Conference was inaugurated by social activist Ms. Aruna Roy and eminent journalist Mr. Kumar Ketkar. Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. V. S. Sampath graced the occasion on the second day. This two-day conference was represented by Election Watch groups of more than 22 States, various NGOs and activists, eminent citizens, media personalities, representatives of all major political parties and other Stakeholders from all over the country.

Discussions took place on various aspects of Electoral and Political issues, particularly issues concerning financial transparency and inner-party democracy of the political parties. Concerns were also expressed on the increasing role of media in electoral mal-practices and its impact on news coverage. Discussions were marked with district voices from various parts of Rajasthan of women and activists involved in strengthening the democratic process in Panchayat and various marginalized groups.

By the end of the conference the house unanimously came up with recommendations addressing issues related to the criminalization of politics, use of muscle and money power etc.

Agenda

Day 1

8.00-9.30	Registration
09:30-10.00	Inauguration: Song by MKSS.
10:00-10.30	Inaugural Address: Ms. Aruna Roy, Prof. Trilochan Sastry, Mr. Kumar Ketkar
10:30 – 11:30	<p>Experience sharing from state Election Watch teams</p> <p>Chairperson – Mr. Ranjan Mohanty (Orissa Election Watch)</p> <p>Panelists: Mr. Biswendu Bhattacharjee (Tripura EW), Prof. Satyabrata Chaudhury (WB EW), Prof. Girija Pandey (UK EW), Mr. Sanjay Singh (UPEW), Mr. Jaskirat Singh (Punjab EW), Mr. Sharad Kumar (Agni, Mumbai)</p>
11:30 – 12:00	Tea Break
12:00 – 13:00	<p>People’s movement and elections</p> <p>Chairperson – Ms Aruna Roy (MKSS)</p> <p>Panelists – Mr. Prem Kishan Sharma (State President :PUCL), Mr. Bhanwar Meghwanshi (MKSS), Ms. Renuka Pamecha (Mahila Punarvas Samiti), Mr. Narayan Bareth (Senior Journalist, BBC)</p>
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 –16:00	<p>Political Party Reforms – Need for a bill to regulate functioning of political parties (20 min for open house)</p> <p>Chairperson – Prof Jagdeep Chhokar</p> <p>Panelists –Mr. Sushil Sharma (General Sec, Congress Pradesh Committee) Ms. Amarjeet Kaur (National Sectary, CPI, Delhi), Ms. Archana Sharma (Spokesperson, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee), Mr. Dushyant Ojha (CPI)</p>
16:00 – 16:30	Tea Break

16:30- 18:00	<p>Challenges for marginalized communities</p> <p>Chairpersons – Dr. Lad Kumari Jain (State Women’s commission)</p> <p>Dalit’s issues – Mr. P L Mimroth (Dalit EW), Mr. Satish Kumar (Dalit EW), Mr. Gopal Verma (Society for Social Justice)</p> <p>Women’s participation – Ms. Mamta Jaitley (Vivedha Features), Ms. Rolly Shivhare (Vikas Samvad, Bhopal), Dr. Sudarshan Padmanabhan (IIT Chennai)</p> <p>Minority and Marginalized groups – Mr. Noor Mohammad (SCPCR), Mr. Paras Banjara (Social Activist), Mr. Nishat Hussain (Social Activist)</p>
19:00 – 21:00	<p>Cultural Session</p> <p>Rajasthani Folk Music (Langa Manganihar) – Chota Gaji and Party लंगामाँगन्नीहार – छोटा गाजी और पार्टी</p>

Day 2

08:30 – 09:30	<p>Registration</p>
09:30 – 11:00	<p>Issues in Panchayat elections (10 min for open house)</p> <p>Chairperson – Mr. Ashok Pandey (SEC, Rajasthan) Special comments: Mr. V S Vyas (Vice chairperson, State Planning Board)</p> <p>Panelists – Mr. Sudhir Verma (former sec Panchayati Raj, Rajasthan), Mr. Virendra Srimali (The Hunger Project), Mr. Sudhir Pal (Jharkhand EW), Mr. Gautam Bandopadhyay (CG EW), Ms. Naurati Bai (Sarpanch, Harmoda, Distt Ajmer), Mr. Suresh Meghwanshi (Sarpanch Rao pura, Distt Bhilwara)</p>
11:00 – 11:30	<p>Tea</p>
11:30 – 12:30	<p>Open session on conducting free and fair elections</p> <p>Chairperson – Mr. Srinivasan Jain (NDTV), Mr. Anil Bairwal</p> <p>Opening comments: Mr. Ashok Jain, CEO Rajasthan – Expectations from civil society Mr. Bharat Bhushan Garg – Jt Director ECI - Expectations from civil society</p>

12:30 – 13:00	Resolutions and ‘Next Steps for NEW’ Chairperson – Prof. Trilochan Sastry, Mr. Nikhil Dey
13:00 – 13:45	Address by Chief Election Commissioner Mr. V.S. Sampath Book release – Election Watch books for elections in last 12 months 15 min for open discussion Chairperson – Ms. Aruna Roy, Prof. Jagdeep Chhokar, Mr. V S Vyas
13:45 – 14:00	Vote of Thanks
14:00 – 15:00	Lunch

Documents distributed to the delegates

Election Watch documents:

1. Criminal and Financial background of current Rajasthan MLAs (Rajasthan Election Watch 2008)
2. Criminal and Financial background of current Rajasthan MPs
3. FAQ on Rule 49-O, Right to Reject and None of the above
4. FAQ on Election Petition and Election Expenses
5. High level summary of criminal records of candidates and winners of 2007 to 2012 state assemblies & Lok Sabha elections
6. Candidates, MPs and MLAs who declared charges under Prevention of Corruption Act in elections of last 5 years
7. Candidates, MPs and MLAs who have declared charges of crimes against women including rape in elections of last 5 years
8. Women representation among all MPs and MLAs in elections of last 5 years
9. Why MPs IT Returns should be made public

Political Party Watch documents:

1. Financial Details of National and Regional Political Parties
2. FAQ on Donations received by Political Parties
3. FAQ on Income Tax Returns of Political Parties
4. Table on status of information required to be available on Political Party websites
5. Why should Political Parties be declared as Public Authorities (summary of complaint filed in CIC)

You may find a copy of these documents on our website at the following link:

www.adrindia.org/content/9th-annual-national-conference-electoral-and-political-reforms

Day 1 Inaugural Address

Ms. Aruna Roy:

Ms. Aruna Roy began by emphasizing the idea that every authority that utilizes public money being brought under RTI. Political parties are an example of one such public authority that must adhere to the principals of financial transparency. While emphasizing on the role of money power in elections, Ms. Aruna Roy narrated an incident where she happened to meet one of the candidates contesting elections in Rajasthan. The candidate justified the role of money power and financial malpractices by stating the reality. He said and she quoted “We mortgage property to be able to fund our contest in elections, we must earn some money back and release our land after elections”. She asserted that democracy is hollow without the existence of transparency and good governance.

