

**Silver Jubilee Celebrations
of
73rd and 74th Amendments
to the
Constitution of India**

**Compilation of Proceedings:
Conferences and Workshops
2017-2019**



an initiative of

**Institute of Democracy & Elections for Good Governance
(a wing of State Election Commission, Maharashtra)**

Compilation of Proceedings: Conferences and Workshops 2017-2019

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An initiative of

Institute of Democracy & Elections for Good Governance

(a wing of State Election Commission, Maharashtra)

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Shri. Vinod Chavan, Shri. Sameer Rane, Smt. Anuya Kuwar, Shri. Bheem Raskar,

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Printed at

Government Central Printing Press, Mumbai

Published by

Department of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai

Supported by

State Election Commission, Maharashtra

1st Floor, New Administrative Building,

Hutatma Rajguru Chowk,

Madame Cama Road,

Mumbai – 400 032

June 2019

Publication No.

SEC/P.N.48/2019-11/Compilation of Proceedings: Conferences and Workshops 2017-2019

Foreword



Constitution Makers while adopting the Constitution of India in 1950 provided for an Independent ECI for the elections to the Parliament and State Assemblies. However, since the Local Self-Government Institutions formed part of the Directive Principles of State Policy; the responsibility of conducting elections to LSGs remained with the respective State Governments only. The Constitution was however amended through the historic 73rd and 74th Amendments in 1992 when it was realized that these PRIs and ULBs have not been able to acquire the status and dignity of a viable and responsive peoples' body in the last four decades due to a number of reasons including absence of regular elections, prolonged supersession, insufficient representation of weaker sections and women, inadequate devolution of powers and lack of financial resources etc.

In order to celebrate the "25th anniversary" of the historic 73rd and 74th Amendments, the State Election Commission, Maharashtra (hereinafter SECM) conducted series of Conferences / Workshops during 2017-2019 in order to

- i) assess the progress made in terms of the Amendments, and
- ii) decide the future course of action for making both the LSGs and SECs more effective, etc.

Following Conferences/ Workshops were conducted at National and Regional level which were attended by eminent, former and serving local representatives and officers, political and social scientists, actual practitioners, representatives of political parties, experts, academicians, students, media persons, etc.

Sr. No.	Subject	Conference/ Workshop	Date and Venue	Proceeding Language
1.	"Twenty Five Years of 73 rd and 74 th Constitutional Amendments – Progress and Future Directions"	National Conference	2 nd and 3 rd November 2017 University of Mumbai, Kalina Campus, Santacruz	English and Marathi
2.	"Twenty Five Years of 73 rd and 74 th Constitutional Amendments – Progress and Future Directions"	7 Regional Conference	15 th January to 22 nd January 2018 Nanded, Aurangabad, Amravati, Pune (Rural), Nasik, Pune (Urban), Nagpur	English, Marathi

3.	Conclusion of “Democracy Fortnight – 2018”	Governor’s Conclave	9 th February, 2018 Sahyadri Guest House, Mumbai	Marathi
4.	‘राजकीय पक्षांद्वारे सशक्त लोकशाही’	State Level Workshop of Political Parties	7 th May 2018 Patkar Hall, S.N.D.T. Women’s College	Marathi
5.	“Healthier Democracy by Political Parties”	3 Regional Workshops	September, 2018 Amravati, Rahuri, Pune	Brief Information
6.	“Better Elections for Healthier Democracy”	Workshop of Experts	6 th July, 2018 University of Mumbai, Kalina	English
7.	“Better Elections for Healthier Democracy”	6 Regional Workshops	September- October-2018 Amravati, Nagpur, Navi Mumbai, Dhule, Pune, Aurangabad	Brief Information
8.	“Better Elections for Healthier Democracy”	International Conference	25 th and 26 th October 2018 The Leela Hotel, Sahar, Andheri, Mumbai	English
9.	Expectation of Constitution-Role of State Election Commissions for Senior Officers of SEC	National Workshop	27 th and 28 th March, 2019 The Dukes Retreat, Lonavala	English

Proceedings of these Conferences/ Workshops have been prepared by the respective host organizations and institutions covering the issues discussed, views expressed and recommendations made.

I am happy to learn that University of Mumbai and Gokhale Institute of Economics and Politics, Pune, have compiled and edited these proceedings with the help of Knowledge Partners of State Election Commission, Maharashtra, and the same is now being published in a book form.

Summarizing the views of somebody else is a difficult task. It is, therefore, possible that some discrepancies might have crept in while preparing this volume. If it has happened, it is absolutely unintentional. I would be happy if these discrepancies are brought to our notice so that they could be rectified in future.

I would like to thank all the Host Organizers/ Institutions, Knowledge Partner, Officers and Staff of State Election Commission, Maharashtra, for arranging this conferences/ workshops in a professional manner.

I would like to express my gratitude toward Hon’ble Governor, Chief Minister, Ministers, both the

Leaders Opposition, Elected Representatives, Officers of Govt. of Maharashtra for their support to this great cause of preserving, protecting and promoting the democracy at the grass root level.

I am sure this Compilation of Proceedings will help the various stakeholders besides serving preserving as a source of knowledge for future generations.

Shri. J. S. Saharia
State Election Commissioner
Maharashtra



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List of Abbreviations

ADR	Association for Democratic Reforms
CAA	Constitutional Amendment Acts
CS	Civil Society
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DPC	District Planning Commission
ECI	Election Commission of India
ECs	Election Commissions
EO	Election Officer
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
GIPE	Gokhale Institute of Politics & Economics
GoM	Government of Maharashtra
GPS	Global Positioning System
GST	Goods and Service Tax
HoD	Head of Department
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
IDEGG	Institute of Democracy & Elections for Good Governance
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IPS	Indian Police Service
LB	Local Body
LG	Local Government
LSG	Local Self-Government

MLC	Member of Legislative Council
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFO	Non-Financial Orgs.
NIRD	National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj
NOTA	None of the Above
NREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Gurantee Act
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
OBC	Other Backward Class
PESA	Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
RLB	Rural Local Bodies
RSCD	Resource and Support Centre for Development
RTI	Right to Information
SC	Scheduled Castes
SEC	State Election Commission
SECM	State Election Commission, Maharashtra
SECs	State Election Commissions
SL	Sri Lanka
SM	Social Media
ST	Scheduled Tribes
TSP	Tribal Sub-Plan
ULB	Urban Local Bodies
VVPAT	Voter Verification Paper Audit Trail
PwDs	Persons with Disability
ZP	ZilhaParishad

National Conference on

Twenty five years of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments: Progress and Future Direction

2nd and 3rd November, 2017

An initiative of

Institute of Democracy &
Elections for Good Governance
(a wing of State Election
Commission, Maharashtra)

Supported by

Government of
Maharashtra

Jointly hosted by

University of Mumbai
and Gokhale Institute of
Politics and Economics,
Pune

Venue

Pherozeshah Mehta Bhavan and Research Centre,
University of Mumbai, Vidyanagari, Kalina Campus,
Santacruz (E), Mumbai - 400 098

National Conference | 2nd and 3rd November 2017 (English)

Background

Historic Amendments to the Constitution of India (73rd and 74th) were made in 1992 in order to provide Local Bodies their rightful place in the governance of the Country.

2. Independent State Election Commissions have been established in most of the States/ Union Territories, a big question still remains as to whether -
 - i) the Local Self-Government bodies have not performed as per the expectations/ spirit of the amendments
 - ii) devolution of 3 Fs (Funds, Functions and Functionaries) has been done upto the desired level” and
 - iii) timely elections are conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner
3. In order to discuss the above, a 2-day National Conference on the subject “Twenty Five Years of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments – Progress and Future Directions” was hosted by University of Mumbai and Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune (GIPE) with the support of the Government of Maharashtra at the initiative of “**Institute of Democracy and Elections for Good Governance**”, a wing of State Election Commission, Maharashtra.

4. Structure of the said Conference was as follows:

Day 1 (09.30 – 17.30)

(i) Registration-

(ii) Inaugural Session- Hon. Governor of Maharashtra Shri Ch. Vidhyasagar Rao, Hon. RDD Minister, Smt. Pankajatai Gopinath Munde, Shri T. R. Raghunandan, Consultant and Advisor, De-centralized Public Governance, , Hon. State Election Commissioner, Shri J. S. Saharia, Prof. Devanand Shinde, Hon. Vice Chancellor University of Mumbai

(iii) Session One: Issues in Governance State versus

a. Local Bodies (Parallel Sessions)

(iv) Session Two: Best Practices – National and International

(v) Session Three: Paper Presentation

Day – 2 (09.30 – 17.45)

(i) Session Four: Effective Participation of Women in Local Bodies.

(ii) Session Five: Devolution of 3 Fs : Funds, Functions and Functionaries (Parallel Sessions)

(iii) Session Six: Electoral Reforms

(iv) Valedictory Function- Chief Guest, Shri Devendra Fadanvis, Hon’ble Chief Minister, Govt. of Maharashtra, Dr. George Mathew, Chairman, Institute of Sciences, New Delhi. Shri J. S. Saharia, Hon’ble State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra.

5. Following booklets were published and released during the said Conference:

Various Books & Research done through Universities and Research Institutes

Sr. No.	Name of the Publication	Name of the Institute	Year of Publication
1.	A Compilation of election watch Reports 2015-2017 (2018)	Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)	Nov. 2017, Oct. 2018
2.	Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation - Standard Operational Procedure (2017)	Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation	Nov. 2017
3.	Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation- General Election 2017 Coffee Table Book	Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation	Nov. 2017
4.	Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai- General Election 2017 Coffee Table Book	Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai	Nov. 2017
5.	Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai-General Elections-2017 Data Analysis	Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai	Nov. 2017
6.	"What Kind Of A Candidate Does The Urban Voter Want?" A Pre-Nomination Study In 16 Municipal Councils Of Maharashtra	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune	Nov. 2017
7.	Analysis Of Rural Local Body Elections Of Maharashtra (2014-2017)	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune	Nov. 2017
8.	Use Of Technology In Electoral Campaigning A Case Study Of Panvel Municipal Corporation Elections, 2017	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune	Nov. 2017
9.	Assessment Of Election Expenses In Municipal Corporations In Maharashtra	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune	Nov. 2017
10.	Why People Do Not Vote In Municipal Corporation Elections: A Voter-Based Survey In Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune	Nov. 2017
11.	Why People Do Not Vote In Municipal Corporation Elections: A Voter-Based Survey In Pune Municipal Corporation	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune	Nov. 2017

12.	How Model Is The Model Code Of Conduct? A Pre-Poll Voter Survey In Municipal Councils In Maharashtra	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune	Nov. 2017
13.	Assessment Of Election Expenses In Municipal Councils In Maharashtra	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune	Nov. 2017
14.	How Do Urban Voters Rate The Polling Process? A Post-Poll Voters' Survey In 5 Major Municipal Corporation Elections In Maharashtra	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune	Nov. 2017
15.	How Do Rural Voters Rate The Polling Process? A Post-Poll Voters' Survey In 5 Major Zilha Parishad Elections In Maharashtra	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune	Nov. 2017

Publications by State Election Commission Maharashtra

Sr. No.	Name of the Publication	Year of Publication
1.	Brochure of SEC	2015/ 2018
2.	Election Newsletter semiannually published -Jan-2016, Jul-2016, Jan-2017, Jul-2017, Jan-2018, Jul-2018	
3.	Model Code of Conduct – A booklet for Government Officials and people representative	Oct. 2016
4.	A booklet on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) during elections of - (i) Municipal Corporations (ii) Municipal Council/ Nagar panchayats (iii) Zilha Parishad/ Panchayat Samiti (iv) Grampanchayat	Dec. 2016
5.	Major Initiatives October-2016 to February-2017	Apr.2017
6.	Analysis - Municipal Corporations and Municipal Council General Elections 2016-2017	Nov. 2017
7.	An informative booklet for Political parties and people's representatives (workshop of political parties)	May. 2018
8.	Profile of all SECs in India	Oct. 2018
9.	Profile of all Municipal Corporations in Maharashtra	Oct. 2018

10.	Profile of all Zilha Parishad in Maharashtra	Oct. 2018
11.	Leaflet - Vibrant and Participative : Local Level Democracy Innovations and Future Strategies	Oct. 2018
12.	Compilation of base Papers for International Conference-2018	Oct. 2018
13.	Book of Important Judgments and Orders of Supreme Court and High Court	Oct. 2017 / Apr. 2018

6. More than 40 eminent speakers expressed their views in the above Conference which was attended by nearly 300 delegates from the different parts of the country.
7. Entire Conference was telecast live on social media like Facebook, YouTube etc.
8. Summary of the views expressed by the various speakers during the above Conference is enclosed herewith.
9. This was probably the first Workshop of its kind in the country, where the various participants felt that similar workshops should also be organized at the regional level in order to create awareness about the Local Self Governments and State Election Commissions and sensitize the various stakeholders about their role and powers.

Day 1

2nd November, 2017 | Inaugural Session

Welcome Address

Professor Devanand Shinde, Hon. Vice Chancellor, University of Mumbai

Professor Devanand Shinde welcomed all the dignitaries to the Dias by presenting the copies of Constitution of India. He stated that 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendment Act has helped the participation of women and deprived sections in the Governance. He further stated that the University of Mumbai is privileged to host this kind of conference which has major aim to strengthen the Democracy and local governance in India.

Introductory Remarks by Hon. State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra, Shri J. S. Saharia

Hon'ble State Election Commissioner after welcoming the dignitaries, especially the Hon'ble Governor and Hon'ble Rural Development Department, Government of Maharashtra, Minister Smt. Pankajatai Gopinath Munde, gave the brief background behind organising the National Conference. The focus of his talk included:

- Objective of the National Conference was to review the implementation of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments during the last 25 years and to suggest possible reforms.
- State Election Commission, Maharashtra (hereinafter SECM) which is an independent Constitutional Authority returns more than 2,50,000 people's representatives in approximately 28,000 Local Self-Governments (LSGs) every 5 years. Elections to the LSGs being voluminous, complex, and fiercely contested, pose greater challenges and difficulties as compared to the elections to the Parliament and Assembly.
- Main challenges which State Election Commissions face arise from the lack of awareness amongst various stakeholders about the :
 - i) Role and responsibilities of the Local Bodies, and
 - ii) Status and Authority of SEC vis-à-vis ECI
- SECM conducted following major elections during 2015-2017:
 - i) Grampanchayat - ----
 - ii) Zilha Parishad - ----
 - iii) Municipal Council - ----
 - iv) Municipal Corporation - 23
- Major initiatives undertaken by SECM during the last 3 years include:
 - i) Online Filing of nomination papers and affidavits by all the candidates through computer software
 - ii) Publishing of criminal and financial background of all contesting candidates outside the polling stations
 - iii) Deregistration of 220 political parties
 - iv) Research through Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune and University of Mumbai

- v) Partnership with Universities and other stakeholders (like Co-op. Hsg. Societies, Hotel Associations, etc.) for higher voter registration and turnout
- vi) Use of Income Tax Officers as Expenditure Observers
- vii) Use of modern technology and computers in all possible areas of election process etc.
- viii) Tableau of SECM during the Republic Day Parade on 26th January, 2019.
- Innovations and efforts made by the SECM gave following encouraging results in the recently held elections:
 - i) Voter registration increased by nearly 75 percent from 12.78 lakhs in January 2016 to 21.7 lakhs in January 2017
 - ii) Voting percentage increased from 48.59 percent (2012) to 56.40 percent (2017) percent in Municipal Corporations, 67.81 percent (2012) to 69.02 percent (2017) in Zilha Parishads, 65.16 percent (2012) to 70 percent (2017) in Municipal Councils.
 - iii) Substantial increases in voting percentage were noticed in the following:
 - Mumbai Corporation – 10.78 percent
 - Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation – 10.51 percent
 - Ulhasnagar Municipal Corporation – 7.41 percent
 - Solapur Municipal Corporation – 7.20 percent
- Strategies which the SECM proposes to undertake in future:
 - i) Voter Awareness and their empowerment through –
 - a. Annual Conferences on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance etc. and
 - b. Annual Democracy Fortnights – from State to Village level.
 - ii) Devise new strategies and compile best practices;
 - iii) strengthening the “Institute of Democracy and Elections for Good Governance”;
 - iv) Instituting Research Fellowships/ internships;
 - v) Establishing linkages with International and National agencies including Electoral Authorities;
 - vi) Maximise the use of computers and modern technology including e-voting;
 - vii) Undertake electoral reforms for improvements in the electoral process and future challenges – filling of vacuous areas, etc.

