

16th ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE on 'ELECTORAL & POLITICAL REFORMS'

Organised by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) & Maharashtra Election Watch

Venue: Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune (846, BMCC Road, Fergusson College Campus, Deccan Gymkhana, Pune, Maharashtra-411004)

Date: 15th and 16th July 2023

AGENDA

15th July 2023 – Auditorium: Kale Hall

9:00 – 09:30	Registration	
09:30 – 09:55	<p>National Anthem and Lamp Lighting</p> <p>Guest of Honour: Dr Nasim Zaidi, former Chief Election Commissioner, Election Commission of India</p> <p>Inauguration & Welcome Address: Maj Gen Anil Verma (Retd) (Head-ADR/National Election Watch (NEW)), Prof Trilochan Sastry (Chairman, Founder Member & Trustee –ADR/NEW), Dr Ajit Ranade (Founder Member & Trustee-ADR/NEW, Maharashtra Election Watch Coordinator, Vice-Chancellor, Gokhale Institute of Politics & Economics, Pune)</p>	
09:55 – 10:25	<p>Keynote Address by Guest of Honour: Dr Nasim Zaidi, former Chief Election Commissioner, Election Commission of India</p> <p>Chairperson – Dr Ajit Ranade (Founder Member & Trustee - ADR/NEW)</p>	
10:25 – 10:40	<p>Address by Hon'ble Mr Justice Narendra Chapalgaonkar (former Judge, Bombay High Court) on "Challenges to Indian Democracy"</p> <p>Chairperson – Dr Ajit Ranade (Founder Member & Trustee - ADR/NEW)</p>	
10:40-10:45	<p>Book Release– Report on “Analysis of Sitting MLAs from 28 State Assemblies and 2 Union Territories of India 2023” & ADR Annual Report 2022-23</p>	
10:45 – 11:35	<p>The Continuing Trend of Money Power and Criminality in Indian Politics: What is the way forward?</p> <p>Focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact of information on voter turnout and voters' choice - Innovative strategies to address voter apathy and encourage informed & ethical voting - Research findings and best practices from around the world - Publication of criminal cases against candidates selected by political parties along with reasons for such selection 	<p>Chairperson – Prof Trilochan Sastry (Chairman, Founder Member & Trustee –ADR/NEW)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr J. S. Saharia, IAS (Retd) (Chairman, International Society for Human Awakening & Development (ISHAD); former Chief Secretary; former State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra) 2. Dr Sanjay Paswan (Member, Bihar Legislative Council; former Central Minister; Member, N.E.C, B.J.P; Professor at Patna University, Patna) 3. Mr Vijai Sardesai (Member of the Goa Legislative Assembly (Fatorda Constituency) from Goa Forward Party; former Deputy Chief Minister of Goa) 4. Prof Yugank Goyal (Associate Professor - Public Policy, Flame University, Pune)
11:35- 11:50	Open Discussion	
11:50- 12:20	Tea Break	

12:20 – 13:15	<p>Decoding the Controversial Electoral Bonds Scheme: How long for Supreme Court to adjudicate?</p> <p>Focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional paralysis and Electoral Bond Scheme, 2018 - Judicial intervention and electoral bonds case - Opposing parties continue to accept electoral bonds 	<p>Chairperson – Prof Jagdeep Chhokar (Founder Member & Trustee – ADR/NEW)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prof M.V. Rajeev Gowda (National Spokesperson, All India Congress Committee (AICC); Chairman, AICC Research Department; former Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, from Karnataka) 2. Prof Satya Narayan Misra (Professor at KIIT School of Management (KSOM), Bhubaneswar) 3. Mr Nitin Sethi (Founding Member, The Reporters' Collective; Senior Journalist) 4. Dr Vipul Mudgal (Trustee – ADR/NEW; Director and Chief Executive, Common Cause)
13:15 – 13:35	Open Discussion	
13:35 – 14:35	Lunch	
14:35 – 14:50	<p>Address by Dr Dalip Singh, IAS (Retd), on “Importance of NOTA and Measures to Improve Indian Elections”</p> <p>Chairperson – Prof Jagdeep Chhokar (Founder Member & Trustee – ADR/NEW)</p>	
14:50 – 15:50	<p>Bringing Political Parties under RTI: Fostering inner-party democracy</p> <p>Focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parties' refusal to come under the purview of RTI - Absence of legal oversight or public scrutiny over political party functioning outside of elections - Inner party democracy & transparency in ticket distribution - Emergence of RTI as a powerful tool in exposing the truth 	<p>Chairperson – Dr Vipul Mudgal (Trustee – ADR/NEW)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr TR Raghunandan (Consultant in Anti-corruption, Decentralised Public Wealth and Heritage Restoration; Director of Avantika Foundation) 2. Mr Venkatesh Nayak (Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)) 3. Prof Narayana A (Faculty-School of Policy & Governance, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru) 4. Mr Ruben Mascarenhas (National Joint Secretary & Campaign Secretary, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP); Working President of AAP Mumbai)
15:50 – 16:05	Open Discussion	
16:05 – 16:55	<p>Local & Urban Governance</p> <p>Focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing influence of money and muscle power in Panchayat/ULBs elections and its impact on governance - Community mobilisation and participation in the decision-making process - Role of CSOs & People's movements in strengthening electoral politics and local governance - Experience sharing/case studies and suggested reforms 	<p>Chairperson – Maj Gen Anil Verma (Retd) (Head - ADR/NEW)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms Malti Sagane (President, Mahila Rajsatta Aandolan (MRA)) 2. Mr Bhim Raskar (Director, Resource and Support Centre for Development (RSCD)) 3. Dr Ujjaini Halim (ADR's State Coordinator – West Bengal) 4. Mr Sudhir Pal (ADR's State Coordinator - Jharkhand)
16:55 – 17:10	Open Discussion	
17:10 – 17:40	Tea & Dispersal	