Mr. Kumar Ketkar:

Mr. Kumar Ketkar said that we cannot be anti-political and pro-democracy at the same time. There is a paradigm shift in functioning of political parties in a democracy like India. Most political parties don't have any volunteers and they are starting to adopt corporate culture devoid of human interface. Also, monetization of political parties is a threat and it is necessary that some process of accountability for every political party is setup. With every new day, the issues under electoral reforms are getting deeper. Paid News is one such factor in this system that has been taken cognizance of by the ECI, Courts and PCI. Anti political activism and corporate fascism are the biggest threats to our democracy and Political system.

Prof. Trilochan Sastry

Prof. Sastry said that the National Election Watch is non-partisan, not part of any political party but a politically inclined body. So far we have got immense support from the media as well as Election Commission of India.

One of the challenges that democracy in India faces is increasing role of money. Our democracy is deteriorating day by day and it is essential to find the underlying causes for the same. Earlier it was money in elections, now it is in governance which is also not in an ideal shape. It is too ambitious a target to achieve good governance, good politics and good democracy at the same time but we are dedicatedly working towards it.

Experience Sharing by State Election Watch teams

Chairperson- Ranjan Mohanty (Orissa Election Watch)

Panelists- Mr. Biswendu Bhattacharjee (Tripura), Prof. Satyabrata Chaudhury (WB EW), Prof. Girija Pandey (UEW), Sanjay Singh (UPEW), Jaskirat Singh (Punjab EW), Sharad Kumar (Agni, Mumbai), Renuka (REW)

Mr. Biswendu (North-East Election Watch)

Mr. Biswendu started off by enumerating all issues encountered in the North- East with respect to elections. He said, in Meghalaya there are issues such as instability of the government, unstable growth and lack of development of economy etc. Tripura faces issues such as limited growth and development, volatile atmosphere and social disturbances, unemployment are some of the issues that threaten the electoral process. Nagaland has many internal regional issues.

All over North- East, inconsistency in electoral rolls is an alarming issue. Bangladeshi migrants and illegal voters harm the system to a great extent. This year even after deletion of invalid names, they seemed to reappear in the final electoral rolls. There are 46000 cases of fraud names of the voters that have been found in the North East. These are the ones that were reported, the number of such unreported cases remains unknown. There is manipulation of EVMs which were trusted highly by people. Slowly this trust seems to be deteriorating. There are striking cases such as, 3 days before elections an MP from NPF was arrested with arms and money. Even after several complaints the minister was not only re-elected but again became minister.

Individual opinion has died in politics as the party sanctions all decisions regarding distribution of tickets. The electoral process unfortunately ends right after elections. There needs to be accountability on part of elected representatives. Performance checks is also a factor that needs to be considered

Prof. Satyabrata Chaudhary (West Bengal Election Watch)

Prof. Chaudhary talked about the relationship between voters, candidates and election mechanisms. He said West Bengal is a homogenous mix of business community, legal community, medical community, teachers etc. The reluctance of this professional community towards voting and to be a part of the political process results in depreciating number of voters. At the same time, democracy has no meaning unless it is inclusive in its true sense. In order for this goal to be fulfilled, MLA, MPs should visit their constituencies regularly and try catering to the homogenous mix of crowds as objectively as possible. They should devote some time for hearing grievances of the public.

Disclosures of assets, expenditure made by representatives should also reach people through newspapers. Voters too have taken the system for granted. Many voters enjoy the voting day as a holiday; voting must be made mandatory and the defaulters should be deprived of government facilities. EVMs should contain 'none of the above option' to lure more people into voting. As for the civil society, local election watch should organise meetings with politicians and citizens to bridge the gaps. Media needs to play an important role and not mislead the public.

Prof. Girija Pandey (Uttarakhand Election Watch):

Prof. Pandey from Uttarakhand narrated an incident. He said, once in a remote village in Uttarakhand, when asked whether any MLAs have visited their area, the word MLA was mistaken by people as a variety of crop which is unheard of in that area. This reflects the level of awareness about political representatives.

In 2012, meetings were held in Dehradun and Nainital which were attended by a large group of people on electoral resources. It is a resource-rich state and there have been many scams related to the resources of the state. A few influential people are bribed to get votes. All scams are related to industries working in the area. When UEW was started, people with political aspirations were scared and tried to suppress the campaign.

Role of youth is extremely important and we want to start intervening in this respect from the villages of Uttarakhand. We should engage the youth and constantly have discussions with them as they are the largest group of voters. Even with student politics, they are finding ways to extort money which they spent on elections. In the words of a famous freedom fighter '*Aandolan aur aalochna ka yug kabhi khatam nahi hona chahiye*'

Mr. Sanjay Singh (Uttar Pradesh Election Watch):

Mr. Singh said steps should be undertaken to improve the accountability of elected representatives. UPEW focused on voter awareness and bringing civil society together through various strategies such as poll campaigns, media engagement etc.

It is important to do away with the apprehension that is emerging among the voters; voters are threatened with increasing cases of paid news etc. There are certain areas where people live in fear of political parties and contestants and that fear has to be removed by intervening in two respects- youth and women. We have initiated Formation of District Election Watch teams. We are building awareness by disseminating information through pamphlets. We have worked on 10 model constituencies to reach booth level and masses. UP CEO has worked closely with us and always supported our work. With their cooperation, we have started District Election Watch in 25 out of 75 districts and we plan to increase that number. We have also created mechanisms to monitor MLA performance. Through this program, information such as attendance, questions being asked by the MLA and MLA funds was provided..

Mr. Jaskirat Singh (Punjab Election Watch)

Mr. Singh said a PIL was filed to make mandatory the affidavit in urban local body elections as well. Sharing of affidavits was very difficult as the State CEO was not helpful. This was done when affidavits were refused even under RTI. He also invited suggestions for getting these affidavits.

