

LOK SATTA
People Power

The Road Less Traveled

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The purpose of a government is to make it easy
for people to do good and difficult to do evil.

William Gladstone

Irreducible Role of State

- Rule of law
 - Public order
 - Justice
 - Education
 - Health care
 - Infrastructure
 - Natural resources development
 - Social security
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Governance at a Glance

- Governments spend Rs. 1800 crores every day
 - Out of 27 million organised workers, government employs 70%
 - Fiscal deficit (Union and States) remains at 10% GDP
 - 50% Union tax revenues go towards interest payment
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Is Money the Issue?

School Education

- 1.6 million classrooms needed
- Capital cost : Rs.16,000 crores – 9 days govt. expenditure
- Recurring expenditure : Rs.8000 crores – 5 days govt. expenditure

Sanitation

- 140 million toilets needed
 - Cost: Rs 35000 crores
 - Equals just 20 days expenditure
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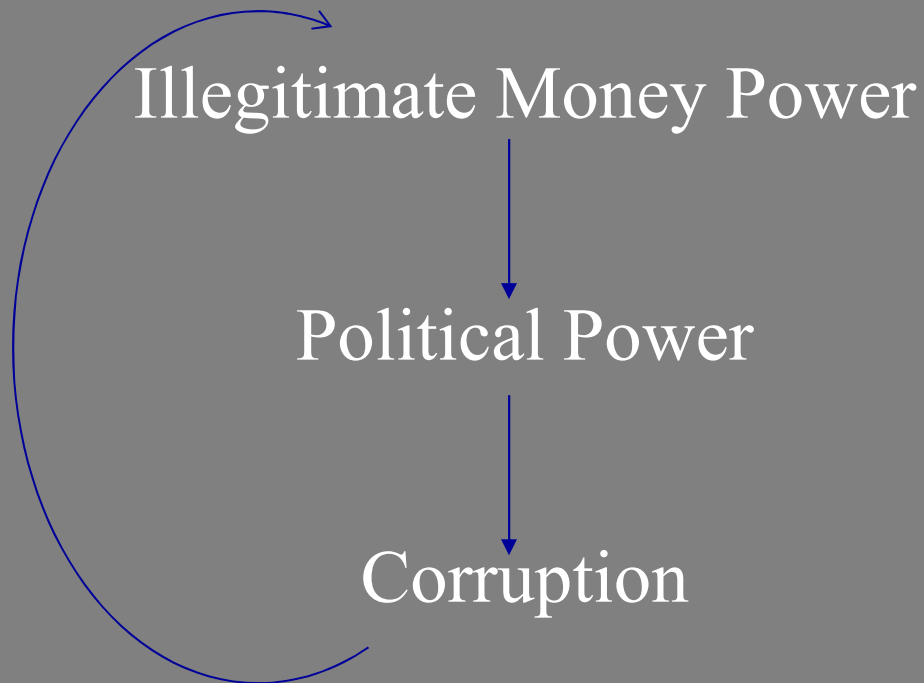
In a Sane Democracy

- Political process should resolve the crisis
 - Parties, elections and public office are the route to reform
 - In India a vicious cycle operates
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Failure of Political Process

Interlocking vicious cycles

Inexhaustible demand for illegitimate funds



Interlocking Vicious Cycles

Most expenditure is to buy votes

Voter seeks money & liquor

More expenditure

Large spending may or may not lead to success, but failure to spend almost certainly leads to defeat

Greater corruption

Greater cynicism

Voter seeks more money

Contd..

Rise of Political Fiefdoms

Need for money, caste and local clout



Parties are helpless in choice of candidates



Rise of political fiefdoms



Absence of internal party democracy



Competition among a few families in most constituencies



Oligopoly at constituency level

Vote delinked from public good

Centralized polity



No matter who wins, people lose



Vote does not promote public good



Voter maximizes short term gain



Money, liquor, caste, emotion and anger become dominant



Vicious cycle is perpetuated

Contd..

