

## Report of meeting on ADR: A workshop on free and fair elections

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at Manthan Auditorium**

The meeting was begun by Mrs. Renu Prakash addressing the members and giving a brief sketch of the discussions to be made in the meeting. She said that we are hearing the slow sound of coming election which will be held in 2019. All the political parties are planning their programme according to the election. Being a civil society organization why don't we? But we will do in quite different manner. We will not propagate the ideas of certain political party, but will certainly make awareness among common mass to vote for right person & not on the name of caste, creed & party symbol. She expressed her feelings that we are not a puppet in the hands of political parties, we have opportunity to use our voting rights in public concern.

All the members introduced themselves in introductory session.

### **Aims:**

1. Creating awareness among people to participate in free and fair elections.
2. Channelize more voters into the election; no person should be left behind.
3. Enhance the participation of the urban youth and women.
4. Increase electoral participation through voter registration.

### **Discussions:**

1. Mr. Sudhir Pal gave a brief about the anticipated situations of 2019 elections.
2. ECI has mandated SVEEP cells to be set up in every state for 5 years.
  - a) In Jharkhand this job was designated to Manthan Yuva Sansthan.
  - b) MYS submitted the following recommendations to ECI:
    - i) Any organization with any kind of political affiliation shouldn't be included.

- ii) The organization must be working with Panchayati Raj.
  - iii) The organization must be 3 years old.
  - iv) The registered office of the organization must be Jharkhand.
  - v) ECI is working with NGO's for the first time.
3. Issues of concerns:
- a) ECI is sometimes unable to track electoral expenditures.
  - b) The total cost on election campaigns is only of 33% and rest 67% goes for bribing the voters.
  - c) Political parties pay the media for their own benefits.
  - d) Criminalization of electoral politics.
  - e) Lack of awareness among the urban youth, women and many marginalized communities.
  - f) Lower the gender parity among the voters of Jharkhand.

#### **Strategies of SVEEP:**

1. Educate and engage voters in elections.
2. Selection of campus ambassador in every college
3. Focus on women and young voters.
4. Third gender community must also get to vote.
5. Communications campaigns through massmedia, social media, traditional media and other media.
6. EVM familiarization camps.
7. Interpersonal communication & direct people-to-people communication.
8. Special registration camps and registration forms to be made available at banks, colleges, post-offices etc.

#### **Decisions:**

1. Talk to Deputy Election Officer about joining SVEEP (in every district).
2. Engage intellectuals, social workers, academicians in every district with SVEEP
3. Campaign for especially challenged people with SVEEP in December, 17, & January, 18 for their capacity building on the issue

4. Formation of district committee as state committee to launch the campaign effectively
5. Any person with political affiliation will not be the part of SVEEP.

**Photograph:**