Mr. Sharad Kumar (Mumbai Election Watch)

Mr. Sharad Kumar started off by enumerating issues in the election process and gave suggestions for its betterment. He said electoral rolls are not up-to-date. If the electoral rolls are improved, the overall voting will be more. 'Agni' has tried to encourage the voters to go out and vote. Voting in urban areas is lower than in rural areas. The reason why voters do not come out to vote is that they do not want to choose any among those contesting. Brail language should be included in the voting mechanism or EVMs to make the process more inclusive. In the electoral rolls, youth registration was very low. So with the EC, colleges were approached and a majority of them were registered. Youth should take part in the electoral process and participate in voting. Completely filled forms were shown to students and helped them register. To ensure the privacy of the voter who does not want to vote, a special provision should be made available on the EVM.

Ms. Renuka Pamecha (Rajasthan Election Watch)

She explained the composition of REW and said that it is a people's movement. Citizen groups from all over Rajasthan are affiliated with REW. RTI Manch, women's group etc. are part of REW. Election is important for democracy but has become a major root of corruption. In elections now, money has replaced the real issues. The sources of money for elections should be disclosed. Voter education and advocacy is necessary to tackle issues during elections. Student candidates and leaders are also following on the foot-steps of corrupt leaders hence the change has to also be upward directed.

People's Movements and Elections

Chairperson – Aruna Roy (MKSS)

Panelists – Mr. Prem Kishan Sharma (State President: PUCL), Bhanwar Meghwanshi (MKSS), Ms. Renuka Pamecha (Mahila Punarvas Samiti), Nararayan Bareth (Senior Journalist, BBC)

Ms. Aruna Roy (Opening Comments)

Ms. Roy said that political party by definition is an organized form of a political thought and a movement that strives to achieve the objective of that thought. It is not the only medium for the people to realize the objectives of a thought.

Of late we have been observing that there are powers behind the decisions made inside the political parties. For example, the FDI debate and its implementation prove this theory that the aspirations of the masses are not finding voice in the agenda setup by the political parties. It's not that politics is only for the parties. In democracy, everyone has a role to play. We just can't blame the parties alone. We are to be blamed as well.

Dr. Devki Jain

Dr. Jain said that the leaders who have professed for social and economic justice have persistently been finding themselves outside the Parliament. People are increasingly finding it difficult to win the Elections. She suggested that ADR should engage women bodies who have immense mobilization influence in order to educate the electorate. ADR should also work towards an alternative economic model other than being actualized by the mainstream political parties where they are failing to achieve the objectives of social and economic justice.

She added that we should try to create an interface with people's movement, women voters, dalits, and minorities for electoral reforms. We should also work towards voters' education. We should adopt Gandhi's economic program. ADR should work with this sort of alternative economic movement.

Mr. Prem Krishan Sharma- State President: PUCL

Rajasthan State President of PUCL, a human rights body, Mr. Sharma said, free will of the people must be reflected in the outcome of the elections. Nowadays elections have become an instrument that meddles with the free will of the electorate. Elections are being won with money and muscle power. The first principle of the People's Movement is to express the political desire and dimensions of citizens of the country.

If politics of the day is not represented by the real need and ambitions of the citizens then this unrepresentative politics will stop citizens from expressing themselves through people's movements. When we talk of elections, we should first see the character of these elections. Free will of people must be reflected at the outcome of every election. The situation at present is that people don't elect but their candidates get themselves elected. Political dimension for every people's movement is very crucial. Role of people's movement is to make our democracy strong.

Mr. Bhanwar Meghwanshi (MKSS)

Mr. Meghwanshi said that NGOs are becoming political parties to save their cadres and parties are increasingly gaining the character of an NGO to establish the cadre. Citizens despise people who are entering the mainstream electoral politics.

The adage that “*Praja hee Prabhu hai*” (“Electorates are supreme in democracy”), this *Praja* (Electorate) is performing its duties towards making our democracy functional but where are the “*Praja hi puja hai*” sort of people? While talking about people’s movements and their role in elections he said, electoral politics makes one coward and weak therefore non-electoral politics (or people’s movements) has the capacity to raise or take up real pressing issues of a society. Politics makes you do things which you have never done in your entire life. There are politicians who really work hard. A delivery of one day of a hardworking politician is greater than 5 years work of an NGO.

There will also be a dilemma in the mind of civil society as to how to engage with the electorate: through Non-Political People’s Movements or through electoral politics? Politics does not have the power to destroy any people’s movement. Good governance comes from people’s movement. The movement should keep working for the society rather than for politics. When people will start saying no to bribes- money, alcohol, drugs and food, then there will be no question of bribe at all.

Ms. Renuka Pamecha (Mahila Punarvas Samiti)

Ms. Pamecha said that when talking about the relationship between elections and people’s movements, we are not against the politics or political parties, but we are against the problems that afflict the parties- the evils of politics. We are actively participating in politics without being in the electoral politics space by effecting the framing of public policy and planning. In people’s movement we should aim to change politics that gives rise to corruption, corporate lobbying, and muscle and money power. People’s movements should also work towards eradicating the problems in the electoral politics.

She said, “I firmly believe that political parties are essential and I believe in Legislative Assembly and Parliament, parliamentary debates.”

Mr. Narayan Bareth (Senior Journalist BBC)

Mr. Bareth touched upon several serious issues in very simple words. He said, earlier political leaders used to come from one of the following: National Movement or Social Movement, now leaders are coming from Socialite Movement. Parameters for tickets have changed drastically. All the major political parties admit that the tickets given to those who had property in their bio-data rather than propriety. These days, bio-data has upgraded to muscle and alcohol. Property (immovable assets) not propriety has become the criteria for political parties to select the candidates to represent themselves in the elections. The 5 contemporary criteria to consider by parties to select a candidate for a party ticket: whether the candidate has LPG gas agency, petrol pump, and contract for highway toll plaza, mining contract and shopping mall. By these means and aids, corporates are sending their employees to Parliament.

The style and character of communication being established by the leaders (of civil society or political parties) is of paramount importance. The parameters in politics have changed drastically which is indeed affecting every aspect of our lives. The kind of politics we are choosing these days, it is showing up in our languages. Foul language in the House is a by-product of such polity.