Interlocking Vicious Cycles Taxes delinked from services

Only 16 % of GDP collected as taxes (union & states)

Fiscal deficits and crisis

Higher Taxes

↓
Unacceptable because
of corruption and poor
services

Desubsidization

↓
The poor do not see
alternative benefits for
the subsidies given up

Wage Reduction

↓
Centralization and Art
311 preclude it

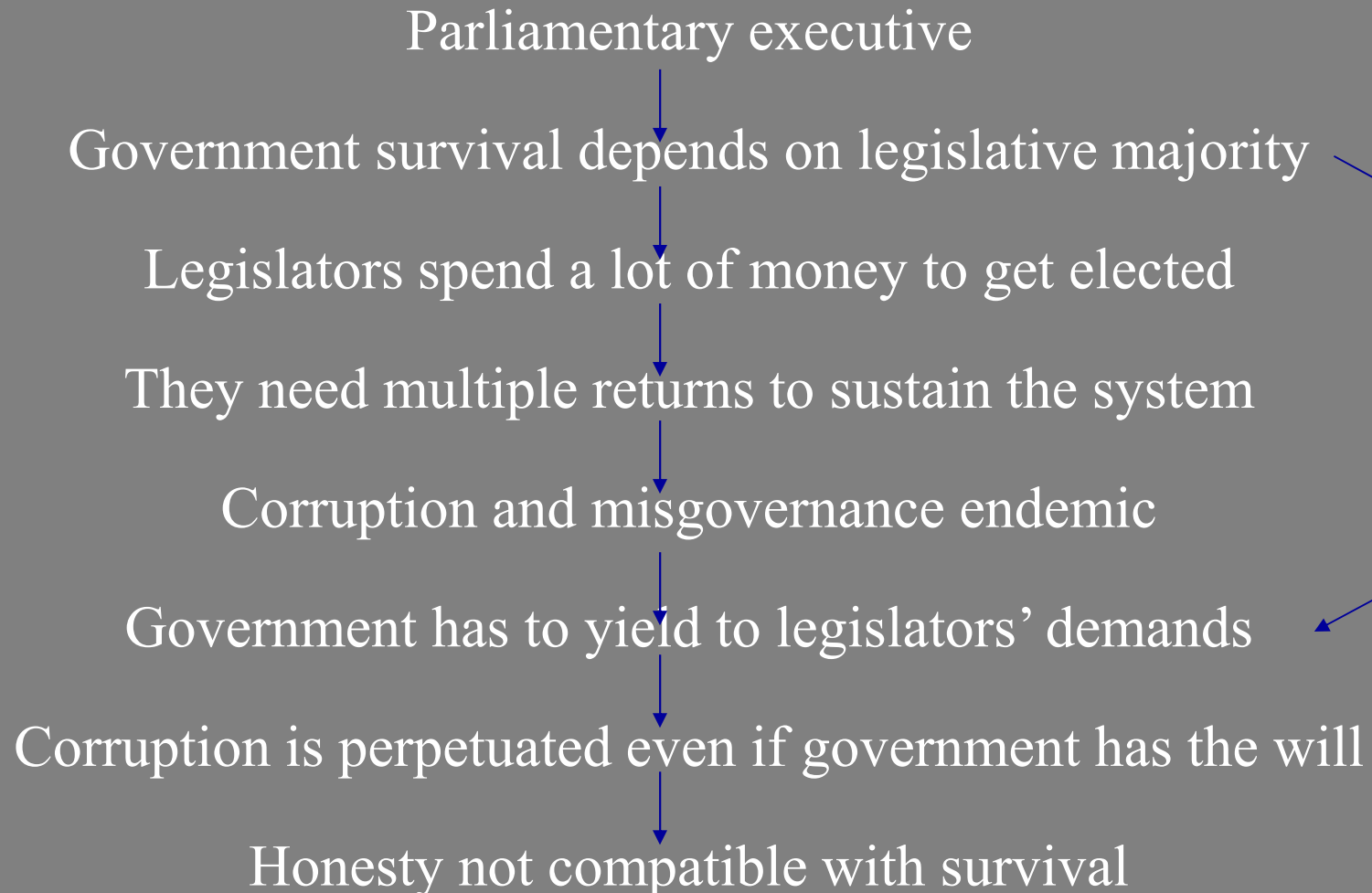
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Deeper fiscal crisis

↓
Poorer services and public goods

↓
Perpetuation of poverty and backwardness

Contd..