Highlights of Key-note addressse by Shri T. R. Raghunandan, Consultant and Advisor, De-centralized Public Governance.

- Politics of Presence: Reservation has empowered women, weaker sections and marginalized communities, to get associated and be a part of mainstream politics.
- Politics of Churning: There is a Demand and Desire among masses to be a part of mainstream politics to achieve desired change.
- Dr. B. R Ambedkar said at 6th Oct, 1932 Provincial assembly during Bombay Presidency elections that “Panchayati Raj system should provide a safeguard through affirmative actions for the depressed class”. This is what the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments have done. The Constitution is not weak, the law entrusts to the State the flexibility to define scope and ambit of Panchayati Raj.
- The fiscal system of Panchayati Raj Institutions is fractured. What we give to the PRI are agency functions of the central government. This denies the share of state revenues to the PRI and it does not do anything more than just giving salaries to the employees.
- Decentralization of power to local level.
- People in villages must be looked as a market of talent and Demand.
- Transfer of power from State to local bodies is important.

- Kerala has an ideal Model of Local government.

Hon. Rural Development Department, Government of Maharashtra, Minister Smt. Pankaja Gopinath Munde

Empowerment of women has led to the sharing of power between men and women. State of Maharashtra was adjudged as the second best state for the devolution of power. People's participation is very limited. Training for the Sarpanchs should be provided by the State government. Devolution of power till grassroots must be ensured. Execution of the work must be checked and done.

Presidential Address by Hon. Governor of Maharashtra, Shri Ch. Vidhyasagar Rao

Three important principles of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act are –

- People's representation and conduct of free and fair elections.
- Devolution of power
- Devolution of financial resources and transfer of functions, etc.

We need to study trend so far in light of Preamble and likewise deliberate in future. Hon. Governor appreciated initiatives taken by SECM to conduct free, fair and transparent elections, such as Voter list, Nomination by using IT tools, Control over violation of Model Code of Conduct, etc. Hon'ble Governor also stated that SEC Maharashtra has done pioneering work in this field just like the ECI has done.

He was very categorical as regards the devolution of powers and raised concern over the same. He opined that, so far, only 14 out of 29 functions from Schedule XI are devolved to Panchayati Raj Institutions and only 10 out of 18 functions from Schedule XII are devolved to Municipalities in Maharashtra. This creates an imbalance and the true spirit of the Amendments is yet to be realised. State Government should fix the agenda, form Committees under experts in a timely fashion for the purpose of devolution of power. Decision making and implementation of mechanism of welfare schemes need to be assigned to local bodies. The State Finance Commissions should take active steps to see to it that financial resources are transferred to the local bodies. States such as Kerala and Karnataka have devolved 100 percent powers to local bodies. State Government should constitute a study group and send our representatives there for study.

Hon'ble. Governor mentioned that 5 percent of TSP (Tribal Sub-plan) fund was provided to 13 tribal districts of Maharashtra by notification issued under his discretionary powers. Likewise, State Government should concentrate and make an effort on empowerment of local bodies. We have to create conditions which will make villages self-sufficient. In urban sector there is lot to be done.

Finally Hon. Governor directed the Conference to thoroughly discuss on the issues of importance for the local self-government like the transfer of power to panchaats and municipalities and give a report to decide on the timeframe for such transfer. He also suggested visiting Kerala and Karnataka to study their model of devolution. The chart of the powers delegated to the Panchayats should be displayed in front of the panchayat office.

Session I

Issues in Governance – State v/s Local bodies – URBAN SESSION

Speakers:

1. Shri. Ramanath Jha, Former IAS
2. Prof. O.P. Mathur, Senior Fellow and Head, Urban Studies, Institute of Social Sciences
3. Smt. Smita Waingankar (On behalf of Dr. Amita Bhide)
4. Shri. Anil Sole, Hon. MLC, Maharashtra

Points emerged from Discussion

- There was tremendous irregularity in local body elections prior to 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendment Act 1992.
- After amendment of 1992, Local body elections started taking place on regular basis every 5 years.
- It also gave due representation to weaker sections of Society through Reservation.
- Hon.MLC Shri.Anil Sole also suggested that Indian Urban Services (IUS) cadre should be established on the same line of IAS and IPS.
- Amendment also brought seriousness in Urban Administration and City Management.

Session I

Issues in Governance – State v/s Local bodies – RURAL SESSION

Speakers:

1. Shri. Sudhir Thakare, Former IAS
2. Dr. Chandrakant Puri, Professor, University of Mumbai
3. Shri. Datta Gurav, Panchayat Raj Consultant
4. Dr. Prabhat Datta, Professor, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata
5. Shri. Chaitram Pawar, BGVS, Dhule
6. Shri. Vishwanath Giriraj, Principal Secretary, Finance Dept, GoM

Points emerged from Discussion

- Training of the public representatives is essential and the training modules have to be reworked as per the need of the people.
- Public debate on direct election to Sarpanch shall be taken up and see if it is really democratic.
- Autonomy, self-sufficiency and decentralization has to be looked into.
- Integrated development programs are essential. (For instance for one programme there is duplication or triplication of funding agencies).
- In PESA and 3 tier system, there is a lack of implementing mechanism (organizations)
- Policy and practice audit of Gram Sabha is essential to fix the responsibility.
- Annual development plans have to be planned at the Gram Panchayat level and the same have to be communicated to the District administration.
- Creation of a Preamble like document that displays all the major highlights of the 73rd and 74th Amendment Act and to be put on display at all Gram-Panchayats.
- Panchayat Samiti should be more powerful in comparison to grampanchayat as it is the implementing unit.
- Comprehensive quality training/ induction for the elected representatives must be done.
- There is a need of “bottom up approach” as opposite to the current “Trickle down approach”
- One Gram Sevak should be appointed for one village.

Session II

Best Practices: National and International

Speaker:

1. Shri. Bhim Raskar, Director, Resource and Support Centre for Development
2. Dr. Panch Rishi Dev Sharma, Asst. Professor, University of Lucknow
3. Maj.Gen. (Retd.) Anil Verma
4. Smt. Anuya Kuwar, Project Officer, Asia Region, Commonwealth Local Government Forum
5. Shri. Suhas Shirsath, Former Sarpanch, Phulambri, Aurangabad
6. Dr.T. Brahamanandam Trigiripalli, Former Asst. Professor, NIRD

Points emerged from Discussion

- Canada and Australia are bright examples of quality training based on experience retention.
- Bangladesh too, has a Horizontal Training Program, whereby a union Parishad (Conference) of various villages comes together to provide training to other villages.
- Capable and efficient leadership remains a common factor for the success of these bodies abroad.
- A pioneering role is played by India in Constitutionalizing the Local Self Governance Bodies in South Asia region.
- However, the tendency of concentration of power is extremely high in south East Asia region.
- A lifelong friction is existent between the governance and the governed.
- Villages like Ralegan Siddhi, Hivre Bazaar, Kutumbakam, Mendhalekha among many have been exemplary in such efforts of self-sufficiency.
- Vibrant village leadership is essential. Efforts to develop leadership through training.
- Rejuvenating the existing resources with the help of villagers is essential to give the spirit if trusteeship to the villagers.
- Jharkhand came up with an innovative concept of Panchayat Bank.
The process has actors at 3 levels. The topmost level is comprised of service providers who look after the provision of funds based on the potential of the ones who are asking for financial assistance. The clients include small scale entrepreneurs from the lower most level of the social structure. The intermediate level comprises of banks which act only as liaisons and provide the money.
- People's wisdom bank needs to be focused and their experiments can be shared to other villages to follow.
- We can incorporate Horizontal Training program from Bangladesh in India with the help of State Election Commission.

Session III

Paper Presentations

Chairperson:

Prof. Gautam Gawali, Head, Dept. Applied Psychology and Counselling Centre.

Paper Presenters:

1. Smt. Aruna Sane
2. Dr. Anirudh Prasad Singh
3. Dr. A. Stephen
4. Shri.. Aseem Mishra

Smt. Aruna Sane

“Emerging leadership in Local Governance: Case Study of Ratnagiri District.”

- Ratnagiri stands as an exception with 52 percent females as elected members.
- Among these women, the number of OBC women is high.
- Also, the average age of women members is between 30-40.
- Even though the statistics look rosy, a paradox is seen within.
- However, the selection of candidates matters on their political background, where a women shall acquire candidature only if an influential or politically experienced male member is part of her family.
- Also, statistically women face more opposition as compared to males during election.
- The steep demand of time and money required for electioneering has marred the growth of female leadership.

Dr. Anirudh Prasad Singh

“A Critical Study of Political Economy of Local Self-Governance in Nepal since 1999”

- A strong sense of management and governance prevalent among the villages and panchayats in Nepal.
- In Nepal, there is a Prosperity line whereby the personal assets of an individual cannot exceed 10 million Nepalese Rupees.
- Nepal denounces patriarchal interference in politics.
- The presence of a proxy leader in place of an elected representative is a punishable offence leading to custody and disqualification.

Dr. A. Stephen

“Participation of women in Autonomous District Council: A study among Maram Naga Tribal Women in Manipur.”

- The research was based on random respondents which were largely from the age group of 32-50.
- The participation of women in active politics in this area is extremely high whereby, the female voter percentage is a staggering 60percent.
- Along with this another astonishing fact is that over 90percent respondents are illiterate and yet have sufficient knowledge of the electoral process, the representatives, Autonomous District Council. However,

they lack the knowledge of political parties and also the membership statistics are next to zero.

- The disheartening factor here, is that these females have zero political orientation and maturity. They are victims of patriarchy and the positive statistics are a result of male political opinion thrust upon these females.
- The politics of this area is highly gendered, and even in the presence of high political mobilisation of women; the political orientation of these women is never given importance.

Shri. Aseem Mishra

“Initiatives towards Decentralized Planning and Governance: a Case Study”

- Poor service delivery mechanism.
- Disinterest in participation
- Municipality considered to be the sole agency of development.
- Under the NGO- SETU, work was conducted to increase people’s participation and spread awareness regarding their rights.
- An initiative was taken up where Ward Committees were established which ensured accountability, quick and accurate planning of work and submission of plans and demand of funds to the Municipality.
- WC also monitors services provided by Public Distribution System, Anganwadis, Primary Schools in the ward, while also organises cultural festivals to promote peace and communal harmony.

Conclusion by Chair: Prof. Gautam Gawali

Faulty assumptions related to women representatives need to be dealt by the administration. Each Gram Panchayat should acknowledge and recognize the contribution of one women representative every year. An endeavor should be that all women are recognized during their respective tenures.

- Youth should get involved in working of the local self govt. as they have new ideas and innovations that will lead to development.

Day 2

3rd November, 2017

Session IV

Effective Participation of Women in local bodies

Speakers:

1. Smt. Pragati Bankhele, Sr. Journalist Maharashtra Times
2. Smt. Malati Sagane, State Convenor, Mahila Rajsatta Andolan
3. Shri. Subhash Mendhapurkar, Social Activist, Himachal Pradesh
4. Dr. Dayabati Roy, Centre for studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata
5. Smt. Lata Sachade, Kala Mahila Vikas Sanghatana, Gujarat

Points emerged from Discussion

- Introspection is required regarding a deteriorating feeling of sisterhood, adoption of digital literacy and an analysis of where we are and where do we want to reach is needed.
- Under reservation, women are given candidature on the basis of elective merit of the male members in her family.
- There exists an aggressive political party system in West Bengal
- In rural West Bengal, a constant aide, who again is a male member of some PRIs provided to the Female Pradhan in order to monitor and condition her decisions as well as curb her functioning.
- A one-to-one correspondence is seen in party families and advisory committees i.e. Core and Guidance committees; at the Block level which sophisticatedly penetrate the three-tier structure varying for party interests as opposed to people's demand.
- Also, the feminine stereotype handles the subject matter of politics as a masculine art, where man has a free space to move around in the public domain, and females who do conventional male jobs are considered upwardly mobile.
- Demand for training of women.
- For better orientation and creation of political support, a program called "Panchayat Darshan" is carried out for elected female members.
- Various hindrances like the rise of Gramsevak Raj, Character Assassination, Family and Work Tussle, expensive electioneering process among many others have discouraged and smothered the rise of female leadership, by and large.

- Need for orientation regarding work, rights and duties and even regarding present physical infrastructure.

Session V

“Devolution of 3 F’s: Funds, Functions and Functionaries”- URBAN SESSION

Speakers:

1. Shri.Jairaj Phatak, Former IAS
2. Shri. Anil Mundada, Former Standing Committee Chairman, Dhule
3. Dr. Jayendra Parulekar, Political Activist
4. Smt.Varsha Vidya Vilas

Points emerged from Discussion

- Formation of two Constitutional Authorities viz. State Election Commission and State Finance Commission should be empowered more in terms of their jurisdiction and devolution.
- Apart from horizontal representation, women representation made bodies more representative.
- Ministry of Panchayati Raj brings out a Devolution Index report every year. There is no Devolution Index or central monitoring for the urban bodies. One major reason could be a feeling that urban bodies are already financially stronger than their rural counterparts.
- Even though Municipal council got upgraded to Municipal Corporation, cities are not developed. The policy of the government should essentially be to appoint an IAS officer to the post of Commissioner in all the Corporations.
- Out of the total budget, the expenditure on salaries and administration is around 70-80percent in Corporations, hence only 30-40percent of funds are actually available for the developmental activities.
- Decentralization of power and finance is inevitable for growth.

Session V

“Devolution of 3 F’s: Funds, Functions and Functionaries”- RURAL SESSION

Speakers:

1. Prof. Surendra Jondhale, Professor, Dept. of Civics and politics, University of Mumbai
2. Shri. Shivajirao Naik, Hon’ble MLA, Govt. of Maharashtra
3. Dr.B.P.Syam Roy, IAS(Retd.), West Bengal
4. Smt. Indavi Tulpule, Shramik Mukti Sanghatana
5. Dr. M. Gopinath Reddy, Professor and Head DSDS, Hyderabad

Points emerged from Discussion

- Finance should be directly provided to the Gram Panchayat
- Innovative ways should be brought in order to generate finance at Gram Panchayat level like in the case of the Tamilnadu and Kerala.
- Devolution of power is not done in real sense. There are many flaws in this aspect

According to the article 243G of the Indian Constitution:

1. State was to allot power and functions to the Local self-government. It is to function as an institute of state government.
 2. Devolution of power will be done at three different levels and there will be no conquering jurisdictions.
- The State Finance Commissions need to be more proactive and participatory and autonomous.
 - PESA Act is brought in 13 to 14 districts partially or fully into the ambit of direct devolution
 - Synergy between the Government, State Finance Commission and State Government should be established to devolve powers.
 - Best practices of Gram Sabhas should be collated at the district level and the District administration should present those biannually to the State Government.
 - The working of District Planning Committee should be done on a regular basis and proper manner.