Ms. Aruna Roy (MKSS) – Concluding comments

The main difference between people's movement and electoral politics is that the former can rise and speak about sensitive and electorally unfriendly issues but the political parties involved only in winning the elections will only speak about populist agendas. We should initiate a **counter process** where in we go to the parties and without accusing them we should just raise people's issues. We should pursue and engage the politicians in our respective constituencies by holding our rallies, in response to each rally being conducted by the politician and ask for the answers (audit) of the elements being promised by the politician in his manifesto.

People's Movements have resulted in quite a few numbers of policies, legislations and implementation. For example anti-dowry bill, anti-sati bill, anti-rape bill etc. We should formulate strategies on how a people's movement can help an independent and good candidate to win elections. People's movements should also strive to make electoral politics more participatory. We should have a concurrent and parallel process with the political class. People's movement has to become the guardian of these social issues.

Political Party Reforms

Need for a Bill to regulate functioning of political parties

Chairman: Prof Jagdeep Chhokar (Founder Member ADR/NEW)

Panelists: Mr. Sushil Sharma (General Sec. Congress Pradesh Committee), Ms. Amarjeet Kaur (National Secretary, CPI Delhi), Mr. Dushyant Ojha (CPM), Ms. Archana Sharma (Spokesperson, INC)

Prof. Jagdeep Chhokar:

Prof. Chhokar introduced the Bill with following words: “Electoral Reforms are not possible without Political Party reforms. The citizens choose a candidate who is given a ticket by a political party. However, political parties work as per their own whims due to the absence of a code of conduct. Do we then need a mechanism to regulate the functioning of political parties? The mechanism could be “Political parties (Registration and Regulations of affairs) draft Bill” formulated by a committee headed by Justice Venkatachaliah or any other such legislation.

Ms. Amarjeet Kaur (National Secretary, CPI, Delhi):

Ms. Kaur in her detailed speech over many political issues said, politics is not only about elections but has multiple facets. We need to demarcate between politics and electoral politics. Politics means Political Parties, and politics has gone through numerous changes over the years. Today, it is seen as a money making venture. Therefore, criminalization of politics and use of money power in politics has reached a point where reforms are required.

Today, we are discussing reforms in political parties. It is true that the politicians need to understand that citizens today are more aware than ever. Changes proposed are a welcome step and deliberation is needed. As far as the Bill is concerned, I will look at its proposals and discuss it with my party on how to take it forward.

She debated some of the following features of the Bill and gave a few suggestions: She said proportionate representation is needed, so that votes are casted on issues and credibility of candidates and not on their caste, creed or color. CPI believes that a person should be disqualified from contesting right after a charge sheet has been filed against him. The law on this issue needs to be amended. Election expenses have only gone up, despite a limit being imposed. Now money is spent on individuals through money packets being delivered to them apart from posters and hoardings (which is recorded). This is because implementation of the rule regarding expenses needs to be streamlined. An extra button on EVM regarding ‘none of the above’ should be there, but it should not be named as Negative voting. The day citizens realize the value of their vote, the scope of having reforms will become wider.

Political parties should come under RTI; but serious discussion on the matter is required so that Democracy does not suffer.

Political Parties should file ITR, CPI does it regularly. She said she believes that parties should be accountable to the people and be transparent in its functioning. Reservation of 1/3rd of the seats for

women should be given. Even a party like CPI is unable to implement that. There has to be a law that ensures that. Focus on youth is also required.

In her stance on behalf of CPI she said, CPI refuses corporate funding and feels that it should be banned. She also said, cases against candidates with respect to electoral complaints should be fast tracked. When it comes to increasing perks and salaries of MPs/MLAs, all parties unite with the exception of CPI, since it does not want to send out a wrong message to the people. We welcome the steps that ADR is taking and would want to have a dialogue with ADR to take this forward. Give us concrete suggestions and I assure you that we will take it up and discuss on all forums.

Mr. Sushil Sharma (General Secretary, Congress Pradesh Committee):

Mr. Sharma said that the draft Bill proposed will be taken up for discussion in their party. Congress party under the Chairmanship of Ms. Ambika Soni has constituted a committee on political and electoral reforms and the government is working with priority on electoral and political reforms. He said, “We believe state funding should be implemented as far as expenses are concerned as it will make sure that money power is not used to contest elections. Reforms in political parties are needed and that has always been our priority. The suggestions given in the Bill would be used in the Congress party.”

Mr. Dushyant Ojha (CPM):

Mr. Dushyant Ojha on behalf of CPM said, an organization which does not democratize itself cannot make democratic processes. “The suggestions made in the draft Bill must be incorporated by all parties. The effort that ADR has made in this regard should have been initiated by political parties.” This movement should reach everywhere. The EC has given a model code of conduct to regulate the functioning of parties. If a law is passed regarding the matter, it would be welcomed.

“Our party feels that ECI should guide political parties in their functioning and make rules for their functioning. People are most important and hence peoples’ movements are important, we have always made it a point to take any of their suggestions very seriously.”

“Today, Parliament is all about lobbies; hence even good bills get opposed. These lobbies have money power and muscle power. These reforms will come only through people and political parties who do not support it will be sidelined.”

Ms. Archana Sharma (Spokesperson INC):

“It is the people who bring political parties to power and it is the people who can save democracy. As far as Congress is concerned, it is very transparent internally. People are allowed to express their grievances. It works on ideals and tries to be secular always. Congress also files ITR and has recommended state funding to the ECI. The donations received by the party are also in public domain. A person who enters politics has aspirations apart from social service. He/she wants to make a career out of it also. Congress has tried very hard to bring about women’s reservation. They tabled the bill but it is not passed by other parties. A woman can be a better representative and policy maker as opposed to a man who merely wants power. Hence, till women’s representation does not come about, democracy will not benefit.”

Challenges for Marginalized Communities

Chairpersons - Dr Lad Kumari Jain (State Women's commission)

Panelists: Dalit's issues – Mr. P. L. Mimroth (Dalit Election Watch), Mr. Satish Kumar (Dalit Election Watch), Mr. Gopal Verma (Society for Social Justice), *Women's participation*-Ms. Mamta Jaitley (Vivedha Features), Ms. Rolly Shivhare (Vikas Samvad, Bhopal), Dr. Sudarshan Padmanabhan (IIT Chennai), *Minority and Marginalized groups* – Mr. Noor Mohammad (SCPCR), Mr. Paras Banjara (Social Activist), Mr. Nishat Hussain (Social Activist)

Mr. Mimroth (Dalit Election Watch):

Mr. Mimroth said, “Based on the experience in Rajasthan, there are a few issues that came to light and few more where action could be taken.” He mainly talked about issues that Dalits face during elections. He said, money power of politicians is not allowing the marginalized communities to exercise their basic right to cast votes on the candidate they wish for or even access to polling booth sometimes becomes an issue. Muscle power was mainly used in 2008 where dalits were specifically targeted. Dalit Election Watch (DEW) identified the centers where dalits were targeted in 2004 based on which the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) was warned beforehand about the polling stations where the dalits might be targeted in 2008.