Political survival and honesty not compatible



What Ails Bureaucracy

- Life time security of bureaucracy
 - Penchant for centralization and secrecy
 - Lack of professionalism and specialized skills
 - Absence of incentives for excellence
 - No accountability
 - Corruption and maladministration
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Distortions of State Power

- Positive Power restricted
Negative power unchecked
 - All organs are dysfunctional
 - A system of alibis
Victims of vicious cycle
 - Change of players
No change in the rules of the game
 - Political process ought to be the solution
But has become the problem itself
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Keys to Resolution

- Crisis is systemic
 - Most players are victims of a vicious cycle
 - Change of players not enough
 - Change of rules of the game needed
 - Institutions are the key
 - Resources are not a problem
 - The way they are deployed is the key
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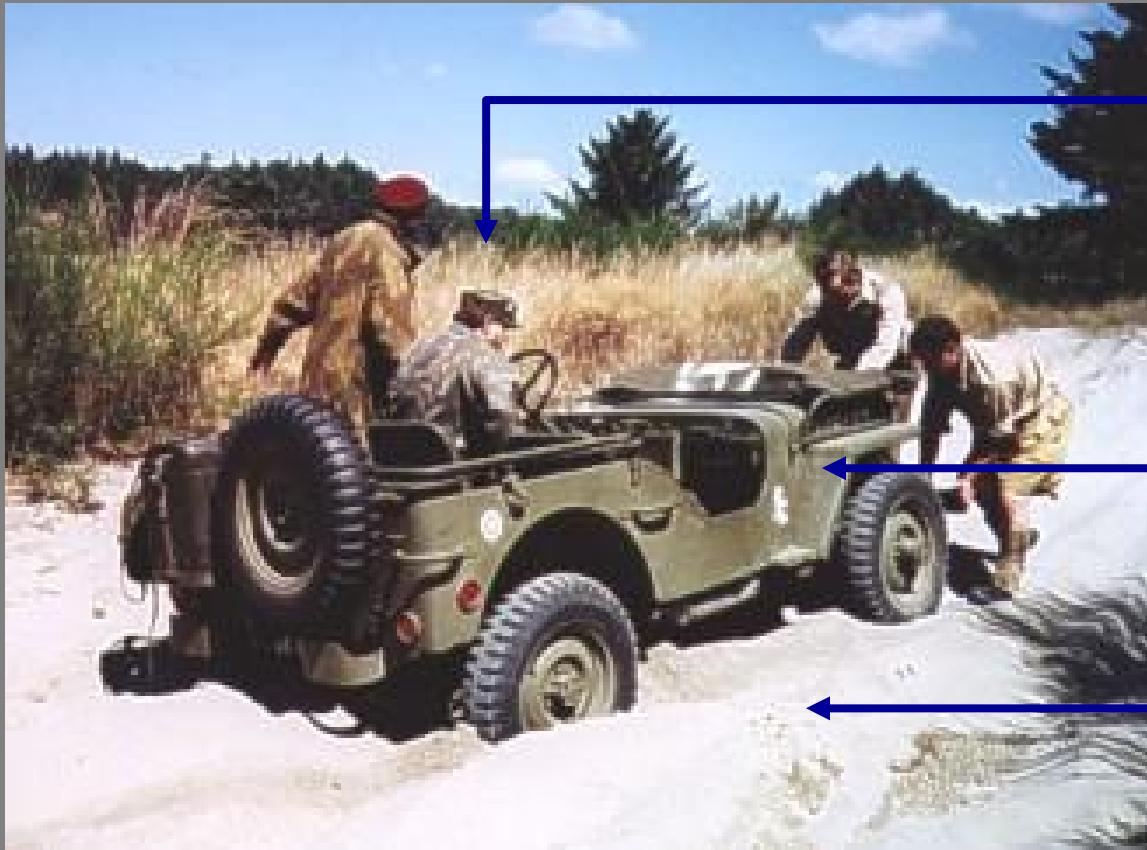
Key Reforms

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Electoral reforms | Funding |
| | Criminalization |
| | Voting irregularities |
| Electoral system | Proportional representation |
| | Separation of powers |
| Decentralization | Local governments |
| Rule of law | Judicial reforms |
| Accountability | Right to information |
| | Citizens' charters |
| | Independent crime investigation |

Mission

To promote peaceful, democratic transformation of Indian governance process and enable India to achieve full potential through good governance

The Track Which Impedes



Players (drivers)

**Democratic
Institutions (Engine)**

**Railings / Track
(political system)**

Approaches to Citizens' Action

- Collective informed assertion
 - Wide dissemination of information
 - Effective mass communication
 - Strategic intervention
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Methods of Citizens' Action – People's Watch

- Collective informed assertion
- People's charter
- Lok Satta as platform
- Fight against corruption
- Fight for better delivery of public services

Methods of Citizens' Action – Swarajya

- Advocacy and campaign for specific reform goals
- Choice of goals
 - Locally achievable
 - No cost / low cost
 - Universally acceptable
 - Strategic goals opening many doors