Session VI

Electoral Reforms

Speakers:

1. Shri. Ajit Ranade, President and Chief Economist, Aditya Birla Group
2. Prof. Jagdeep Chhokar, Founder and Trustee ADR
3. Dr. Vishwambhar Choudhary, Social Activist

Points emerged from Discussion

- There is a code of conduct for political parties during election. This code of conduct should be enforced all the time.
- A separate mechanism should be developed in order to scrutinize the false affidavits as now due to Aadhar card links it will become a very easy process. Aadhar cards must also be linked to voter ID cards.
- Election manifestos should be taken as affidavits and assurances. These assurances should be audited by third party on behalf of the Election Commission.
- Right to reject should be added to NOTA option. Also Right to Recall be implemented.
- The process of paid news, fake opinion polls are used as the tools during elections. Punitive actions or heavy fines should be charged for these unscrupulous activities.
- There must be one consolidated Election law; including Representation of Peoples Act, Model Code of Conduct etc. A chapter on 'Work of Political Parties' be introduced in it.
- A book containing 22 election reforms was sent to the President of India in 2004 by Chief Election Commissioner and later similar book was placed again in year 2016 containing 43 reforms. Whatever is implementable in the State of Maharashtra be accepted by the State Government through the Governor of the State.
- If a candidate is denied of consent through NOTA, he may not be allowed to contest the elections at least for the next five years. (since the population is comparatively small, it is workable)
- NGOs, Media, Courts should play a major role to keep a check on the elections.
- A Fast track court should be established for election related matters and no criminal convict should be allowed to contest elections.
- All political parties should come under the framework of Right to Information Act.

- Electoral reforms are not an isolated task, but an integration of Political, Administrative and Judicial ReforSmt.

Valedictory Function

Dr. Rajas Parchure,

Director, GIPE welcomed all the delegates from various states who participated in two days National Conference. He also mentioned that Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune and university of Mumbai since last 3 years have conducted 25 research studies on local body elections in Maharashtra.

Professor Devanand Shinde,

Vice Chancellor University of Mumbai congratulated all the participants who participated in conference for successful sessions.

Dr. Mrudul Nile,

Associate Professor, University of Mumbai and

Smt. Manasi Phadke,

Project Co-ordinator, GIPE, Pune summarized two-days National Conference with following points:

- Need for training of elected representatives was revealed many times in this two-day conference.
- Such conferences must be arranged every year for exchange of ideas and Best Practices.
- Process-driven development be encouraged instead of success of onl person-driven development of a village.
- Independence of State Election Commission be accepted by Government. It has to come culturally and not just Constitutionally.
- Devolution of power and functions to local bodies must not be treated as subordinate part of State Government. Local bodies should be recognized as Autonomous bodies.
- Transfer of subjects (29 Rural and 18 Urban) is a crucial issue which needs to be looked into. Hon. Governor also insisted on doing it faster.
- Money power involved in elections is a crucial thing to be concentrated upon.

Special Remarks by Shri. J.S. Saharia, Hon. State Election Commissioner Maharashtra

Hon'ble State Election Commissioner after welcoming the dignitaries, especially the Hon'ble Chief Minister and Dr. George Mathew informed the House that the said Conference was organised with the objective to review the implementation of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments during the last 25 years and suggest possible reform. While appreciating the excellent suggestions made by the various speakers over the 2-days, he mentioned the following points through PPT:

- It is ironic that though the State Election Commission is an Independent Constitutional Authority at par with the Election Commission of India, many stakeholders, including Government, do not honour and respect –

- i) the role and responsibilities of Local Bodies, and
- ii) Assessment and Independence of SEC

This was creating hurdles at times in fulfilling the mandate given by the Constitution.

- SECM has taken several innovative measures during the last 3 years to make the elections more free, fair and transparent, some of which are as follows:
 - i) Filing of nomination papers and affidavit by all candidates with the help of computer software
 - ii) Use of modern technology and computers in most of the possible areas of the electoral process
 - iii) Display of criminal and financial backgrounds of all the contesting candidates outside the polling stations for the benefit of voters
 - iv) Use of VVPAT on an experimental basis in Nanded Municipal Corporation
 - v) Use of Income Tax / Sales Tax officers as Expenditure Observers
 - vi) Revision of admission form and introduction of compulsory subject on “Democracy, Election and Good Governance” for the first year university students
 - vii) Revision of expenditure limits for the candidates
 - viii) Procedure especially the “manner and time” for political parties and candidates to submit their expenditure details
 - ix) Series of meetings, workshops / conferences of Election Managers etc. throughout the State for effective implementation of Model Code of Conduct etc.
- Initiatives undertaken by SECM resulted in increase in voter registration by nearly 75percent from 12.18 lakhs in January 2016 to 21.7 lakhs in January 2017. It also led to increase in voting percentage in various local bodies, for example:

Name of the Corporation	2012	2017	Increase
Mumbai	44.75 percent	55.53 percent	10.78 percent
Pimpri Chinchwad	54.84 percent	65.35 percent	10.51 percent
Ulhasnagar	42.19 percent	49.60 percent	7.41 percent
Solapur	52.36 percent	59.56 percent	7.20 percent

- State Election Commissioner thereafter elaborated some of the strategies which the SECM proposes to undertake in future:
 - i) Voter’s empowerment through continuous education, Annual Democracy Fortnights, novel methods of engagements etc.
 - ii) Establishment of “Institute of Democracy and Elections for Good Governance”
 - iii) Linkages with National and International agencies
 - iv) Filling of vacuous areas wherever possible
 - v) Use of research fellows/interns etc.
- State Election Commissioner concluded his speech by emphasising the need:
 - i) for SEC to be fiercely independent
 - ii) for the Local Bodies to assert themselves through Association, education, training etc.
 - iii) for effective devolution of 3Fs (Fund, Functions and Functionaries) by Governments to Local Bodies.

Valedictory Address by Dr. George Mathew, Chairman, Institute of Sciences, New Delhi

- Exchange of ideas took place in this two-day National Conference.
- On 28th July 1946, M.K. Gandhi quoted, “Independence must begin at bottom. Every village has to be self-sufficient and capable of managing its own affairs. Every village will be Panchayat with full powers”

- How much is the capacity of the training centre for local self-government at just one apex institute for training.
- Improvement needed in the area of capacity building of elected representatives:
 - Every district must have a training centre for local self-government where they meet twice a year and knowledge exchange takes place.
 - Knowledge exchange visit should be undertaken not only to good states but also to failed states. Visits to neighboring countries may also be arranged for representatives.
 - This is the age of Information revolution. Information dissemination must be properly done and executed to the people through conscientization.
 - When we invest in people, we create social/ human capital. And this is the base for Good Governance.
 - Create a local self-government culture.
 - Women in governance and women empowerment will lead to development.

Address by Chief Guest, Shri. Devendra Fadanvis, Hon,ble Chief Minister Govt. of Maharashtra

Hon'ble CM congratulated for organization of the National Conference. He also stated that it is the first such National Conference regarding Local self-Governance. He further added the following:

- Introspection be done of 25 years of Amendment and work for future strategies for improvement.
- For a strong democracy we need to make local bodies stronger. State Government used to interfere in local body Governance before 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment.
- State Election Commission is an independent and strong body that take care of local body elections.
- Every one today at every level of governance needs power. When the same people are elected at the next level, their perception is also seen changing.
- Funds today are directly provided to grassroots development but, for a proper development there should be some training provided so that these funds are used properly.
- Devolution will be successful only if proper training is given to candidates.
- Capacity building of people from grassroots' should be done.
- Important Announcement: Formulating a Mechanism for the training of elected representatives in each district for capacity building.

दोन दिवसीय राष्ट्रीय परिषद

७३ व्या व ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीची पंचवीस वर्षे : प्रगती आणि भावी वाटचाल

दिनांक : २ आणि ३ नोव्हेंबर २०१७

पुढाकार

लोकशाही, निवडणूक
व सुशासन संस्था (राज्य
निवडणूक आयोग, महाराष्ट्र)

सहकार्य

महाराष्ट्र शासन

आयोजक

नागरिकशास्त्र व राज्यशास्त्र विभाग,
मुंबई विद्यापीठ, आणि गोखले
राज्यशास्त्र व अर्थशास्त्र संस्था, पुणे

स्थळ

मुंबई विद्यापीठ, सर फिरोजशाहा मेहता भवन, विद्यानगरी,
कलिना कॅम्पस, सांताक्रूझ (पू), मुंबई- ४०० ०९८.

पार्श्वभूमी

मुंबई विद्यापीठ व गोखले राज्यशास्त्र व अर्थशास्त्र संस्था, पुणे यांनी राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाच्या पुढाकाराने व ग्रामविकास विभाग, महाराष्ट्र राज्य यांच्या सहकार्याने २ व ३ नोव्हेंबर २०१७ रोजी मुंबई विद्यापीठात दोन दिवसीय राष्ट्रीय परिषदेचे आयोजन केले होते.

या परिषदेमध्ये स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या आजी- माजी लोक प्रतिनिधींसह अधिकारी, स्वयंसेवी संस्थांचे प्रतिनिधी, अभ्यासक, विद्यार्थी इ. मोठ्या संख्येने सहभागी झाले होते. सहभागींचा हा आकडा सुमारे ३०० होता. परिषदेत सुमारे ४० वक्त्यांनी आपले विचार मांडले.

परिषदेच्या ठिकाणी ७३ व ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीची वैशिष्ट्ये आणि वाटचाल दर्शविणारे प्रदर्शन मांडण्यात आले होते. शिवाय राज्य निवडणूक आयोग, यशदा, गोखले राज्यशास्त्र व अर्थशास्त्र संस्था, एडीआर इत्यादींच्या पुस्तकांचे कक्षही (स्टॉल) होते. परिषदेचा उद्देश आणि भूमिका या संदर्भात पायाभूत निबंधाचा संग्रहदेखील प्रकाशित करण्यात आला होता. परिषदेची रुपरेषा ठरविण्यासाठी हे उपक्रम सहायभूत ठरले.

फेसबुक व युट्यूब लाईव्ह या सोशल मीडियावर संपूर्ण परिषदेचे थेट प्रसारण करण्यात आले. मुद्रित आणि इलेक्ट्रॉनिक माध्यमांतूनही संपूर्ण परिषदेचा वृत्तांकन प्रसिद्ध झाला. सर्व प्रसारमाध्यमांचे मोठे सहकार्य लाभले. ७३ आणि ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीची वैशिष्ट्ये आणि स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या कार्याचा आढावा घेणाऱ्या ध्वनिचित्रफितीही या वेळी दाखविण्यात आल्या.

पहिला दिवस

२ नोव्हेंबर २०१७ | उद्घाटनसत्र

स्वागतपर भाषण :

प्रा. देवानंद शिंदे, प्रभारी कुलगुरू, मुंबई विद्यापीठ, मुंबई

डॉ. शिंदे यांनी प्रारंभी भारतीय संविधानाच्या प्रती देऊन मंचावरील सर्व मान्यवरांचे स्वागत केले. स्वागतपर भाषणात डॉ. शिंदे म्हणाले की, ७३ व ७४ व्या घटनादुरुस्तीमुळे स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांमध्ये महिला व वंचित गटांच्या सहभागाला वाढीस चालना मिळाली. या घटना दुरुस्तीच्या २५ वर्षेपूर्तीनिमित्त होत असलेली ही परिषद विद्यापीठाच्या दृष्टीने निश्चितच अभिमानास्पद आहे. या परिषदेच्या माध्यमातून लोकशाही व स्थानिक प्रशासनाला बळकटी देण्याच्या दृष्टीने सखोल विचार मंथन होईल, अशी आशा आहे.

प्रास्ताविक:

श्री. ज. स. सहारिया, राज्य निवडणूक आयुक्त, महाराष्ट्र

श्री. सहारिया यांनी सादरीकरणाच्या माध्यमातून परिषदेच्या आयोजनामागील भूमिका स्पष्ट केली. ते म्हणाले की, ७३ व ७४ वी घटना दुरुस्ती ही ऐतिहासिक नोंद आहे. लोकशाहीचा पाया बळकट करण्याच्या दिशेने टाकलेले ते एक महत्वाचे पाऊल म्हणावे लागेल. या घटना दुरुस्तीनंतर सर्व राज्यांत स्वतंत्र राज्य निवडणूक आयोगांची स्थापना करण्यात आली. त्यामुळे स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुका वेळेवर होऊ लागल्या. सुशासनाच्या दृष्टीने निर्भय, मुक्त व पारदर्शक निवडणुका अत्यंत महत्वाच्या असतात. एकूणच या वाटचालीचा आढावा घेणे आणि भावी दिशा ठरविण्याच्या उद्देशाने ही परिषद आयोजित करण्यात येत आहे.

श्री. सहारिया यांनी सन २०१५ ते २०१७ या कालावधीत झालेल्या स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुका आणि त्यातील नावीन्यपूर्ण उपक्रमांचाही आढावा घेतला. त्याचबरोबर राज्य निवडणूक आयोगासमोरील आव्हाने व उपलब्धी याबाबतही त्यांनी आपले विचार व्यक्त केले. ते असे:

- राज्य निवडणूक आयोग ही भारतीय निवडणूक आयोगाच्या समकक्ष अशी स्वतंत्र संविधानिक यंत्रणा आहे.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या दर ५ वर्षांनी निर्भय, मुक्त व पारदर्शक पद्धतीने निवडणुका घेण्याचे दायित्व राज्य निवडणूक आयोगावर सोपविण्यात आले आहे.

- राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने सन २०१५ ते २०१७ या कालावधीत राज्यातील एकूण सुमारे २४ हजार स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या (एकूण संस्थांच्या ८० टक्के) निवडणुका घेतल्या.
- विधानसभा निवडणुकांच्या तुलनेत स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुका जास्त गुंतागुंतीच्या असतात. राज्यातील स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांत दर ५ वर्षांनी २.५ लाख प्रतिनिधी निवडले जातात. लोकसभेमध्ये ४८ तर विधानसभेसाठी २८८ सदस्य निवडले जातात. म्हणून या निवडणुका लहान असल्या तरी त्या अधिक चुरशीच्या असतात.
- या राष्ट्रीय परिषदेचे परिषदेचे मुख्य उद्दिष्ट गेल्या २५ वर्षांमधील अंमलबजावणीचा आढावा घेणे व संभाव्य सुधारणा सुचवणे, हे आहे.
- लोकशाही, निवडणुका व सुशासन यावर वार्षिक परिषदा आणि वार्षिक लोकशाही पंधरवडा आयोजित करण्याबाबत विचार सुरु आहे.
- 'लोकशाही, निवडणुका व सुशासन संस्था'या राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाच्या उपक्रमाद्वारे नवीन धोरणे आखून सर्वोत्तम कार्यपद्धतीचे संकलन केले जावे, संशोधन शिष्यवृत्ती देणे आणि राष्ट्रीय/ आंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तरावरील निवडणूक यंत्रणांशी समन्वय साधण्याचा आयोगाचा मानस आहे.

बीजभाषण

श्री. टी. आर. रघुनंदन, विकेंद्रित सार्वजनिक प्रशासन या विषयावरील सल्लागार, बेंगलुरु.

- आरक्षणामुळे महिला व वंचित समुदायांचे सक्षमीकरण होत आहे. ते आता राजकारणाच्या प्रमुख प्रवाहाशी जोडले जात आहेत, असे सांगत श्री. रघुनंदन यांनी खालील मुद्दे मांडले:
- आरक्षणामुळे समाजातील वंचित घटक आणि महिलांचे सक्षमीकरण हातभार लाभला आणि त्यांचा राजकीय क्षेत्रातील सहभाग वाढला; तसेच ते मुख्य प्रवाहात येण्यास मदत झाली.
- राजकारणाच्या मुख्य प्रवाहात सहभागी होण्याची इच्छा आणि धडपड बऱ्याच जणांची असते. त्यासाठी राजकीय विचारमंथन महत्वाचे असते.
- डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांनी ६ ऑक्टोबर १९३२ रोजी मुंबई प्रेसिडन्सी निवडणुकांच्या असेंब्लीमध्ये म्हटले होते की, पंचायत राजव्यवस्थेने सकारात्मक कृतीद्वारे वंचित घटकांमध्ये सुरक्षिततेची भावना निर्माण केली पाहिजे. ७३ व ७४ व्या घटनादुरुस्तीने हेच केले आहे. मुळात राज्यघटना कमकुवत नाही. उलट पंचायत राजची कक्षा आणि व्याप्ती निश्चित करण्याची लवचिकता राज्य शासनाला उपलब्ध करून दिली आहे.
- पंचायतराज संस्थांची वित्तीय स्थिती व पद्धती डळमळीत झाली आहे. आपण पंचायत राज संस्थांना केवळ केंद्र शासनानाची एजन्सी एवढ्या स्वरूपापुरतेच मर्यादित करून टाकले आहेत. त्यामुळे पंचायत राज संस्थांच्या वाट्याला येणारा राज्य शासनाकडील निधी नाकारला जात आहे आणि या संस्थांचे अस्तित्व केवळ कर्मचाऱ्यांना वेतन देण्यापुरतेच शिल्लक राहिले आहे.
- स्थानिक पातळीवर सत्तेचे विकेंद्रीकरण.
- गावांतील लोकांच्या बुद्धिमत्तेची कदर झाली पाहिजे आणि त्यांना वाव द्यायला हवा, यादृष्टीने त्यांच्याकडे पाहिले पाहिजे.