“In spite of the steps taken by the ECI, dalits are still being targeted either through muscle power or money power. Political parties are also not interested in gathering dalit votes through confidence but would rather buy them off. A total of 65 complaints were received through the grievance cell set up for grievance redress of dalit election issues. Cases were filed on the miscreants and charges filed under the SC/ST Act for stopping dalits from voting. Not much seems to have happened on these fronts. If more such Dalit Election Watch programs were set up in other states, it would enable the dalits to exercise their right to vote.”

Mr. Satish Kumar:

Mr. Kumar on Dalit issues said, maximum public participation is required when it comes to elections and choosing the government of the people but dalits are denied basic voter rights and this is a tragedy for democracy. Booth capturing is still very much prevalent in many places in Rajasthan especially in those areas which are majorly populated by dalits. FIR should be filed on such corrupt practices based on the Representation of People Act (RP Act) and also booked under the SC/ST Act. Video surveillance of polling booths could be done to overcome the challenges of dalit suppression during voting. 30% of the SC/STs are not allowed to vote in a minimum and its absolutely crucial that this situation should change.

Mr. Gopal Verma:

Mr. Verma too focused on Dalit issues during elections. He said that the Society of Social Justice analysed the assembly elections, municipality elections and also the panchayat elections. When the names of dalits were checked against the electoral list, it was found that most of those names were missing from the list. Their names are not even registered in the voter list. It was seen that people who reside in a single locality were allotted different wards during polling. Dalits were not allowed to file nomination papers and were beaten up if at all they succeeded in doing it.

Many dalits were not even allowed to leave their homes to cast their votes. Runner-up candidate would usually gather a few people and beat up the dalits because the candidate assumed that the only reason he/ she lost the election was because the dalits did not cast their votes in favor of the runner up candidate. It would be a great help to the dalits if ADR could support Dalit Election Watch.

Ms. Mamta Jaitley (Vivedha Features):

Mr. Jaitley talked about women and elections. She said that based on the experience gained from being a part of the Mahila Aandolan, it can be said that no decision-making rights are given to women. Only 10% of the Upper and Lower Houses of the country are represented by women. Security, reservation and female feticide are the three main issues that need to be addressed when it comes to women's participation in everyday affairs. It can be said that it is almost impossible to vote without male pressure and this scenario should be eradicated so that personal opinion/ decision of women too plays a vital role in the electoral process.

Ms. Rolly Shivhare (Vikas Samvad, Bhopal):

Ms. Shivhare said participation of women in politics is very important. Child rights issues and health related issues especially malnutrition should be taken up by women as they relate to the issues in a much deeper sense. Responsibilities of women in politics are more of hypocrisy than a fact. "What is representation of adivasi and dalit women in politics? It still is unanswered.. From practical experience, it has to be sadly concluded that there is no voice for women in Madhya Pradesh."

Dr. Sudarshan Padmanabhan (IIT Chennai):

Dr. Padmanabhan said that there was an emphasis on social justice in the Verma Committee Report. India is not an active society but a passive one where it is not a participatory democracy. Challenges that women face are everywhere: at home, in public, at work where their basic rights are infringed upon. If the governance does not work, there is no guarantee of social justice. Evaluation of democratic society is a way to evaluate law and order of the country.

Mr. Noor Mohammad (SCPCR):

Mr. Mohammad talked about minority issues during elections. He said that there is no participation of minority communities especially Muslims. Minority communities are strong in the society in terms of money/ wealth. They are not begging but asking for the basic rights as a citizen. Political parties only see the end result of an election and give tickets to the minority candidates only if they are assured of a win and not based on developmental issues.

Mr. Paras Banjara (Social Activist):

Tribal issues and elections were taken up by Mr. Banjara. He said that nomadic communities have no voter card, no ration card and their names do not feature in the electoral rolls. Mobile EVMs would help the nomadic communities. These communities are the easiest target of money power. Such communities have no political backing and hence have no voice of their own.

Mr. Nishat Hussain:

Mr. Hussain said that women as decision-makers are still not accepted. Sex ratio in Rajasthan at present is 883, which is abysmally low. We must think that what would be the situation if women were invisible in the political picture. It has been observed that women as political representatives deal with issues that are related to women and child development, family welfare etc.

Day 2 **Issues in Panchayat Elections**

Chairperson – Mr. Ashok Pandey (State Election Commission (SEC), Rajasthan)
Special comments - Mr. V S Vyas (Vice chairperson, State Planning Board)

Panelists – Mr. Sudhir Verma (Former Secretary, Panchayati Raj, Rajasthan), Mr. Virendra Srimali (The Hunger Project), Mr. Sudhir Pal (Jharkhand Election Watch), Mr. Gautam Bandopadhyay (Chhatisgarh Election Watch (CG EW)), Ms. Naurati Bai (Sarpanch, Harmoda, District Ajmer, Rajasthan), Mr. Suresh Meghwanshi (Sarpanch Rao pura, District Bhilwara, Rajasthan)

Mr. Kaluramji (Sarpanch, Vijaypura):

Mr. Kaluramji said, “One must enter politics for public service and not for money. It is possible to win an election without money. I fought and won elections at an expense of mere Rs. 695. I had a manifesto of ensuring transparency. There were a lot of malpractices in the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), such as improper allocation of work, wage payment frauds etc. I made sure that these discrepancies were sorted out and benefits of NREGA were available to all.”

Ms. Naurati Bai (Sarpanch, Harmoda, Dist Ajmer):

Ms. Naurati Bai said, “RTI is a very effective tool, as it gives control to citizens. Financial transparency is also equally important. The entire money of Panchayat belongs to the villagers and should be used justly to their benefit. It is not easy to win over bad politics prevalent in the village and do concrete work. The government should conduct social audit at least thrice a year.”