16th July 2023 – Auditorium: Kale Hall

09:00 – 09:30	Registration	
09:30 – 10:35	<p>Youth and Women Participation in Electoral Politics: In preparation for General Elections 2024</p> <p>Focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unique entry barriers to female political participation - Tickets to untainted young male and female candidates over dynastic candidates or those with muscle/money power - Gap between low women representation and high women participation - 33% Women Reservation in Lok Sabha & Assemblies still pending-Why political parties resist women empowerment? - 65% of the Indian population is under 35 years of age but only 12% MPs are below 40 years of age. What measures can be undertaken to enhance the role of young politicians in designing policies for better governance? 	<p>Chairperson – Dr Kiran B. Chhokar (Trustee-ADR/NEW)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr Chaitra Redkar (Associate Professor-Humanities and Social Sciences, Dy. Chair, and Associate Dean at Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune) 2. Dr Sonia Bhaidas Nagarale (Associate Professor at the Department of Law, Savitribai Phule Pune University) 3. Ms Angellica Aribam (Founder, Femme First Foundation) 4. Prof Sridhar Pabbisetty (Senior Director of School of Government, MIT-World Peace University, Pune)
10:35 - 10:50	Open Discussion	
10:50 - 11:05	<p>Address by Dr Anand Deshpande (Founder, Chairman, and Managing Director, Persistent Systems) on “Decentralisation of Economy using Technology”</p> <p>Chairperson – Prof Trilochan Sastry (Chairman, Founder Member & Trustee –ADR/NEW)</p>	
11:05 – 11:20	Tea	
11:20 – 12:35	<p>Election Campaigns, Digital Technology and Social Media Mobilization in India</p> <p>Focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absence of robust institutional framework to trace/regulate the actual expenditure by parties on digital media - Covert nature of political campaigns & data-driven micro-targeting - Parties and political consultancy - Fake news, hate speech, deep fakes, voter suppression, surrogate advertising etc. - Impact of social media in shaping the narrative for youth - Blockchain Voting, Artificial Intelligence, Biometrics, Bogus Voting, Booth Capturing, Voter Intimidation, Misuse of electoral rolls 	<p>Chairperson – Mr Jaskirat Singh (Trustee-ADR/NEW)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr Saurabh Dwivedi (Editor and Founder, The Lallantop; Senior Journalist) 2. Ms Karen Rebelo (Editor, Boom Live) 3. Mr Rakesh Reddy Dubbudu (Founder, Factly.in and ADR's State Coordinator- Andhra Pradesh & Telangana) 4. Mr Pulkit Sharma (Political Strategist and Digital Media Specialist)
12:35 – 12:50	Open Discussion	
12:50 – 13:40	<p>Concluding Session (with institutional stakeholders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summation of ideas generated over the two-day conference - Discussing some concrete solutions to be taken forward - Open discussion inviting suggestions - Mera Vote Mera Desh Campaign for Lok Sabha 2024 Elections 	<p>Chairperson – Prof Trilochan Sastry (Chairman, Founder Member & Trustee –ADR/NEW)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr Babloo Loitongbam (ADR's State Coordinator- Manipur) 2. Ms Rolly Shivhare (ADR's State Coordinator – Madhya Pradesh) 3. Mr Sanjay Singh (ADR's State Coordinator – Uttar Pradesh) 4. Mr Manoj Dhyani (ADR's State Coordinator –Uttarakhand)
13:40 onwards	Lunch & Dispersal	