- राज्य शासनाकडून स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांना अधिकाधिक अधिकार प्रदान केले गेले पाहिजेत.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्याबाबतीत केरळ हे एक आदर्शवत उदाहरण आहे.

श्रीमती पंकजा गोपीनाथ मुंडे, ग्रामविकास मंत्री, महाराष्ट्र

महिला सक्षमीकरणामुळे सत्तेत महिलांचा सहभाग वाढत आहे, यादृष्टीने महाराष्ट्र हे देशातील द्वितीय क्रमांकाचे सर्वोत्तम राज्य ठरले आहे. राज्यातील सरपंचांसाठी राज्य शासनाने प्रशिक्षणाची व्यवस्था केली पाहिजे. अगदी शेवटच्या स्तरापर्यंत अधिकार प्रदान झाल्याची खात्री केली गेली पाहिजे. कामांच्या अंमलबजावणीचे मूल्यमापन झाले पाहिजे.

श्री. सी. विद्यासागरराव, राज्यपाल

मा. राज्यपाल महोदय यांनी ७३ व ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीच्या २५ वर्षांचा सविस्तर आढावा घेतला. मुक्त, निर्भय व पारदर्शक निवडणुकांसाठी राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने हाती घेतलेल्या नावीन्यपूर्ण उपक्रमांचेही मा. राज्यपाल यांनी कौतूक केले. या वेळी त्यांनी मांडलेले विचार असे:

- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांमधील सर्व घटकांना प्रतिनिधित्व, मुक्त, निर्भय व पारदर्शक निवडणुका आणि अधिकारांचे हस्तांतरण ही ७३ आणि ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीची मुख्य वैशिष्ट्ये आहेत.
- संविधानाच्या प्रस्तावनेला डोळ्यासमोर ठेऊन आतापर्यंतच्या प्रवासाचा आपण अभ्यास केला पाहिजे आणि त्या अनुषंगाने पुढील दिशा निश्चित केली पाहिजे.
- राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने मतदार यादीच्या विभाजनासाठी आणि नामनिर्देशनपत्रांसाठी संगणक प्रणालीचा अवलंब, आचारसंहितेच्या काटेकर अंमलबजावणीसाठी घेतलेली खबरदारी निश्चितच कौतुकास्पद आहे.
- राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने राबविलेले नावीन्यपूर्ण उपक्रम निश्चितच संपूर्ण देशासाठी पथदर्शी आहेत.
- आजवर अकराव्या अनुसूचीमधील २९ पैकी फक्त १४ अधिकार/ जबाबदाऱ्या पंचायतराज संस्थांकडे हस्तांतरित करण्यात आल्या आहेत. बाराव्या अनुसूचीतील १८ पैकी फक्त १० अधिकार/ जबाबदाऱ्या नागरी स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांकडे हस्तांतरित करण्यात आल्या आहेत.
- पुरेशा अधिकारांच्या हस्तांतरणाअभावी स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या कार्यभारात असंतुलन निर्माण झाले आहे. त्यामुळे घटना दुरुस्तीचा मूळ उद्देश पूर्णतः सफल होताना दिसत नाही.
- संपूर्ण अधिकारांच्या हस्तांतरणाची प्रक्रिया कालमर्यादित पार पाडण्यासाठी राज्य शासनाने तज्ज्ञांची समिती गठित करावी.
- निर्णय प्रक्रिया आणि लोककल्याणाच्या योजना राबविण्यासाठी प्रक्रिया पार पाडण्याची जबाबदारी स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांवर सोपविली गेली पाहिजे.
- आर्थिक अधिकार पूर्णपणे स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांकडे हस्तांतरित झाले आहेत की नाही, याकडे वित्त आयोगाने गांभीर्यपूर्वक लक्ष देण्याची गरज आहे.
- केरळ आणि कर्नाटकसारख्या राज्यांनी स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांकडे शंभर टक्के अधिकारांचे हस्तांतरण केले आहे. यासंदर्भात या दोन्ही राज्यांत जाऊन अभ्यास करण्यासाठी राज्य शासनाने एक अभ्यास गट तयार करावा.

- गाव स्वयंपूर्ण होण्यासाठी आपण पूरक व्यवस्था निर्माण केली पाहिजे; तसेच शहरी भागातही अजून बरेच काही करण्यासारखे आहे.
- अधिकारांच्या हस्तांतरणाबाबतच्या तपशिलाचा तक्ता प्रत्येक पंचायतीच्या सूचना फलकावर लावला पाहिजे.
- या परिषदेत पंचायत राज संस्थांच्या अधिकारांबाबत व्यापक विचारमंथन होऊन त्याबाबतच्या महत्वाच्या सूचना आणि शिफारशींचा अहवाल सादर करावा.

समांतर सत्र - II

प्रशासकीय मुद्यांसंदर्भात स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था विरुद्ध राज्य शासन :
नागरी स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था

वक्ते :

- श्री. रामनाथ झा, निवृत्त भा. प्र. से.
प्रा. ओ. पी. माथूर, इन्स्टिट्यूट ऑफ सोशल सायन्सेस
सौ. स्मिता वायंगणकर (डॉ. अमिता भिडे यांच्या वतीने)
श्री. अनिल सोले, मा. विधान परिषद सदस्य, महाराष्ट्र

चर्चासत्रातील ठळक मुद्दे

- ७३ वी व ७४ वी घटना दुरुस्ती पूर्वी स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांमध्ये मोठ्या प्रमाणात अनियमितता होती.
- १९९२ मधील ७३ वी व ७४ वी घटना दुरुस्तीनंतर दर ५ वर्षांनी नियमित कालावधीनंतर स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुका वेळेवर होऊ लागल्या.
- आरक्षणामुळे समाजातील वंचित घटकांना स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांमध्ये योग्य त्या प्रमाणात प्रतिनिधित्व मिळू लागले.
- भारतीय प्रशासकीय सेवा आणि भारतीय पोलिस सेवेच्या धर्तीवर भारतीय नागरी सेवा (IUS) सुरू केली पाहिजे, असे मत श्री. सोले यांनी व्यक्त केले.
- या घटना दुरुस्तीमुळे नागरी प्रशासनात आणि नगर व्यवस्थापनामध्ये गांभीर्य आणले.

समांतर सत्र - I

प्रशासकीय मुद्यांसंदर्भात स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था विरुद्ध राज्य शासन :

ग्रामीणस्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था

वक्ते:

श्री. सुधीर ठाकरे, निवृत्त भा. प्र.से.

डॉ. चंद्रकांत पुरी, प्राध्यापक, मुंबई विद्यापीठ

श्री. दत्ता गुरव, पंचायतराज सल्लागार

डॉ. प्रभात दत्ता, प्राध्यापक, इन्स्टिट्यूट ऑफ डेव्हलपमेंट स्टडिज, कोलकता

श्री. चैतराम पवार, सरपंच, बारिपाडा (जि. धुळे) आणि केंद्र शासनाच्या पर्यावरण विषयक उच्चस्तरीय समितीचे सदस्य,

श्री. विश्वनाथ गिरिराज, प्रधान सचिव, वित्त विभाग, महाराष्ट्र शासन

चर्चासत्रातील ठळक मुद्दे

- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या लोकप्रतिनिधींचे प्रशिक्षण आवश्यक आहे.त्याचे प्रारूप आवश्यकतेनुसार विकसित केले पाहिजे.
- सरपंचांच्या थेट निवडणुकी संदर्भात व्यापक चर्चा झाली पाहिजे आणि ही पद्धत खरोखर लोकशाहीच्या तत्वांना धरून आहे किंवा नाही, याची तपासणी केली पाहिजे.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांची स्वायत्तता, स्वयंपूर्णता आणि विकेंद्रीकरणाविषयी सखोल विचार केला पाहिजे.
- एकात्मिक विकासाचे कार्यक्रम आवश्यक आहेत. (उदा. एकाच कार्यक्रमासाठी निधी देणाऱ्या यंत्रणा वेगवेगळ्या असतात. त्यातील द्विरुक्ती टाळली पाहिजे.)
- त्रिस्तरीय लोकशाही रचनेची आणि पेसाची अंमलबजावणी करण्याच्या कार्यपद्धतीत उणिवा आहेत.
- जबाबदारी निश्चितीसाठी ग्रामसभेचे धोरण आणि प्रत्यक्ष कार्यवाही संदर्भात लेखापरीक्षण केले पाहिजे.
- ग्रामपंचायत स्तरावरच वार्षिक विकास योजना तयार केली पाहिजे व त्याबाबत जिल्हा प्रशासनाला अवगत केले पाहिजे.
- वने, जमिनी, जलसंपदा, पशुपालन, कृषी इ. संसाधनांच्या बाबतीत विविध विभागांचा आपसात समन्वय असला पाहिजे.
- ७३ आणि ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीच्या वैशिष्ट्यांची संविधानाच्या प्रस्तावनेप्रमाणे थोडक्यात माहिती देणारे दस्तावेज (डॉक्युमेंट) तयार केले पाहिजे.
- अंमलबजावणीची यंत्रणा या नात्याने पंचायत समितीला ग्रामपंचायतीपेक्षा जास्तीचे अधिकार असावेत.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या लोकप्रतिनिधींसाठी कार्यभारासंदर्भातील परिचयात्मक आणि सर्वसमावेशक प्रशिक्षण दिले पाहिजे.
- विकासासंदर्भातील दृष्टिकोन अधोगामी ऐवजी उर्ध्वगामी असावा.
- एका गावासाठी एकच ग्रामसेवक नियुक्त केला पाहिजे.

समांतर सत्र - II

देशविदेशातील स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांमधील उल्लेखनीय कार्य

वक्ते:

श्री. भीम रासकर, संचालक, आरएससीडी

डॉ. पंचक्रषी देव शर्मा, सहाय्यक प्राध्यापक, लखनौविद्यापीठ

श्री. अनिल वर्मा, मेजर जनरल(निवृत्त)

श्रीमती अनुया कुंवर, प्रकल्प अधिकारी, आशिया प्रदेश, सीएलजीएफ

श्री. सुहास शिरसाठ, माजी सरपंच, फुलंब्री, जि. औरंगाबाद

डॉ. ब्रह्मानंद मत्रिगिरिपल्ली, निवृत्त सहाय्यक प्राध्यापक, नॅशनल इन्स्टिट्यूट ऑफ रुरल डेव्हलपमेंट, हैदराबाद

चर्चासत्रातील ठळक मुद्दे

- अनुभवांवर आधारित उत्तम दर्जाच्या प्रशिक्षण व्यवस्थेबाबत कॅनडा आणि ऑस्ट्रेलिया ही दोन उत्तम उदाहरणे आहेत.
- बांगलादेशात विविध गावांची मिळून तयार करण्यात आलेल्या युनियन परिषदेच्या छताखाली एकत्रितरीत्या प्रशिक्षण दिले जाते. त्यात एकमेकांना समांतर पद्धतीने व एकाच स्तरावर प्रशिक्षण दिले जाते.
- बांगलादेशातील हा प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम आपण राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाच्या मदतीने आपल्याही राज्यात राबविला पाहिजे.
- विविध देशांमधील उदाहरणे बघितल्यास स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या यशामध्ये सक्षम आणि प्रभावी नेतृत्वाचा मोठा वाटा दिसतो आणि हा अनेक देशांमधला सामाईक घटक आहे.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांना संविधानिक दर्जा देऊन भारताने दक्षिण आशियात एक पथदर्शी उदाहरण समोर ठेवले आहे; परंतु दक्षिण-पूर्व आशियामध्ये सत्तेच्या केंद्रीकरणावरच अधिक भर आहे.
- प्रशासन जनता यांच्यात दीर्घकाळापासून संघर्षाची परंपरा आहे.
- राळेगणसिद्धी, हिवरेबाजार, कुटुंबकम, मेंढालेखा व इतर विविध गावे स्वयंपूर्णतेची उदाहरणे आहेत.
- गावामध्ये दमदार नेतृत्वाची आवश्यकता आहे. प्रशिक्षणाद्वारे अशा प्रकारचे नेतृत्व विकसित केले पाहिजे.
- गावांमध्ये अस्तित्वात असलेल्या संसाधनांचा कायापालट करून त्यांच्या शाश्वततेसाठी ग्रामस्थांमध्ये या संसाधनांबाबत आपण विश्वस्त असल्याची भावना निर्माण केली पाहिजे.
- झारखंडमध्ये पंचायत बँक ही नावीन्यपूर्ण संकल्पना राबवली जात आहे. ही संकल्पना तीन स्तरांत विभागलेली आहे. सर्वांत वरच्या स्तरावर सेवा प्रदाते असतात. ते आर्थिक मदतीची मागणी करणाऱ्या लोकांच्या क्षमतेनुसार निधीची तरतूद करतात. तृतीय स्तरावरील ग्राहकांमध्ये लघू उद्योजकांचाही समावेश असतो. मधल्या स्तरावर केवळ बँकांचा समावेश असतो. त्या केवळ समन्वयक म्हणून आर्थिक पुरवठा करण्याची जबाबदारी पार पाडतात.

- लोकांच्या आशा-अपेक्षा आणि दृष्टिकोनावर लक्ष केंद्रित केले पाहिजे आणि विविध गावांच्या अनुभवांची आपआपसात देवाण-घेवाण केली पाहिजे.

समांतर सत्र - III

शोधनिबंधांचे सादरीकरण

अध्यक्ष:

प्रा. गौतम गवळी, प्रमुख, उपयोजित मानसशास्त्र आणि समुपदेशन केंद्र

शोधनिबंध सादरकर्ते

- १) कु. अरुणा साने
- २) डॉ. अनिरुद्ध प्रसाद सिंह
- ३) डॉ. ए. स्टिफन
- ४) श्री. असीम मिश्रा

कु. अरुणासाने

‘स्थानिक प्रशासनातील उगवते नेतृत्व : रत्नागिरी जिल्ह्याचे विशेष उदाहरण’

- रत्नागिरी जिल्ह्यात स्थानिक स्वराज्य सस्थांमध्ये ५२ टक्के महिला लोकप्रतिनिधी आहेत.
- महिला लोकप्रतिनिधींमध्ये ओबीसी महिलांची संख्याअधिकआहे.
- महिला लोकप्रतिनिधींचे सरासरीवय३०- ४० आहे.
- महिलांच्या बाबतीत आकडेवारी उत्साहवर्धक दिसत असली तरी प्रत्यक्षात बराच विरोधाभास आहे.
- महिला उमेदवारांची निवड त्यांच्या राजकीय पार्श्वभूमीवरून ठरते. कुटुंबातील व्यक्ती राजकीय किंवा सामाजिकदृष्ट्या प्रभावी असेल तरच संबंधित कुटुंबातील महिलांना उमेदवारी दिली जाते.
- निवडणुकीच्या काळामध्ये महिलांना पुरुषांच्या तुलनेत अधिक विरोध सहन करावा लागतो, असे आकडेवारीवरून दिसते.
- निवडणुकांच्या दृष्टीने वेळ आणि पैसा ही मोठी गरज बनली आहे. महिला नेतृत्वाच्या वाटचालीत नेमका तोच अडथळा ठरत आहे.