Mr. Ladu Ramji (Sarpanch):

Mr. Ladu Ramji said, “It is very hard for a poor person to contest elections. An honest and just system should begin at the ward level where ward Panch should be elected fairly. In a democracy, inclusiveness plays an important role and at times these downtrodden rural folk fail to be a part of the bigger frame. The social audit should also be conducted at that level.”

Ms. Rukma (Sarpanch):

Ms. Rukma said, “When I decided to stand for elections, everybody in my family and otherwise had their own set of doubts. Besides we were not financially strong to be able to spend lakhs of rupees on campaigning. I still stuck by my decision and contested elections, won in just 2200 Rs. After becoming Sarpanch, I focused on issues that needed immediate attention. I made sure that minimum wage is implemented in NREGA. Out of a village of 1400 potential workers 1000 have already been given 100 days of work. I believe that people vote for you as long as they think you can lead them and make their lives easier by attending to their needs. One does not necessarily have to invest a lot of money to win elections.”

Ms. Kamla Bai (Sarpanch):

Ms. Kamla Bai said, “It is possible to win an election with honesty and motive of public service. I strongly believe that, because I won against a Sarpanch who was ruling Panchayat for the last 55 years. I must have done something right for the betterment of the village for them to believe in me and go against stable establishment. When there is a will, one definitely finds a way. I went by this phrase all throughout the period before elections.”

Mr. Hamir Singh Ji:

Mr. Singh said that there should be a mechanism which takes care of ticket distribution for contesting elections. This mechanism should ensure fair selection of contesting candidates. It is very difficult for a person to get a party ticket. Even if a person wants to make a difference by being a part of the system there are too many hurdles. Those who don't have political lineage or are not very rich, unfortunately have nothing to leverage to get a ticket.

Ms. Gyarsi Bai:

Ms. Gyarsi Bai said, “In tribal and backward areas, a poor person does not get a chance to contest elections. Good people who do not believe in use of muscle or money power should be given a chance to contest elections.”

Mr. Sudhir Pal (Jharkhand Election Watch):

Mr. Pal said that in 2010, Panchayat Elections were conducted in Jharkhand after 38 years. There are a few challenges that are faced in Jharkhand. Panchayat acts like a social contractor for the State government. Self-governance is nowhere to be seen. The bureaucracy in Jharkhand is not habitual to dealing with the Panchayati Raj system. The State government has not amended a law to suit the Panchayati Raj system. 50% reservation for women in Panchayat elections has resulted in 57% women winners.

Mr. Virendra Srimali (The Hunger Project):

Mr. Srimali said that women representation in Panchayat elections should increase. Statistics reveal that political awareness amongst women has increased. More and more young people are looking at politics as a career. Panchayat is a very important way of strengthening grass root democracy.

Suggestions on Panchayat Elections:

- There should be consideration of the two-child law for contesting Panchayat elections.
- There should be a change in the nomination process of Panchayat elections to enable a proper campaign. There should be some time available between finalizing the nominations and elections.
- There should be more voting booths in Panchayat elections.
- The list of reserved category should be out 3 months prior to elections.
- The seats that are reserved for women should be continue for at least 2 terms.

Mr. Ashok Pandey (SEC, Rajasthan):

Mr. Pandey said that average expense in Panchayat elections in Rajasthan is Rs. 1 crore per year. In this scenario, it is amazing that people win an election in mere 695 rupees. Caste system is a reality and one of the most important issues.

Before the 72nd and 73rd amendment in 1991, Panchayat elections in Rajasthan were in a badshape. Sometimes they were not even conducted. After 1991, every five years there have been elections.

Further he said:

“We are working in the following aspects of electoral reforms:

- 1. Delimitation of wards:** The Indian Constitution says that delimitation of wards should be done every 10 years along with the census. The State Election Commission (SEC) is not authorized for this. Till now the delimitation of 1991 is valid.
- 2. Reservation of seats:** The declaration of reserved seats is done by the government but its rotation should be in the hands of the SEC.
- 3. Use of Money power and Muscle power:** The use of money and muscle power in Panchayats elections has increased significantly due to a lot of money involved in various schemes.
- 4. Nomination Process:** In by-elections, we have tried changing the process. We finish finalizing nomination and give 5 days before elections to campaign. We will try it in phases again and if found viable will implement it through.
- 5. Ballot papers:** We had printed ballot papers this time and plan to introduce this system in next elections.
- 6. Results:** Create a cluster of 5-7 elections and collect all ballot papers at one common place. This will ease the law and order management process so that fair counting is done.
- 7. Electoral reform** is an on-going process. If we can keep trying we will definitely pass the miscreants and enhance democracy.”

Mr. Nikhil Dey (MKSS): Concluding comments

Mr. Dey said, “India is a land of seasonal migrations today. Elections are conducted in the non-agricultural season, when people have migrated. This issue needs to be addressed. We are making arrangements for NRIs to vote and people who have migrated for economic reasons are left behind. We all present here should make resolutions on which we can all work together in the entire country.”

Open session on conducting free and fair elections

Chairperson – Prof. Trilochan Sastry, Mr. Nikhil Dey

Opening comments: Ashok Jain, CEO Rajasthan – Expectation from civil society

Panelist: Bharat Bhushan Garg –Joint Director ECI - Expectation from civil society

Mr. Ashok Jain, CEO Rajasthan

Mr. Ashok Jain had put across a list of things being done for Rajasthan Elections. He said that the State Election Commission (SEC) is working round the clock to accomplish the goal of conducting free and fair elections. Photo-voter list is ready and compiled. Awareness campaigns for registration of names, developing the need in everyone to exercise their right to vote etc. EVM checks and strengthening of polling stations for the upcoming elections is underway. Updating Rajasthan CEO Website to make it more user-friendly is in process. Location details of any polling booth along with information about poll booth officers and contact details are being made available in Google maps in the CEO site. Online application of voter card is also being facilitated. Details of booth level officers besides the facilities to file complaints and provide feedback can be found in the website. The call centre number set for the period of elections in Rajasthan is 1950.

He made an appeal to the people and said that the approachability of NGOs is more than the ECI. For example, correction of voter list, increase in the women enrollment and increase in the youth participation etc. can be achieved on a larger scale if there is active participation by NGOs. Mumbai is a good example of the levels to which the voter numbers could increase if NGOs could give a helping hand to the ECI.