Swarajya – Reform Goals

- Right to Information
 - Citizen's Charters
 - Empowerment of local governments
 - Empowerment of stake holders
 - Universally accessible school education
 - Speedy justice through rural courts
 - Toilet for every household
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Methods of Citizens' Action – Election Watch

- Voter verification and registration
- Screening of candidates
- Know your candidates
- Common platforms
- State-level debates
- Training of volunteers
- Monitoring of polling process

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Methods of Citizens' Action – Election Watch

- Does not aim to affect the outcome
 - Election time is ripe for awareness campaign
 - Focus on remediable flaws
 - Pressure on parties and candidates
 - Idea of accountability
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Impact of LOK SATTA

India's leading civil society initiative

- About 30 % support base in AP
- Known virtually in every village
- Could mobilize 10 million signatures for local government empowerment in AP alone
- Could organize people's ballots with participation of one million citizens with 3 days' notice in favour of disclosure of candidate details

Impact of LOK SATTA

Several local and state level successes

- 9 citizen's charters in AP
 - First charters providing for compensation of Rs 50 per day in select municipal services
 - Cessation of short delivery at 1500 petrol stations
 - benefit of Rs 1crore/day
 - Stake-holder empowerment – laws enacted to constitute water users' associations and school education committees
 - Toilets for every household – Lok Satta's advocacy resulted in a major initiative by the state
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Several local and state level successes

- Stopped enactment of a restrictive societies law, and ensured passing of an enabling law in collaboration with CDF
 - Curb corruption at micro level - building regularization; fight against central excise corruption in small industries sector; check on corruption in registration and transport dept. etc, in various places
 - Awareness on right to information
 - Focus on health care and school education reform
 - Advocacy and drafting of a bill for local courts – likely to be enacted as law soon
 - Successful advocacy for decentralized power distribution management
 - Built effective tools for citizen action
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Impact of LOK SATTA

Election related successes

- Election watch became a nation-wide instrument for non-partisan citizen engagement. Support to groups in TN, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, West Bengal and Chattisgarh
- Arrested growth of criminal elements in politics
- Could prevent election of a notorious faction leader with violent record from becoming a Zilla Parishad Chairman
- Common electoral rolls for local, state and national elections have become a reality
- In local elections, Tendered vote is now accepted as proof of rigging and repolls are ordered

Impact of LOK SATTA

National successes

- A National Campaign for Electoral and Governance Reforms is now in place
- The disclosure campaign led to institutionalization of disclosure of candidate details
- The alternative model for women's representation has altered the national debate and is now widely accepted
- Post-office as a nodal agency for voter registration is close to reality
- Political funding reform is now in place, and a law has been enacted by Parliament

Resources

- Mostly Volunteer time, energy and credibility
 - Support in kind (infrastructure, printing etc.)
 - Skillful use of Media
 - Limited cash support
 - Limited funding for specific projects
 - No foreign funding for now (as a policy)
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National Scene - Recent Reform Initiatives

- Disclosure of candidate details
 - Changes in Rajya Sabha Election
 - Anti-defection Law changes
 - Limiting the Size of Council of Ministers
 - Women's Reservation in legislatures
 - Post office as nodal agency for voter registration
 - National Judicial Commission
 - Right to Information
 - Political Funding law
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Other Systemic Reforms Needed

- Proportional representation
 - Direct election of chief executive in states
 - Internal democracy in political parties
 - Judicial and police reforms
 - Independent and strong anti-corruption agency
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Window of Opportunity

- Deepening fiscal crisis
 - Citizen's disgust and concern
 - Unsustainable status quo
 - Relatively sound private economy
 - Demographic changes and rising expectations
 - Communications revolution
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Some Harbingers of Hope

- Tamil Nadu – literacy, population control and economic growth
 - AP – population control
 - Maharashtra – Control of judicial corruption
 - Rajasthan – Rise from BIMARU status to middle-income level
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National Communication Campaign

- What are the reforms needed and why
 - What is there in it for me as a citizen
 - How can I participate
 - In all major languages
 - Taking advantage of Radio and Cable TV penetration
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Two Paths - Choice is Ours

German example vs USSR example

- Freedom enhancing
- Democratic
- Orderly
- Integrating
- Growth-oriented
- Tyrannical
- Chaotic
- Disintegrating
- Debilitating

“Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat ”

- *Sun Tzu*