डॉ. अनिरुद्ध प्रसादसिंह

‘नेपाळमधील स्थानिक स्वराज्य प्रशासनाच्या १९९९ पासूनच्या राजकीय अर्थव्यवस्थेचे टीकात्मक अध्ययन’

- नेपाळमधील गावे व पंचायतींमध्ये व्यवस्थापन आणि प्रशासनाबाबत एक जागरूक दृष्टिकोन आहे.
- नेपाळमध्ये संपन्नता रेषा निश्चित करण्यात आली आहे. त्यानुसार एखाद्या व्यक्तीला १० अब्ज नेपाळी रूपयांपेक्षा जास्त मालमत्तेचा संचय करता येत नाही.
- नेपाळच्या राजकारणामध्ये पितृसत्ताक पद्धतीला थारा नाही.
- प्रतिनिधीच्या जागी प्रति लोकप्रतिनिधी (प्रॉक्सी) म्हणून काम करत असल्यास तो गुन्हा ठरतो. त्यामुळे त्याला कैद होऊ शकते किंवा अपात्र ठरू शकतो.

डॉ. ए. स्टिफन,

‘स्वायत्तजिल्हापरिषदेमधील महिलांचा सहभाग: मणिपूरमधील मारमनागाजमातीच्या महिलांबाबत अध्ययन’

- प्रस्तुत संशोधन ३२- ५० वयोगटातील यादृच्छिक (रँडम) उत्तरदात्यांवर आधारित होते.
- या क्षेत्रात महिला मतदारांचे प्रमाण ६० टक्के असून त्यांचा राजकारणातील सक्रीय सहभागदेखील लक्षणीय आहे.
- प्रस्तुत संशोधनातील ९० टक्के उत्तरदाते निरक्षर आहेत; परंतु त्यांना निवडणूक प्रक्रियेसंदर्भात माहिती आहे.
- महिलांना राजकारणाविषयी अतिशय कमी माहिती असून त्या पुरुषसत्ताक व्यवस्थेच्या बळी आहेत. त्यांच्यावर पुरुषांकडून राजकीय मते लादली जातात.
- महिलांचा राजकारणामधील सहभाग मोठा असूनही पुरुषप्रधानतेमुळे त्यांना पुरेशा वाव मिळत नाही. शिवाय त्यांच्या राजकीय मतांना महत्त्व दिले जात नाही.

श्री. असीम मिश्रा,

‘नियोजन व प्रशासनाच्या विकेंद्रीकरणाच्या दृष्टीने घेतलेला पुढकार: एक अभ्यास’

- कमकुवत सेवा वितरण यंत्रणा
- सहभागामध्ये उत्सुकतेचा अभाव
- नगरपालिकेला विकासाची एकमेव एजन्सी मानले जाते.
- सेतू या स्वयंसेवी संस्थेच्या माध्यमातून लोकांमध्ये त्यांच्या अधिकारांची जाणीव निर्माण करण्यासाठी जनजागृती करण्यात आली.
- वॉर्ड समित्यांच्या स्थापनेचा उपक्रम हाती घेण्यात आला. त्याद्वारे उत्तरदायित्व व कामाच्या अचूक नियोजनाची हमी देण्यात आली.
- वॉर्ड समित्यांमार्फत वॉर्डमधील सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली, अंगणवाड्या, प्राथमिक शाळा इत्यादी सेवांवर देखरेख ठेवली

जाते. शांतता आणि सांप्रदायिक सौहार्दासाठी सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रमांचे आयोजन केले जाते.

अध्यक्षीय समारोप

प्रा. गौतमगवळी, विभाग प्रमुख, उपयोजित मानसशास्त्र व समुपदेशन केंद्र, मुंबई विद्यापीठ.

- महिला लोकप्रतिनिधींच्या संदर्भात चुकीच्या गृहितकांवर काम केले जाते, ते टाळले पाहिजे. प्रत्येक ग्रामपंचायतीने दर वर्षी उल्लेखनीय कार्य करणाऱ्या एका महिला लोकप्रतिनिधीचा सन्मान केला पाहिजे.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या कामकाजात युवकांचा सहभाग वाढविला पाहिजे. कारण युवा पिढीत जोश आणि नावीन्यपूर्ण पावले उचलण्याची धमक असते.

दुसरा दिवस

३ नोव्हेंबर २०१७

समांतर सत्र - IV

स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांमधील महिलांचा प्रभावी सहभाग

वक्ते:

श्रीमती प्रगती बानखेले, वरिष्ठ पत्रकार, महाराष्ट्र टाइम्स
श्रीमती मालती सगने, राज्य संयोजक, महिला राजसत्ता आंदोलन
श्री. सुभाष मेंढापूरकर, सामाजिक कार्यकर्ते, हिमाचल प्रदेश
डॉ. दयाबती रॉय, सेंटर फॉर स्टडिज इन सोशल सायन्सेस, कोलकता
श्रीमती लता सचदे, कला महिला विकास संघटना, गुजरात

चर्चासत्रातील ठळक मुद्दे

- महिलांमध्ये आपसात सहकार्याची भावना वृद्धिंगत झाली पाहिजे. याबाबत महिलांनी निश्चितच आत्मपरीक्षण करण्याची करज आहे.
- महिलांनी डिजिटल साक्षरता अंगीकारली पाहिजे; तसेच आपण कुठे आहोत आणि आपल्याला कुठे जायचे आहे? याबाबत ध्येयनिश्चिती करायला पाहिजे.
- कुटुंबातील पुरुष उमेदवाराच्या निवडून येण्याच्या क्षमतेवरच आरक्षित जागेसाठी महिलांना उमेदवारी दिली जाते.
- पश्चिम बंगालमध्ये आक्रमक राजकीय पक्षप्रणाली अस्तित्वात आहे.
- पश्चिम बंगालच्या ग्रामीण भागांमध्ये महिला सरपंचांना एक मदतनीस दिला जातो. तो मदत करण्याऐवजी तिच्यावरच अंकुश ठेवण्याचा प्रयत्न करतो आणि तिच्या कामात हस्तक्षेप करतो.
- स्त्री ही अबला असल्यामुळे राजकारण हे फक्त पुरुषांचेच क्षेत्र आहे, असा काही जणांचा समज असतो. राजकारणात सर्वत्र

पुरुषांचा मुक्त संचार असतो. मात्र पुरुषांची केवळ सर्वसाधारण पारंपरिक कामे केली तरीही महिलांना आधुनिक समजले जाते.

- महिलांच्या प्रशिक्षणाची मागणी.
- महिला लोकप्रतिनिधींना सक्षम करण्यासाठी आणि दिशादर्शनासाठी 'पंचायत दर्शन' कार्यक्रम विकसित करण्यात आला आहे.
- ग्रामसेवकाची अरेरावी, चारित्र्यहनन, कुटुंब आणि कामांतील ताणतणाव; तसेच खर्चिक निवडणूक अशा विविध कारणामुळे महिला नेतृत्वाचा उदय आणि विकासात अडथळा येतो.
- कार्य, अधिकार व कर्तव्ये याबाबत मार्गदर्शनाची; तसेच भौतिक सुविधा उपलब्ध करून देण्याची गरज आहे.
- सामाजिक, आर्थिक व राजकीय स्वायत्तता अतिशय महत्त्वाची आहे.
- राष्ट्रीय स्तरावर महिला लोकप्रतिनिधी व महिला कार्यकर्त्यांच एक संघटन उभे राहिले पाहिजे. त्या माध्यमातून एकमेकींच्या उल्लेखनीय कामांच्या अनुभवांची देवाणघेवाण झाली पाहिजे.

समांतर सत्र - V

'श्री एफ'चे विकेंद्रीकरण-निधी, कार्ये व यंत्रणा : नागरी सत्र

वक्ते:

श्री. जयरज फाटक, नगरविकास विभागाचे माजी प्रधान सचिव व बृहन्मुंबई महानगरपालिकेचे माजी आयुक्त

श्री. अनिल मुंदडा, माजी अध्यक्ष, स्थायी समिती, महानगरपालिका, धुळे

डॉ. जयेंद्र परुळेकर, राजकीय कार्यकर्ते

सौ. वर्षा विद्या विलास

चर्चासत्रातील ठळक मुद्दे

- राज्य निवडणूक आयोग आणि राज्य वित्त आयोग या दोन संविधानिक संस्था आहेत. विकेंद्रीकरण आणि अधिरासंदर्भात या यंत्रणा अधिक सक्षम केल्या पाहिजेत.
- समांतर प्रतिनिधित्वाबरोबरच स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या कामकाजात महिलांच्या कर्तृत्वाला अधिक संधी दिली गेली पाहिजे.
- पंचायत राज मंत्रालयाकडून दर वर्षी 'विकेंद्रीकरण निर्देशांक' अहवाल सादर केला जातो. नागरी यंत्रणांसंदर्भात अशी कुठलीही व्यवस्था नाही. नागरी यंत्रणा आधीच आर्थिकदृष्ट्या ग्रामीण स्वराज्य संस्थांपेक्षा जास्त सक्षम आहेत, असे मानले जाणे हे, याचे कारण असू शकते.

- काही नगरपरिषदा महानगरपालिकेमध्ये रुपांतरित झाल्या असल्या तरी संबंधित शहरांचा मात्र विकास झालेला नाही. त्यासाठी सर्व महानगरपालिकांमध्ये आयुक्ताच्या पदावर भारतीय प्रशासकीय सेवेतील अधिकाऱ्याला नियुक्त करायला हवे. मुळातच हे सरकारचे धोरण असले पाहिजे.
- महानगरपालिकांच्या एकूण अंदाजपत्रकापैकी वेतन आणि प्रशासनावर होणारा खर्च सुमारे ७०- ८० टक्के आहे. त्यामुळे विकासाच्या उपक्रमांसाठी फक्त ३०- ४० टक्के निधी उपलब्ध होतो.
- विकासासाठी सत्ता आणि आर्थिक तरतुदींचे विकेंद्रीकरण अपरिहार्य आहे.

समांतर सत्र - V

‘श्री एफ’चे विकेंद्रीकरण-निधी, कार्ये व यंत्रणा : ग्रामीण सत्र

वक्ते:

प्रा. सुरेंद्र जोधळे, राज्यशास्त्र व नागरिकशास्त्र विभाग, मुंबई विद्यापीठ

श्री. शिवाजीराव नाईक, मा आमदार, महाराष्ट्र सरकार

डॉ. बी. पी. श्याम रॉय, भा.प्र.से. (निवृत्त), पश्चिम बंगाल

श्रीमती इंदवी तुळपुळे, श्रमिक मुक्ती संघटना

डॉ. एम. गोपीनाथ रेड्डी, प्राध्यापक व प्रमुख, डीएसडीएस, हैद्राबाद

चर्चासत्रातील ठळक मुद्दे

- आर्थिक निधी थेट ग्रामपंचायतींना दिला जावा.
- तामिळनाडू आणि केरळ प्रमाणे ग्रामपंचायत स्तरावर उत्पन्न निर्माण करण्यासाठी नावीन्यपूर्ण पद्धतींचा वापर केला जावा.
- प्रत्यक्षात सत्तेचे विकेंद्रीकरण झालेले नाही. या संदर्भात अनेक त्रुटी आहेत.
- राज्य वित्त आयोगांना अधिक सक्रिय व स्वायत्त करण्याची गरज आहे.
- थेट विकेंद्रीकरणाच्या नावाने पेसा अधिनियम अंशतः किंवा पूर्णतः १३- १४ जिल्ह्यांमध्ये राबवण्यात आला आहे.
- अधिकारांचे विकेंद्रीकरण करण्यासाठी सरकार, राज्य वित्त आयोग आणि राज्य शासन यांच्यात समन्वयन करण्याची गरज आहे.
- ग्राम सभेमधील सर्वोत्तम पद्धतींचे संकलन जिल्हा स्तरावर केले जावे व जिल्हा प्रशासनाने दर सहा महिन्यांनी त्याचे सादरीकरण राज्य सरकारला करावे.
- जिल्हा नियोजन समितीचे कार्य नियमित प्रकारे व योग्य पद्धतीने केले जावे.

समांतर सत्र – VI

निवडणूक सुधारणा

वक्ते:

श्री. अजित रानडे, संस्थापक विश्वस्त, एडीआर आणि मुख्य अर्थतज्ज्ञ, आदित्य बिल्डा ग्रूप

प्रा. जगदीप चोकर, संस्थापक विश्वस्त, एडीआर

डॉ. विश्वंभर चौधरी, सामाजिक कार्यकर्ते

चर्चासत्रातील ठळक मुद्दे

- निवडणुकीच्या काळात राजकीय पक्षांसाठी आचारसंहिता असते; परंतु त्याचधर्तीवर नेहमीच किमान आचार संहिता असवी.
- खोट्या शपथपत्रांच्या पडताळणीसाठी स्वतंत्र यंत्रणा विकसित केली जावी. कारण आता आधार जोडणीतून हे शक्य आहे. त्याचबरोबर सर्व आधार कार्डस मतदार ओळख पत्रांना जोडणे अनिवार्य केले पाहिजे.
- सध्या 'एक देश एक निवडणूक' याबाबत चर्चा सुरू आहे; परंतु प्रत्येक स्थानिक संस्था व त्यांच्या लोकप्रतिनिधींच्या जबाबदाऱ्या भिन्न आहेत. त्यामुळे ही संकल्पना तपासून पाहायला हवी.
- व्यवहार्यतेच्या दृष्टीने ई-व्होटिंग संकल्पनाही तपासली पाहिजे. त्यासाठी आपल्या देशातील डिजिटल साक्षरता दर विचारात घेतला पाहिजे.
- निवडणूक जाहिरनामे हे शपथपत्रे आणि हमीचा पुरावा म्हणून ग्राह्य धरली पाहिजेत. त्यांच्या पूर्तीसंदर्भात निवडणूक आयोगामार्फत स्वतंत्र मूल्यमापन (थर्ड पार्टी ऑडिट) झाले पाहिजे.
- नोटांमध्ये उमेदवाराला नाकारण्याच्या पर्यायाचाही समावेश केला पाहिजे; निवडून आलेल्या लोकप्रतिनिधीला परत बोलवण्याचा अधिकार असला पाहिजे. नोटाला सर्वाधिक मते मिळाल्यास निवडणूक रद्द केली पाहिजे.
- पेड न्यूज, खोटे मत घडवणारे पोल अशा बाबी निवडणुकांच्या काळात वापरल्या जातात. अशा प्रकारांना आळा घातला पाहिजे व दंडात्मक कारवाईदेखील केली पाहिजे.
- सर्व निवडणुकांसाठी एकत्रित व सर्वसमावेशक कायदा असला पाहिजे. त्यात 'राजकीय पक्षांचे कार्य' हे स्वतंत्र प्रकरण असावे.
- मुख्य निवडणूक आयुक्तांनी २००४ मध्ये भारताच्या राष्ट्रपतींना २२ निवडणूक सुधारणा असलेले पुस्तक पाठवले होते. ४३ सुधारणा असलेले असे पुस्तक २०१६ मध्ये पुनः देण्यात आले. त्यातील काही गोष्टी राज्यपालांच्या स्तरावर करणे शक्य असल्यास महाराष्ट्राने ते करावे.
- नोटांच्या माध्यमातून एखादा उमेदवार नाकारला गेला असल्यास त्याला किमान पुढची पाच वर्षे निवडणुका लढवण्याची अनुमती देऊ नये (लोकसंख्या तुलनेने कमी असल्यामुळे हे व्यवहार्य होऊ शकते).