Inclusion of marginalized communities for example, Nomads: Members of such societies are trying to get their names added to the electoral rolls and for this the ECI would need NGOs' help. During elections, there should be a drive by people from all social, economic and ethnic groups to encourage voters to cast their votes ethically. Support of CSOs is needed both before and after the elections- in reaching out to the voters. Ethical voting to strengthen democracy is being promoted widely.

Mr. Bharat Bhushan Garg –Joint Director (ECI)

Mr. Garg tried to create awareness about the length and breadth of money power in elections. He said, it has become extremely challenging to control the money power in elections. Some measures that have been taken are: flight squads, control rooms (helpline numbers), video surveillance team. Candidates involved in such practices should also be arrested. Voters should vote for those who do not offer any money or otherwise to buy their votes. The more important issue is to how to nab money power? One of the ways is for voters to be more vigilant. Based on the reports created by ADR after analyzing the election expenditure of candidates, it is seen that expenditure is much more than the limit set by ECI. Teaming up of NGOs with ECI is crucial to nab money power. 40-50% of the overall expenses of candidates/ re-contesting MPs/MLAs seem to be towards paid news. There is no direct way to find out where the money is spent on paid news. It is also equally important to curb illegal expenses of not only the candidates but all the political parties. Division of expenses could be made more elaborate by making the statements of expenditure more transparent. Votes of the public are crucial. So NGOs with ECI should take up the issue of developing the culture in people to make an informed choice of their representatives.

Mr. Srinivasan Jain (NDTV)

Senior journalist Mr. Jain said that national level impact of money power was analyzed with the help of Prof. Sastry. It was revealed that money spent illegally on elections is only a little less than the Defence Budget. Civil society groups should create a monitoring panel where discussion should be held about candidates who are given tickets and come up with an analysis that would create maximum impact in the public and who after an informed choice can reject those candidates who are not satisfactory. Interventions are carried out only after candidate selection. Controlling the challenges after this stage is very difficult. The need is to work before the candidates are selected.

Mr. V. S. Vyas (Vice Chairperson, State Planning Board)

Mr. Vyas suggested several things for the betterment of electoral process. He said that an assembly/ parliamentary candidate should have experience in winning smaller Panchayat/ Municipality elections. This makes the way for them to understand public issues through local body elections. Parties are not democratic although the country is. Primary units of parties need to be represented higher up in the party so that candidate represents the thoughts and opinions of his party members too. Role of civil society in electoral reforms should also be taken seriously.

Resolutions and ‘Next Steps for NEW’

Chairperson – Prof. Trilochan Sastry, Mr. Nikhil Dey

Prof. Trilochan Sastry:

In the last and a crucial part of the conference Prof. Sastry said that all resolutions passed here will further be discussed with the state partners, media and the ECI. Government and the ECI alone cannot do everything. Hence the role of civil society is very important. Need for the change of laws is very important but alongside, there must be a way where public participation is seen. One cannot only blame the ECI or other bodies who have anything to do with elections. Instead active participation from all bodies is the need of the hour.

Awareness of the people is very crucial for good governance. Money power should be talked about similar to how Karnataka Election Watch is currently doing through pamphlets, SMS, street plays, skits, etc. If such programs are implemented nationwide, media too will pick up on it and spread the word. Flying squads should be set up to create more awareness. Issue based campaigns will also help in terms of focus. One of the examples can be conducting a campaign on making public aware that their vote is not for sale.

There is pressure on minorities against voting. Civil societies need to work with the ECI to change the scenario. Seasonal migration is an issue as logistics would be distorted. If elections happen during off-season of agriculture, more votes could be gained as the migrants would be in their respective States to cast votes. But implementation of this idea would take time and effort by the ECI which also has to think about the practicality of such implementation.

Election expenses also play a key role in electoral process. The ECI ‘may decide’ to overturn the election of the winner who submitted a false statement. We need to look into what the procedural implications are and what the time bar would be in case it is implemented. The shadow expenditure reports are available in the public domain which can be compared with the election expenditure statements submitted not only by the individuals but also the political parties. There is a need to run campaigns to effectively disseminate information and put out a message against money power (as example) by creatively sensitizing the electorate.

For voter rolls, government can use schemes similar to the Know Your Customer (KYC) scheme used by banks. It should be implemented where all the data is mandated and collected so as to eradicate any errors in the rolls. Similar to the ‘Inclusive Accounts’ used by the banking sector where mobile banking is part of the KYC, the ECI too could benefit from such technology.

National Election Watch (NEW) has so far looked into who cannot contest elections so as to keep the ‘bad guys’ out of the picture but now we should be looking into who all can contest so there will be more people suitable as representatives. NEW should plan for the upcoming State and Lok Sabha Elections by holding a meeting in July in New Delhi with all the State partners and discussing the strategies for informing larger sections of the society.

I thank MKSS, behind-the-scene people and those who travelled from far and wide to attend the conference.

Nikhil Dey:

Mr. Dey began by stating an irony that at the same time when we have issues related to migrants with respect to voting and electoral rolls, NRI voting has been implemented. We should take up such main issues together and pass a resolution on what the way ahead is. A centralized coordination from New Delhi is required where all issues can be addressed and solutions obtained. Inputs from all the State partners are required now so as to come to a resolution as to what needs to be done in the short term and in long term too. Separate state analysis apart from a national level analysis can be done so as to reach as many people as possible from all walks of life.

Apart from this we should randomly choose and scrutinize a few affidavits for authenticity of declaration of their assets. We can maybe choose one candidate per constituency and cross-check the statements in the affidavits. From the scrutiny we can determine the number of ways by which information can either be held back or under reported or falsely stated thus looking into possible fudging of the information.

ADR should conduct a meeting in New Delhi and invite one or two persons from each State and devise the strategy on how to curb excessive use of money power. During the candidate selection process, public discussions need to be facilitated in the respective constituencies inviting prominent people like politicians, industrialists and media.

Address by Chief Election Commissioner Shri. V. S. Sampath

Chairperson – Ms. Aruna Roy, Prof. Jagdeep Chhokar, Mr. V S Vyas

Mr V.S. Sampath:

The Election Commissioner said that the ECI is happy to partner with ADR which is a strong ally in election matters and has a healthy understanding in most of the issues of common good and common cause.

He said, “I would like to place on record that I am grateful for the electoral reforms ADR is trying to bring forth.”