- स्वयंसेवी संस्था, माध्यमे, न्यायालये यांनी निवडणुकांवर नियंत्रण ठेवण्यामध्ये मुख्य भूमिका बजावली पाहिजे.
- निवडणुकीशी संबंधित प्रकरणांसाठी जलद गती न्यायालय स्थापन केले गेले पाहिजे आणि गुन्हा सिद्ध झालेल्या कोणत्याही गुन्हेगाराला निवडणुका लढण्याची संधी दिली जाऊ नये.
- सर्व राजकीय पक्षांना माहिती अधिकाराच्या चौकटीमध्ये आणले जावे.
- निवडणूक सुधारणा हे एक स्वतंत्र कार्य नसून ते राजकीय, प्रशासनिक व न्यायिक सुधारणांचे एकात्मिक स्वरूपाचे काम आहे.

समारोपाचे सत्र

मा. मुख्यमंत्री श्री. देवेंद्र फडणवीस यांच्या प्रमुख उपस्थितीत समारोप समारंभ पार पडला. मा. राज्य निवडणूक आयुक्त श्री. ज. स. सहारिया या वेळी उपस्थित होते. डॉ. मॅथ्यू यांना या दोन दिवशीय परिषदेच्या समारोपाच्या भाषणासाठी निमंत्रित करण्यात आले होते.

स्वागतपर भाषण

डॉ. राजस परचुरे,

संचालक, गोखले राज्यशास्त्र व अर्थशास्त्र संस्था, पुणे

डॉ. परचुरे समारोप समारंभाला उपस्थित मान्यवरांचे स्वागत केले. गोखले राज्यशास्त्र व अर्थशास्त्र संस्थेने व मुंबई विद्यापीठाने गेल्या तीन वर्षांत महाराष्ट्रातील स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांसंदर्भात विविध प्रकारचे संशोधन केले आहे, असे डॉ. परचुरे यांनी यावेळी सांगितले.

प्रा. देवानंद शिंदे,

मुंबई विद्यापीठाचे उपकुलगुरू यांनी परिषदेच्या आयोजनाबद्दल व सहभागी झालेल्या सर्वांचे अभिनंदन केले.

डॉ. मृदुल निळे,

सहाय्यक प्राध्यापक, मुंबई विद्यापीठ आणि

श्रीमती मानसी फडके,

प्रकल्प समन्वयक, गोखले राज्यशास्त्र व अर्थशास्त्र संस्था, पुणे यांनी या दोन दिवशीय राष्ट्रीय परिषदेचा सारांश पुढील प्रमाणे

सादर केला :

- या दोन दिवसीय परिषदेमध्ये नवनिर्वाचित लोकप्रतिनिधींच्या प्रशिक्षणाची गरज अनेकदा समोर आली.
- संकल्पना व सर्वोत्तम पद्धतींच्या आदान- प्रदानासाठी अशा परिषदा दर वर्षी आयोजित केल्या जाव्यात.
- फक्त एक व्यक्तीने केलेल्या गावाच्या विकासाच्या यशोगाथेऐवजी प्रक्रियेवर आधारित विकासाला प्रोत्साहन दिले जावे.
- सरकारने राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाचे स्वतंत्र स्थान मान्य केले पाहिजे. हे फक्त संधानिक पातळीवर नाही तर सांस्कृतिक पातळीवर असले पाहिजे.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांना राज्य सरकारमधील दुय्यम यंत्रणा म्हणून समजले जाऊ नये. स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांना स्वायत्त संस्था म्हणून बघितले गेले पाहिजे.
- विषयांचे हस्तांतरण (२९ ग्रामीण आणि १८ नागरी) हा एक महत्त्वपूर्ण मुद्दा आहे व त्यावर चर्चा केली गेली पाहिजे. मा. राज्यपाल महोदयांनी ही प्रक्रिया जलद करावी, असे सूचविले.
- निवडणुकांमध्ये पैशाच्या हस्तांतरणाच्या मुद्द्यांवर विशेष लक्ष दिले पाहिजे.

श्री. जे. एस. सहारिया,

राज्य निवडणूक आयुक्त

श्री. सहारिया यांनी मंचावरील सर्व मान्यवरांचे स्वागत केले. त्यांना परिषदेची पार्श्वभूमी विशद केली. ७३ व ७४ व्या संधानिक सुधारणेमुळे डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर आणि महात्मा गांधी यांनी मांडलेल्या 'सुराज्य' संकल्पनेच्या धर्तीवर लोकांना अधिकार मिळाले, असे ते म्हणाले. त्यांच्या भाषणातील आणखी काही ठळक मुद्दे:

- या घटना दुरुस्तीमुळे स्थानिक संस्थांना संविधानिक दर्जा मिळाला व महिला, अनुसूचित जाती, अनुसूचित प्रजाती इ. आरक्षणाची सुरुवात झाली.
- वेळेवर निवडणुका घेतल्या जाव्यात यासाठी राज्य निवडणूक आयोग व राज्य वित्त आयोगाची स्थापना करण्यात आली.
- सर्व राजकीय पक्षांसाठी समान संधी/ समान सुविधा उपलब्ध करून देण्यासाठी सरकारपासून स्वतंत्र असलेल्या राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाची स्थापना करण्यात आली.
- महाराष्ट्र राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने १९९४ पासून आजवर अनेक निवडणुका पार पाडल्या आहेत. राज्यात सुमारे २८,००० स्थानिक संस्था आहेत. सन २०१५- २०१७ या कालावधीत सुमारे ८० टक्के स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुका घेण्यात आल्या.
- विधानसभा निवडणुकांच्या तुलनेत स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुका अधिक गुंतागुंतीच्या असतात. राज्यात विधानसभेच्या निवडणुकीत २८८; तर लोकसभेच्या निवडणुकीत ४८ सदस्य निवडून दिले जातात. तुलनेत स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांमध्ये दर ५ वर्षांनी २.५ लाख प्रतिनिधी निवडले जातात.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुका लहान असल्या तरी त्या अधिक चुरशीच्या होतात.
- संसदेच्या व विधानसभेच्या निवडणुकांसाठी दर ३० वर्षांनी मतदारसंघ निश्चिती (डिलिमिटेशन) केले जातात. स्थानिक

स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांसाठी दर ५ वर्षांनी म्हणजे प्रत्येक निवडणुकीनंतर मतदारसंघ म्हणजे प्रभाग रचना केली जाते.

- नामनिर्देशनपत्रे आणि शपथपत्रे भरण्यासाठी संकेतस्थळाची सुविधा उपलब्ध करून दिली आहे.
- टू व्होटर, सीओपी (सिटीझन्स ऑन पेट्रोल) इ. मोबाईल पचा वापर केला आहे.
- नगरपरिषद आणि महानगरपालिकांच्या निवडणुकांमध्ये शपथपत्रांचा सारांश मतदान केंद्राबाहेर प्रसिद्ध करण्यास सुरुवात केली आहे.
- एडीआर (असोशिएशन फॉर डेमोक्रेटिक रिफॉर्म्स) या स्वयंसेवी संस्थेने शपथपत्रांतील आकडेवारीचे विश्लेषण केले आहे.
- आदर्श आचारसंहितेच्या प्रभावी अंमलबजावणीसाठी प्रथमच प्राप्तिकर विभागाच्या अधिकाऱ्यांना सहभागी करून घेण्यात आले.
- विद्यापीठांनी प्रवेश प्रपत्रांमध्ये बदल केले व १८ वर्षे पूर्ण केलेल्या विद्यार्थ्यांची मतदार यादीमध्ये नोंदणी अनिवार्य केली. त्यामुळे दर वर्षी मतदार यादीमध्ये ५-६ लाख मतदारांची भर होईल, असा अंदाज आहे.
- पदवीच्या पहिल्या वर्षाच्या विद्यार्थ्यांसाठी लोकशाही, निवडणुका व सुशासन या विषयाचा अभ्यासक्रम तयार करण्यात आला आहे.
- मुंबई विद्यापीठ आणि पुणे येथील गोखले राज्यशास्त्र व अर्थशास्त्र संस्थेतर्फे स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांसंदर्भात २५ विभिन्न विषयांवर संशोधन करण्यात आले आहे.
- पारंपारिक व अद्ययावत तंत्रज्ञानाद्वारे मोठ्याप्रमाणावर मतदार जागृती अभियान राबविण्यात आले. त्यामुळे मतदार नोंदणीमध्ये ७५ टक्के वाढ झाली व मतदानाचे प्रमाण ८ ते १० टक्क्यांनी वाढले.
- आगामी काळात राज्याच्या विविध भागांमध्ये राष्ट्रीय परिषदेच्या धर्तीवर परिषदा आयोजित करण्यात येतील.
- लोकशाही, निवडणुका आणि सुशासनाबाबत मतदार व नागरिकांसाठी सतत शिक्षणाचा उपक्रम राबविला जाईल.
- 'लोकशाही, निवडणुका व सुशासन संस्थे'द्वारे नवीन धोरणे आखण्यात येतील; तसेच उल्लेखनीय उपक्रमांचे संकलन केले जाईल.
- राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाच्या माध्यमातून संशोधन शिष्यवृत्त्या देण्यात येतील; तसेच राष्ट्रीय आणि आंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तरावरील विविध संस्थांसोबत समन्वय साधून संकल्पनांची व उपक्रमांचे आदान- प्रदान केले जाईल.
- ई-व्होटिंगबाबत विचारविनिमय सुरु आहे. त्याचबरोबर अन्य निवडणूक सुधारणांच्या माध्यमातून सध्या काही कमतरता असल्यास त्या भरून काढल्या जातील.

डॉ. जॉर्ज मॅथ्यू,

अध्यक्ष, इन्स्टिट्यूट ऑफ सोशल सायन्सेस, नवी दिल्ली

डॉ. मॅथ्यू यांना या दोन दिवशीय परिषदेच्या समारोपाच्या भाषणासाठी निमंत्रित करण्यात आले होते. त्यांनी या दोन दिवसांतील विचारमंथनाचा थोडक्यात परामर्श घेतला. त्यांच्या भाषणातील ठळक मुद्दे खालीलप्रमाणे आहेत :-

- दोन दिवसीय राष्ट्रीय परिषदेमध्ये संकल्पनांचे मोठ्याप्रमाणात आदान प्रदान झाले.
- २८ जुलै १९४६ रोजी महात्मा गांधींनी म्हंटले होते, की स्वातंत्र्याची सुरुवात तळापासून झाली पाहिजे. प्रत्येक गाव स्वयंपूर्ण असले पाहिजे व स्वतःचा विकास स्वतः करण्यास सक्षम असले पाहिजे. प्रत्येक गावात पूर्ण अधिकार असलेली पंचायत असेल.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या लोकप्रतिनिधींसाठी प्रत्येक जिल्ह्यात प्रशिक्षण संस्था असायला हवी. या संस्थेत वर्षातून दोन वेळा बैठका व्हायला हव्यात व त्यात माहितीचे आदान- प्रदान झाले पाहिजे.
- फक्त उल्लेखनीय कार्य असलेल्या राज्यांतच केवळ भेटी देऊन उपयोग नाही. स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थासंदर्भात फारसे चांगले काम झाले नसेल किंवा अपयशी ठरलेल्या राज्यांतदेखील भेटी देण्याची आवश्यकता आहे.
- सध्याचे माहिती क्रांतीचे युग असून माहितीचे प्रसारण योग्य प्रकारेच केले पाहिजे आणि योग्य प्रबोधनासह लोकांना माहिती दिली जावी.
- लोकांमध्ये केलेली गुंतवणूक म्हणजे सामाजिक भांडवलाची उभारणी होय. तोच सुशासनाचा पाया असतो.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था संस्कृती उभी राहिली पाहिजे.
- शासनातील महिलांचा सहभाग आणि त्यांचे सक्षमीकरण यामुळे विकासाला चालना मिळेल.

श्री. देवेंद्र फडणवीस,

मुख्यमंत्री, महाराष्ट्र

मा. मुख्यमंत्री यांनी या राष्ट्रीय परिषदेच्या आयोजनाबद्दल सर्वांचे अभिनंदन करून राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने राबविलेल्या नावीन्यपूर्ण उपक्रमांचे कौतुक केले. स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या कामकाजाचा आढावा घेताना त्यांनी पुढील मुद्दे मांडले:

- राज्य घटनेच्या ७३ व ७४ व्या दुरुस्तीच्या २५ वर्षांचे औचित्य साधून निश्चितच आत्मपरीक्षण केले गेले पाहिजे व त्याअनुषंगाने भविष्याची वाटचाल केली पाहिजे.
- सक्षम लोकशाहीसाठी आपल्याला स्थानिक संस्थांना अधिक बळकट बनवले पाहिजे. ७३ व ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीपूर्वी राज्य सरकार स्थानिक संस्थांच्या कामकाजामध्ये ढवळाढवळ करत असे.
- राज्य निवडणूक आयोग ही एक स्वतंत्र व सक्षम यंत्रणा असल्याने स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुका व्यवस्थितपणे पार पाडल्या जातात.
- शासनाच्या प्रत्येक स्तरावरील प्रत्येकाला अधिकाधिक अधिकार मिळावेत, असे वाटते; परंतु प्रशासनातील स्तर बदलला की त्याची भूमिका आणि दृष्टिकोनदेखील बदलतो.
- मूलस्तरीय विकास कामांना सध्या थेट निधी उपलब्ध करून दिला जातो; परंतु निधीचा योग्य वापर होण्यासाठी प्रशिक्षणाची आवश्यकता आहे.
- योग्य प्रशिक्षणाशिवाय अधिकार प्रदान करण्याचा उद्देश सफल होणार नाही.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या लोकप्रतिनिधींच्या क्षमता बांधणीसाठी व प्रशिक्षणासाठी प्रत्येक जिल्ह्यामध्ये स्वतंत्र व्यवस्था निर्माण केली जाईल.

Regional Conference on

25 years of the 73rd and 74th

Constitutional Amendments:

Progress and Further Direction

Initiative by

Institute of Democracy & Elections for Good Governance
(a wing of State Election Commission, Maharashtra)

Hosted by

Divisional Commissioner

January 2018

Regional Conference – January-2018

Background

Encouraged by the response to the 2-day National Conference of 2nd and 3rd November 2017 at Mumbai, SECM arranged the following 7 Regional Workshops on the subject “Twenty Five Years of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments – Progress and Future Directions” with the help of concerned Divisional Commissioners, in order to create awareness and sensitize the various stakeholders about the role and functions of Local Self Governments and State Election Commissions.

i) Nashik	-	15 January 2018
ii) Nanded	-	17 January 2018
iii) Pune (Rural)	-	17 January 2018
iv) Nagpur	-	18 January 2018
v) Pune (Urban)	-	20 January 2018
vi) Amravati	-	20 January 2018
vii) Aurangabad	-	22 January 2018

2. Fair amount of discussion took place in the above Conferences which were attended by large number of stakeholders including serving / retired local representatives, Government Officers, social / political scientists, researchers, NGOs, students etc.
3. List of the speakers along with major recommendations made in the above Conferences is enclosed herewith for ready reference.

Regional Conference

Nashik

5th January 2018

Sr. No.	Speaker	Subject
First Session		
1.	Shri. Popatrao Pawar, Hiware Bazar	Local Self Government Institutions And Government : Inter-Relations
2.	Shri. Ajay Sawarikar, Director, YASHADA, Pune	
3.	Shri. Virendra Jadhavrao, Director, Krishna Basin Corporation	
4.	Adv. Abhay Agarkar, Ahmadnagar Corporation	
Second Session		
1.	Smt. Devyani Pharande, M.L.A.	Inclusive Governance By Local Self Government Institutions Especially For Women And Weaker Sections.
2.	Dr. Jitendra Vasnik	
3.	Shri. Ashok Bhangare	
4.	Shri. Namdeo Nanaware	

Recommendations:

- Rural and Urban India should complement each other in all possible ways.
- Future Threat – corporate houses will run Panchayat Raj Institutes in near future.
- Maharashtra is the only state from India with two separate Acts passed 1958 – The Bombay Village panchayat Act 1958 and The Maharashtra Zilha Parishad and Panchayat Samitis Act, 1961 for strengthening the working of Panchayat Raj System.
- Election expenditure is the biggest hurdle in development process of India.
- There is a need to provide appropriate and continuous training to the representatives of people, especially to women and marginalized segments.
- There is a great opportunity for women and marginalized segment representatives to mark an impact of their contribution. It is mainly possible due to the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.
- It is essential to carry out Social Audit to verify and ascertain the quality and utility of development schemes.
- It is essential to properly implement the Gender Budget.
- Social Audit should also take into account the Gender Budget.

- Utilization of funds needs to be scrutinized in the context of purpose.
- Timely availability of fund is an important factor related to Local Self Government Institutions. The timely and adequate fund availability helps to successful completion of development schemes. Therefore, there is an urgent need to follow time management practices for the disbursement of fund.
- The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments have made mandatory to conduct election after every five years in case of Local Self Government Institutions. This has resulted into decentralization of power. This is a historical decision.
- Reservation for SC, ST, and Women has strengthened the democracy by ensuring active participation of common people.
- The wards/ villages for rural Local Self Government Institutes are changed after every five years. It results in many problems to certain villages. This could be considered by the Election Commission.
- In some of the villages, there is only one booth for voting. After counting of votes, the voting taken place in that village is known to every candidate. If the village has voted for the opposition candidate, then in such case the village may face certain problems. Therefore, suitable measures should be taken by the Election Commission where such a situation exists.
- The election process should be made free from muscle and money power.
- Data of voters and non-voters could be compiled by the EC and it should be used for public education and awareness.
- Finance Commission should provide funds at Panchayat Samiti level.
- A special meeting should be held by the Zilha Parishad authorities to examine and review about the use of powers delegated to them. A periodic review should be taken about the funds received and utilized.
- There is need to carry out audit of the functioning of DPC.
- There should be an overall awareness about the rights which are not yet used.
- Urbanization is a major issue faced by Gram Panchayats. Accordingly, the Gram Panchayats should ensure to provide employment opportunities in the village itself, with a view to reduce urbanization.
- The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments have made significant impacts on the wider participation of people in the governance process.
- There is a need to modify the process of by-election.
- There is a need to make more efforts to increase the percentage of voting.
- Community education campaign should be undertaken to increase awareness of election and voting.
- The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments have given many rights to all the Local Self Government Institutions in the rural as well as urban areas. These rights need to be effectively used for the benefit of citizens.
- The representatives of people in various Local Self Government Institutions need to ensure effective implementation of various development schemes with the proper coordination with the Government Officials.
- Economic development, health, education and rapid urbanization are some of the key areas of concern for the Local Self Government Institutions.
- There should be initiatives for measuring the revenue of the Gram Panchayat. These initiatives must be endowed with revenue/ tax collection rights.

Regional Conference

Pune (Rural)

17th January 2018

Sr. No.	Speaker	Subject
First Session		
1.	Shri. B. M. Varale, Retired Additional Chief Executive Officer	Autonomy Of Local Self-Government Institutions, Their Work And Their Relation With The Government And Roles
2.	Shri. Pradeep Kand, Ex-President, Pune Zilha Parishad	
3.	Shri. Sharad Butte Patil, Z. P. Member, Pune	
4.	Shri. Sudhir Thakare, Ex- Principal Secretary, Rural Development	
Second Session		
1.	Shri. Bhim Raskar, Director Resource and Support Centre for Development	Place And Existence Given By The 73rd Constitutional Amendment To The Local Self-Government Institutions, Their Status And Importance; Role Of Women Office Bearers
2.	Smt. Bhagyashri Bhagywant, Ex-President, Z. P. Satara	
3.	Smt. Leena Bansod, Additional C. E. O.	
4.	Shri. Rajendra Bharud, C. E. O. Z. P. Solapur	
Third Session		
1.	Smt. Deepa Sadekar, Deputy Director, Audit And Treasury	Availability Of Funds To Local-Self Government Institutions, Efficient Use Of The Funds
2.	Shri. Sharad Butte Patil, Z. P. Member Pune	
3.	Shri. Rahul Kadam, Deputy Chief Auditor And Finance Officer, Kolhapur	
4.	Shri. Popatrao Pawar, Working President, Ideal Village Scheme	

Fourth Session		
1.	Shri. Indrajit Deshmukh, Additional. Chief Executive Officer, Z. P. Kolhapur	Awareness In The Voters And Necessary Reforms In The Electoral Process
2.	Smt. Monika Singh, Deputy District Collector, Election, Pune	
3.	Smt. Kishori Gadre, Retired Deputy District Collector	
4.	Shri. Kunal Khemnar, C. E. O., Z. P. Kolhapur	

Recommendations:

- Initiatives are being taken up in the Schools for increasing awareness among the youth to improve the percentage of voting. Also, there is a need for awareness of the people that voting is their moral duty.
- Publication of information of the contestants and placing it in the voting centers
- It is necessary to use RTI in the electoral process.
- If the ideal Code of Conduct is breached, then immediate and serious punitive action should be taken up.
- Reforms are needed in the Code of Conduct and IPC.
- Action should be taken against cyber-crimes committed through social media.
- In order to avoid bogus voting, AADHAR Card, Online Vote, Biometric and Password System should be used.
- It is necessary that manifestos are published in advance.
- Voters voting in three consecutive elections should be given preference in some government schemes.
- Officers/ staff working for increasing voting percentage should be felicitated.
- In order to reduce burden on Booth Level Officer, online voter registration apps should be used.
- It is necessary to separate urban, remote and hilly regions for election expenses.
- It is necessary that the political parties publically give detailed accounts of the funds received by them and contributions.
- Work that can be done during the Model Code of Conduct should be classified.
- Preference should be given to unanimous elections and if the election takes place unanimously, then they should be given benefits and concessions.
- Separate machinery should be there for elections and outsourcing should be done for this.
- Funds for election process should be increased.
- Expenses for re-election should be taken from the contestant.
- It is necessary that training is given to officers/staff for implementation of law and the code of conduct.
- Records for election process should be maintained. Information should be compiled and given to the people.
- App like true voter should be prepared.
- Web based online complaint redressal system should be developed.
- Recognition to a party should be canceled due to low voting and crimes.
- Once nomination is made, it should not be canceled, such provision should be there.
- If the candidate has serious crimes, then he should be permanently dropped.
- There should be provision of right to recall for wrong elected candidates. Electoral literacy campaign should be efficiently implemented.

Regional Conference

Nanded

17th January 2018

Sr. No.	Speaker	Subject
First Session		
1.	Shri. Dattatray Bansode, Ex- President, Z. P. Latur	Relation Between Local-Self-Government Institutions And The Government-Transfer Of 3Fs (Funds, Functions And Functionaries) And Difficulties Arising
2.	Shri. Rahul Rekhawar, I.A.S. Commissioner, Corporation, Parbhani	
3.	Prof. Dr. A. N. Siddhewad, HOD Of Political Science, Peoples College, Nanded	
4.	Shri. Sudhir Thakare, Ex- Principal Secretary, Rural Development	
Second Session		
1.	Smt. Shailaja Swami, Ex- Mayor, Nanded	How All- Inclusive, Mainly For The Women And The Vulnerable Sections Administration Can Be Run By The Localself Government Institutions?
2.	Shri. Ramchandra Tiruke, Vice President, Zilha Parishad, Latur	
3.	Dr. Shri. Sunil Shinde, Dnyanopasak College, Parbhani	
4.	Dr. Shobha Waghmare, Social Activist, Nanded	
Third Session		
1.	Shri. G. Shrikant, District Collector Latur	Necessary Electoral Reforms
2.	Shri. Madhavrao Patil Shelgaonkar, Social Activist, Nanded	
3.	Shri. Ganesh Deshmukh, Municipal Commissioner, Nanded	
4.	Shri.M. A. Pathan, Ex-Corporation Secretary, Corporation, Aurangabad	
5.	Dr. Balaji Katturwar, Deglur College, Deglur.	

Recommendations:

- There should be necessary reforms to avoid unspent funds from the received funds by the Gram Panchayats.
- Gram Panchayat or Panchayat Raj Institutions should use their rights to increase their income.
- Sarpanch/ Presidents should not be directly elected from the voters.
- There are directions to return unspent money. Instead of this, there should be policy level decisions about its expenses.
- GST should be levied properly as per the revenue of the Corporations.
- Software should be used for keeping accounts of the local- self-government institutions so as to avoid irregularity.
- Staff of the Corporation should be transferred only after 3 years.
- All tasks in the Eleventh Schedule should be transferred to the Panchayat Raj Institutions. Disparity regarding transfer of 3 Fs (Funds, Functions and Functionaries) should be reduced.
- If we adopt one village- one Gram Sevak policy, then efficiency can be increased.
- More efforts are needed to change peoples' mentality regarding paying taxes.
- There should be facility to provide training to members of women and child welfare committees and all newly appointed political office bearers.
- AADHAR card should be linked with election voter cards.
- There should be restrictions on facilities given to those who do not vote.
- There should not be permission for a candidate to contest from more than one constituency. It will reduce expenses on re- elections and frequent elections and also its adverse impact on development works can be avoided.
- Along with government employees, teachers and professors of schools and colleges should be prevented from contesting elections.
- Along with employees, there should be a condition of age limit for the membership of Panchayat Raj Institutions and office bearers.

Regional Conference

Nagpur

18th January 2018

Sr. No.	Speaker	Subject
First Session		
1.	Shri. Deorao Bhongale, President, Z. P. Chandrapur	Current Status Of The Local Self-Government Institutions
2.	Shri. E. Z. Khobragade, Ex- I.A.S. Officer	
3.	Shri. Mohan Hirabai Hiralal, Social Activist, Lekhamendha, District Gadchiroli	
4.	Prof. Sheshkumar Yerlekar, Hinganghat	
5.	Shri. Chandu Patil Marakwar, Sarpanch, Rajgarh	
Second Session		
1.	Smt. Nishatai Savarkar, President, Zilha Parishad, Nagpur	Wome's Participation In The Functioning Of The Local self-Government Institutions (Rural)
2.	Shri. A. R. Sheikh (Retired Commissioner Development)	
3.	Smt. Jayashri Gaphat, Sabhapati, Education And Health, Z. P. Vardha	
4.	Dr. Pravin Bhagdikar, Nagpur	
5.	Smt. Suvarna Damale, Prakriti Sanstha, Nagpur	
Third Session		
1.	Dr. Jayraj Phatak, Ex- I.A.S. Officer	Transfer Of Fund, Functions And Functionaries
2.	Shri. Anup Kumar, Divisional Commissioner, Nagpur	

Recommendations:

- Various departments should be given to the local- self-government institutions.
- Gram Panchayats should be provided with human resources for technical aspects and audit.
- After every election, arrangements should be made to impart training to the public representatives.
- Awareness should be enhanced that political power is of the people.
- Rights should be decentralized and rights should be given to Panchayat level.

- Panchayat Samitis at block level should be consolidated.
- In order to increase importance of the villages, agriculture products produced near the village should be given proper rate.
- Budget at the Gram Panchayat level should be in Marathi language.
- Rights of Panchayat Samitis should be increased.
- There should be an increase in funds to Zilha Parishad received through District Planning Committee.
- Tradition of reading Constitution preamble in the school should be started.
- Panchayat Samitis should be given rights to collect taxes.
- President of Gram Sabha should be Sarpanch.
- People do not regard Zilha Parishad schools positively. Therefore, the funds of the Finance Commission should be mostly spent on schools and Anganwadis.
- Planning for any work should be done at the lower levels.
- The provision of staying on Gram Sabha should be removed.
- President of Women Sabha should not be a man.
- Instead of Block Development Officer, the cheque of Dalit Basti Improvement Scheme should have signature of the Sarpanch.
- There should be a condition that public representatives must be literate.
- The duration of Panchayat Samitis should be increased to 5 years from the current 2.5 years.
- Same reservation should not be repeated in the constituency.
- If the committee does not provide Caste Verification Certificate within 6 months, then the elected candidate should not be made illegible.
- Arrangements for online voting should be made for migrated voters.
- Confidentiality regarding which candidate got voting from which specific voting booths should be protected.

Regional Conference

Pune (Urban)

20th January 2018

Sr. No.	Speaker	Subject
First Session		
1.	Shri. Ramanath Jha, Retired I.A.S.	Autonomy Of Local Self-Government Institutions, Functions, Relations With The Government And Roles
2.	Smt. Mukta Tilak, Mayor Corporation	
3.	Shri. Suhas Palshikar, Ex- HOD, Political Science Department, Pune University	
Second Session		
1.	Smt. Kishori Gadre, Upper District Collector (Retired)	Existence Of Local Self-Government Institutions, Their Status And Role Of Women Office Bearers
2.	Smt. Seema Sawale, President, Standing Committee, Pimpri Chinchwad	
3.	Smt. Rajeshwari Deshpande, HOD, Political Science, Pune University	
Third Session		
1.	Smt. Padmashri Taldekar, Chief Auditor, Pimpri Chinchwad Corporation	Availability Of Funds To Local Self Government Institutions And Efficient Use Of The Funds.
2.	Shri. Ambrish Galinde, Chief Auditor, Pune Corporation	
3.	Shri. Manohar Shinde, Deputy City President, Malkapur (Nagar Panchayat, Satara District)	
4.	Smt. Shital Teli- Ugale, Additional Commissioner , Pune Corporation	
Fourth Session		
1.	Shri. Deepak Nalawade, Deputy Commissioner (Rehabilitation) Pune Division, Pune	Voter Awareness And Reforms Necessary In The Electoral Process
2.	Shri. Siddharth Dhende, Deputy Mayor, Pune Corporation	
3.	Shri. Ajit Ranade, Founder Trustee, ADR	

Recommendations:

- There should be coordination between functions and financial arrangements.
- Efforts should be made for generating good governance.
- It is necessary that the Municipalities/ Corporations have their income sources so that they can fulfill their functions and responsibilities. For this, the following care should be taken to spend according to income.
- It is necessary to select the scheme on priority basis and then spend
- Survey of all properties within limits of the Municipality/ Corporation.
- Municipalities should reduce their establishment expenditure through saving on electricity/ telephone bill, rent expenses, etc.
- Capital Value Based Property Tax is necessary.
- User Charges and other charges should be revised from time to time.
- Development Charges should be revised as per changing ready reckoner.
- Revising water tax every year.
- By adopting double auditing system, rating of the municipality should be done from a recognized institution and efforts should be made to obtain bond- loan instead of institutional loan.
- Giving priority to most urgent tasks from available fund.
- Properly utilizing available immobile properties.
- Giving financial rights to ward committees.
- It is necessary to give more rights to the elected representatives.
- Levying property tax and other taxes in a simple and easy to process way.
- It is necessary to increase income sources of the Municipal Corporations.
- It is necessary that the people get water supply by water meter.
- Implementing schemes of women's empowerment.
- It is necessary to obtain performance grant from the Government based on assessment of the work of the municipality.
- It is necessary to obtain fund of the district planning committee on large scale.
- Levying tax on the buildings of the Central and the State Governments
- The local- self-government institutions should have autonomy in decision making process.
- There should be proper relation between scope of work of the local- self-government institution and the fund available for this.
- In the context of the 74th Constitutional amendment, responsibilities of the Centre and the State should be clarified for the urban local self government institutions.
- It is necessary to build capacity of the women to increase their participation in the democratic process.
- The process of filling up nomination should be totally done through online system.
- The time for completion of propaganda is different for every election. The provision for Loksabha and Vidhansabha election should be made applicable for all.