Ills affecting the Electoral System:

- Muscle power
- Misuse of official power
- Money power

Muscle power: The ECI has been constantly trying to take up this issue but the minority sections are still affected. The ECI evolved a vulnerability mapping, where lower ECI officers are asked to identify a few factors and facilitate a few issues such as

- Identifying vulnerability of voters
- Intimidating capacity of the candidates
- Providing confidence to the voters

Day of poll: Security to be beefed-up with mobile squads, to check all the highly vulnerable areas for voters and accompany them to the polling booths.

Civil society organizations can play a role in identifying vulnerable sections of the society. “Be rest assured, we will ensure everyone is able to vote.”

Money power: Muscle power is almost curbed but money power is difficult to track and control. There is deficiency of laws and practices in implementation. But this is no justification for not implementing stronger system to curb money power. ECI is open- minded and suggestions at the field level for improvement are welcome. Money power is a matter of great concern and hence has to be curbed swiftly and efficiently.

ECI has created a new division for expenditure monitoring and revived observers for expenditure. Currently, Grievance Cell number (1950) is at operational at district level but operates only during office hours. He said, “It has to be stated here that, more than ever, there is a better understanding between the ECI and Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) and the Income tax (IT) departments.” Before the announcement of elections, senior most IT officers are approached and asked about the network of missionaries who could be empowered and re-distributed as observers. Any action taken on the candidate is in accordance with the IT Department. Other improvements are: increased number of flying squads, observers, maintenance of a shadow register and video surveillance. Candidates are asked to come and check the details of their entry into the shadow register so that it is transparent.

Black Money: There are about 50,000 polling stations in the upcoming election bound state Karnataka hence public help is important as the ECI cannot place missionaries at all places to curb money power. Regarding expenditure monitoring sessions, Gujarat High Court felt that it was an infringement of the privacy of individuals but the case is with the Supreme Court and the ECI is hopeful that we would get a positive response.

We have ensured following things that were prompted by the civil society and organizations like ADR to us:

1. *Affidavits filed need to be disseminated at the earliest:* Within 24 hours, affidavits are hosted on the website despite the problems in remote areas.
2. *Donations above Rs 20,000:* Most of the statements submitted by the parties are incomplete and not verifiable, including the number of installments in which the donations were given.
3. *Changes in Form 24A:* A few changes have been suggested to the Law Ministry to bring transparency in the functioning of political parties.
4. *Expenditure statement of candidates* should be submitted within 30 days of the election while the election petitions should be filed within 45 days of the election. Hence, there is only a small window of 15 days for challenging the election of the candidate. All the information would be hosted on the website within 48 hours.

Following were the responses of Mr. Sampath to questions that arose during the open session with the CEC:

- *Political parties:* There is definitely a need for transparency in the functioning of political parties. One of the proposals by ECI along with ADR is to have a full-fledged law governing the functioning of parties. The entire issue needs to be addressed in a consolidated law.
- *Registration of Political Parties:* ‘De-registration’ of parties is not possible under law by the ECI.
- *Submission of false affidavits:* Merely taking action on perjury is not sufficient. Suggestion of the ECI is that a false submission of statement could be one of the criteria for disqualification of a candidate/ winner. The main purpose of the affidavit is to make public aware of the details of candidates, be it criminal or asset details.
- *Incomplete filing of affidavit* need not result in cancellation of the election of the candidate. The returning officer is to check for completion of the affidavit/ form. ‘Not applicable’ should also be specified and not left blank. Only when false information is deliberately given, action is proposed.
- *NRI voting:* NRIs cannot vote if they are not in their permanent residential address as given in their voter card. It is only possible for them to retain their names in electoral rolls.
- *Migrant voter:* As long as the migrant voter satisfies the qualification for an eligible voter, he can vote.
- *De-criminalization of politics:* The ECI is passionate about it and it is a part of the reform proposed to the government. The ECI is hopeful that one day the reforms take shape as law.
- *Paid news:* This issue is rampant in all elections. Measures to tackle this have not been as good as expected. Currently paid news is not an electoral offence but it should appear in the expenditure statement. District and State level committees during Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh Elections cross checked the election expenditure statement especially with respect to paid news.

- *False Election Accounts:* Action of the ECI under Section 10(A) of Representation of the People Act (RPA) provides for action against candidates relating to filing of affidavits only on 2 grounds:
 - A. Not filing within the stipulated time
 - B. Not filing in the manner required

In the Shivram Gouda case, the Supreme Court had specifically stated that “... not just filing but veracity and accuracy of the details furnished” were important.

- *Enrollment:* This is a critical issue and is the soul of the entire election process. Electoral rolls are always given to the political parties and Panchayat. Currently, they are also being put up on the CEO’s website for facilitation of the process. Civil society organizations must play a facilitating role in cross checking the electoral rolls.

He concluded by saying “I sincerely thank you for ensuring purity of elections.”

Ms Aruna Roy (MKSS):

Compliments ADR’s way of activism:

“We were attracted towards ADR with their policy of engagement. We did not have faith in people who belonged to IIM or any of the rich cadres, but the type of struggle they have brought about is great. If the society we are living in is multi-faceted, then the activism should also be multi-faceted. The path of engagement is as important as various People’s Movements. We should support and compliment this approach. We must also read and suggest on the features of the Political Parties draft Bill.”

Ready for Elections in Rajasthan:

“As far as elections are concerned, we should make a list of things which we do not want. For instance, mining and land mafias in Rajasthan are the visible ills. These are the things we do not want. We must at least say that we do not want a candidate who is involved in these things. We should say as to whom we do not want as a candidate. We have had public meetings regarding not letting rape accused to contest elections. We should be ready before elections to see what can be done to ensure that the right candidates contest elections.”

Prof. Jagdeep Chhokar thanked the CEC and Ms. Aruna Roy for their participation and valuable contribution to the conference.



House paying respect to whistleblower Mr. Ram Kumar Thakur, who was shot dead on 23rd March 2013.



Eminent journalist Mr. Kumar Ketkar delivering inaugural address



Session on Panchayati Raj



CEC Mr. V. S. Sampath giving press bytes



CEC V. S. Sampath and Ms. Aruna Roy in a candid moment



SEC Mr. Ashok Panday delivering a speech



Press briefing by Rajasthan Election Watch



Session on Political Party Reforms

Sessions



Sessions



Interactive Sessions



Cultural Program



Venue



*"No office in the land is
more important than that
of being a citizen"*

-Felix Frankfurter



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