Regional Conference

Amravati

20th January 2018

Sr. No.	Speaker	Subject
First Session		
1.	Shri. Sheshrao S. Khade, Retired Additional Chief Executive Officer	Local-Self-Government Institutions And Government- Mutual Relations
2.	Dr. Prakash Pawar, Political Science Department, Shivaji University, Kolhapur	
3.	Dr. Subhash Gavai, Principal, Smt. Shakuntalabai Dhabekar College, Karanja Lad	
4.	Shri. Ajay Lahane, Dy. Collector, Yavatmal	
Second Session		
1.	Shri. Milind Chimote, Corporator And Ex- Mayor, ASHri.awati	All- Inclusive Administration By The Local Bodies Organizations
2.	Dr. Avinash Jumale, Assistant Professor, J. D. Patil Sangludkar College, Daryapur	
3.	Shri. Sandip Tudunwar, HOD, Political Science, Shri. Binjhani Nagar College, Nagpur	
4.	Shri. Tukaram Tekale, Assistant Professor, Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh Academy, ASHri.awati.	
Third Session		
1.	Dr. Vinod Gayakwad, Assist. Professor, G. B. Murarka College, Shegaon	Electoral Reforms
2.	Shri. Shyamkant Mhaske, Dy. Collector	
3.	Shri. Pravin Thakare, Dy. Collector	
4.	Adv. Shri. Firdose Mirza, Hon. High Court, Nagpur	
Fourth Session		
1.	Shri. Piyush Singh, Divisional Commissioner, Amravati	Open Discussion
2.	Shri. Shekhar Channe, Secretary, State Election Commission, Maharashtra	

Recommendations:

- Unless Gramsabhas are strengthened, capacities of all the PRIs will not be built. Therefore, it is utmost important to empower the Gramsabhas.
- The elected representatives should consider the views of people and discuss them in respective bodies. This will have reflection of the public thoughts.
- The success of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment lies in the larger scale implementation of the rights given to the Gram Sabhas by the amendment.
- The local self-government institutions are not away from impact of technology. Therefore, one can suspect that this technology is becoming more influential for the public representatives. Therefore, it should be given proper consideration whether this technology is beneficial to the people.
- In order to financially empower autonomous organizations and local- self-government institutions, small scale industries should be encouraged at the local level.
- Public representatives who stand in public gatherings and plays their role in Gram Sabha need to consider policies to be adopted for development of the Gram Panchayat and nearby villages.
- In order to convey to the grassroots, the original view behind the formation of Panchayati Raj system and the rights given in the XI and XII annexure through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendment, large scale awareness drive should be taken up.
- The public representatives should have basic legal knowledge and they should be aware about their duties.
- Training to the staff and the office bearers shall be mandatory.
- Every division should organize district- level conferences on the lines of the divisional conference organized by the Election Commission.
- Government should have a feeling of reliance and the same has to be translated among the members of its staff.
- It is necessary that the urban administration and rural administration come to the same level and have a mutual dialogue.
- All- inclusiveness means inclusion of the women and other vulnerable groups. However, are they capable to look after that post? For this, they should be empowered through training. After the elections are completed, the Election Commission should give directions to the state administration to organize induction training within one month of the election at any cost through credible, relevant and recognized training institutions with proper facilities for such training.
- The party manifestos of political parties should not appease the voters, it should be towards accomplishments of certain goals and a mechanism should be established to check the aspects which appease the voters.
- Elections of the Panchayat Raj system- Zilha Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat should take place together.
- Regarding family monopoly: one person should contest only for two terSmt. He/ she should not be allowed to apply for a third term.
- A list of donors to political parties should be published. It will show transparency of the political parties in financial matters.
- The State Election Commission has rights to finalise voter list on a particular day. The date 6 months before any election should be the date of finalizing the voter list.
- It is the responsibility of the contestant to submit this validity to the Election cell within 6 months. There may be one correction in this clause/ requirement. This process should be completed in 9 months instead of 6 months. If it is invalid after 9 months and if judicial remedies after its invalid status are

expired and still if it remains invalid, then that person should be banned to contest from that constituency on permanent basis i.e. arrangements should be made that he/ she cannot contest the open group.

- The system of filling up forms in two constituencies for one election should be abolished. The contestant has to contest the election only from one seat.
- Regarding withdrawal, the informant should not do this. The contestant himself/ herself should do it. Video recording of the moment of withdrawal should be done and the contestant should be physically present there.
- Staff should not be trained just for the election, but the governmental training institutions should prepare a 7- day basic course and training should be imparted right from the R.O. level to the Presiding Officer. A training programme should be prepared to impart this training across the year.
- News coming in newspapers during the elections should be objective. But if paid news like some contestant has taken lead in propaganda are being published, then a specific code of conduct is necessary for the newspaper. Therefore, the news like 'taken a lead in propaganda/election campaigning' should be regarded as a paid news and there should be provision for penalty for this. Also, a comprehensive set of rules should be prepared for the paid news and they should be clarified.
- After the election is declared, instead of transfer, the returning officer should be appointed on deputation till completion of the electoral process.
- As per the demand of the State Election Commission for the election, the Government should provide finances and the fund be immediately given to the Commission.
- There should be uniformity for time limit of public propaganda for all elections including Corporation, Legislative Assembly and Zilha Parishad elections.
- Reservation should be there for two terms in the same ward.
- Gram Panchayats receive development fund. But Panchayat Samiti does not receive any fund. There should be a provision to provide some fund to Panchayat Samiti in some way.
- There is the condition of 7th Standard education for the position of Sarpanch. But this should be enhanced till 10th Standard education.

Regional Conference

Aurangabad

22th January 2018

Sr. No.	Speaker	Subject
First Session		
1.	Shri. K. M. Nagargoje, Retired Director, Krishi Parishad	Relations Between Localself Government Institutions And The Government-Transfer Of 3Fs (Funds, Functions And Functionaries) And Difficulties Therein
2.	Shri. Jivanrao Gore, Ex- President, Osmanabad	
3.	Dr. Pandit Nalawade, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru College, Aurangabad	
Second Session		
1.	Shri. Bhim Raskar, Director Resource and Support Centre for Development	How All- Inclusive, Mainly For The Women And The Vulnerable Sections Administration Can Be Run By The Localself Government Institutions?
2.	Shri. Aniruddh Khotkar, President, Zilha Parishad, Jalna	
3.	Smt. Mangala Khiwasara, Senior Social Activist, Aurangabad.	
4.	Dr. Sunanda Tidke, Rashtramata Indira Gandhi College, Jalna	
Third Session		
1.	Justice K. U. Chandiwale, General Revenue Judicial Tribunal, Aurangabad	Electoral Reforms
2.	Shri. Nandkumar Ghodele	
3.	Shri. Navalkishora Ram, District Collector, Aurangabad	
4.	Dr. Navnath Aghav, Professor, Saraswati Bhuvan College, Aurangabad	
5.	Shri. Ajit Ranade, Pune	

Fourth Session		
1.	Dr. Purushottam Bhapkar, Divisional Commissioner, Aurangabad	Open Discussion
2.	Dr. B. A. Chopade, Vice Chancellor, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University. Aurangabad	
3.	Dr. V. L. Dharurkar, Ex- HOD, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University. Aurangabad	

Recommendations:

- There should not be participation of any political party in election in Panchayat Raj system and elections should not be contested under banner of any party.
- Attention should be given to fundamental needs such as electricity, roads and water.
- Mass media should be used on large scale for increasing awareness about governmental schemes.
- Encouragement should be given to deprived sections like women.
- Public representatives should form their organizations to control corruption.
- Movements and social organizations should work without falling prey to any political pressures.
- Instead of creating new policy, the earlier policies should be implemented first.
- There should be inclusiveness, in the way women can participate freely and fairly in the local-body elections. There should be coordination and cooperation between functioning of the administrative officers and public representatives.
- Administrative officers should give plan of systematic work to the public representatives.
- Rights of the administration should be increased and when mistakes are made, action should be taken.
- There should be clarity in the Government resolutions made by the Government.
- Everyone should declare social audit of his/ her work.
- As the representatives of local-self-government institutions do not understand governmental schemes, they should be given related training and should be prepared.
- The village itself should prepare its own plan and accordingly, it should be provided with funds.
- Women's Gram Sabhas should be conducted and their presentations should be approved by the general Gram Sabha.
- Gram Panchayats should prepare social audit.
- While preparing village development plan, there should be bottom up planning approach.
- In order to eliminate corruption at the village level, all sections should participate more in Gram Sabha and copy of the report of Gram Sevak should be given to every villager.
- Public organizations and political parties firstly should conduct meetings of the women and understand their problems.
- The administration should help the women and give opportunities to the widowed and deserted women.
- The Government takes cognizance of problems faced by women only when it is reported in the media. Instead of this, the Government should take up such issues as a matter of urgency.
- The administration and the society should not help the women with the approach of making any special favour to them.
- Unnecessary expenses for the election should be stopped.
- If a contestant of an election has criminal background, then no party should make him or her its candidate.
- The State Election Commission should recommend to the Government that if a public representative

misuses his/her powers, then he/ she shall be disqualified from the position.

- If a candidate is contesting on two places and if he wins on both the places, then he should be told to take one position and return the cost accrued to the Election Commission for the second place.
- As the duration of the re- election is not fixed, there should be a time bound programme after a candidate becomes illegible.
- There should be reservation for the post of a deputy mayor.
- A preventive law should be made against criminal behaviour.
- The right to information should relate with political parties and public representatives.
- There should be a provision in the law so that the people can have the right to recall.
- The candidate should be allowed to contest only in one constituency.
- A contestant with serious crimes should not be allowed to contest elections. If a contestant with crimes against his name is contesting an election, then there should be a specific symbol after his name on the voting machine.
- The power should be allowed to contest only in one constituency.
- There should be a condition that the Gram Panchayat member should be educated till 10th Standard and a member of a municipality should be educated above 10th standard. While others were of the opinion that educational qualification is not necessary for elections.
- CCTV should be used in voting ward of Gram Panchayat and meetings. Municipalities should have permission to spend 30percent money and no- confidence motion should only be brought out after 3 years.

विभागीय परिषदा

७३ व्या व ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीची २५ वर्षे :
प्रगती आणि पुढील वाटचाल

पुढाकार

लोकशाही, निवडणुका व सुशासन संस्था
राज्य निवडणूक आयोग, महाराष्ट्र

आयोजक

विभागीय आयुक्त कार्यालय

जानेवारी - २०१८

पार्श्वभूमी

मुंबई विद्यापीठ व गोखले राज्यशास्त्र व अर्थशास्त्र संस्था, पुणे यांनी राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाच्या पुढाकाराने व ग्रामविकास विभाग, महाराष्ट्र राज्य यांच्या सहकार्याने २ व ३ नोव्हेंबर २०१७ रोजी मुंबई विद्यापीठात दोन दिवसीय राष्ट्रीय परिषदेचे आयोजन केले होते.

या परिषदेमध्ये स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या आजी- माजी लोक प्रतिनिधींसह अधिकारी, स्वयंसेवी संस्थांचे प्रतिनिधी, अभ्यासक, विद्यार्थी इ. मोठ्या संख्येने सहभागी झाले होते. सहभागींचा हा आकडा सुमारे ३०० होता. परिषदेत सुमारे ४० वक्त्यांनी आपले विचार मांडले.

परिषदेच्या ठिकाणी ७३ व ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीची वैशिष्ट्ये आणि वाटचाल दर्शविणारे प्रदर्शन मांडण्यात आले होते. शिवाय राज्य निवडणूक आयोग, यशदा, गोखले राज्यशास्त्र व अर्थशास्त्र संस्था, एडीआर इत्यादींच्या पुस्तकांचे कक्षही (स्टॉल) होते. परिषदेचा उद्देश आणि भूमिका या संदर्भात पायाभूत निबंधाचा संग्रहदेखील प्रकाशित करण्यात आला होता. परिषदेची रुपरेषा ठरविण्यासाठी हे उपक्रम सहायभूत ठरले.

फेसबुक व युट्यूब लाईव्ह या सोशल मीडियावर संपूर्ण परिषदेचे थेट प्रसारण करण्यात आले. मुद्रित आणि इलेक्ट्रॉनिक माध्यमांतूनही संपूर्ण परिषदेचा वृत्तांकन प्रसिद्ध झाला. सर्व प्रसारमाध्यमांचे मोठे सहकार्य लाभले. ७३ आणि ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीची वैशिष्ट्ये आणि स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या कार्याचा आढावा घेणाऱ्या ध्वनिचित्रफितीही या वेळी दाखविण्यात आल्या.

अ. क्र.	विभागीय परिषदेचे ठिकाण	दिनांक
१.	नाशिक	५ जानेवारी २०१८
२.	नांदेड	१७ जानेवारी २०१८
३.	पुणे (ग्रामीण)	१७ जानेवारी २०१८
४.	नागपूर	१८ जानेवारी २०१८
५.	पुणे (शहर)	२० जानेवारी २०१८
६.	अमरावती	२० जानेवारी २०१८
७.	औरंगाबाद	२२ जानेवारी २०१८

विभागीय परिषद

नाशिक

दि. ५ जानेवारी २०१८

अ.क्र.	वक्त्यांची नावे	विषय
प्रथम सत्र		
१	श्री. पोपटराव पवार, हिबरे बाजार	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था आणि शासन: ३ एफ (वित्त, कार्य आणि यंत्रणा) यांच्यातील संबंध
२	श्री. अजय सावरीकर, संचालक, यशदा, पुणे	
३	श्री. विरेंद्र जाधवराव, संचालक, कृष्णा खोरे महामंडळ	
४	डॉ. अभय आगरकर, अहमदनगर	
द्वितीय सत्र		
१	श्रीमती देवयानी फरांदे, आमदार	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था: महिला आणि मागासवर्गीय घटकांचा सर्वसमावेशक विकास आणि प्रशासन
२	डॉ. जितेंद्र वासनिक	
३	श्री. अशोक भांगरे	
४	श्री. नामदेव ननावरे	

शिफारशी :

- ग्रामीण आणि शहरी भारताने आपआपसात समतोल साधला पाहिजे.
- भावी काळात उद्योग जगत (Corporate Houses) स्थानिक संस्था चालवतील, अशी भिती वाटत आहे.
- सामाजिक अंकेक्षण होणे आवश्यक आहे.
- खेड्यांना जिवंत ठेवायचे असेल तर योग्य ते पावले उचलली पाहिजेत.
- निवडणूक खर्च हे भारतीय विकास प्रक्रियेसमोरील मोठे अडथळा/आव्हान आहे.
- लोकप्रतिनिधीना वेळोवेळी आवश्यक ते प्रशिक्षण दिले पाहिजे.
- लिंगधारित अर्थसंकल्पाची व्यवस्थित अंमलबजावणी झाली पाहिजे.

- विकास योजनांचा दर्जा आणि उपयोगिता तपासण्यासाठी वेळोवेळी सामाजिक अंकेक्षण होणे आवश्यक आहे.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थाना निधीचा वेळेवर पुरवठा होणे हे स्थानिक विकास कामाच्या यशस्वी अंमलबजावणीसाठी आवश्यक आहे.
- प्रत्येक पाच वर्षांनी गावांतील प्रभागाची रचना बदलते आणि त्याचा गावावर विविधप्रकारे परिणाम होतात. त्याचा विचार राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने करावा.
- कुणाला कुठून किती मते मिळाली हे सर्व उमेदवारांना कळत असते. हे टाळण्यासाठी राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाकडून आवश्यक ती पावले उचलण्यात यावीत.
- मतदारांची व मतदार नसलेल्यांची यादी बनवून लोकांमध्ये जनजागृती निर्माण करावी.
- वित्त आयोगाने पंचायत समिती स्तरावर निधी पुरवावा.
- जिल्हा नियोजन समितीच्या कामकाजाचे अंकेक्षण झाले पाहिजे.
- वाढते शहरीकरण रोखण्यासाठी ग्रामपंचायतींच्या पातळीवर नागरिकांसाठी रोजगार उपलब्ध करून द्यावा.
- ७३ व्या आणि ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्ती मुळे शासन व्यवस्थेमध्ये लोकसहभाग वाढण्यास मदत झाली आहे.
- पोट निवडणुकीच्या प्रक्रियेमध्ये सुधारणा करण्याची आवश्यकता आहे.
- सामूहिक शिक्षण अभियान अंतर्गत मतदान वाढवण्यासाठी प्रयत्न झाले पाहिजेत.
- ७३ व्या आणि ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्ती कायदान्वये शहरी आणि ग्रामीण भागातील स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थाना मोठ्या प्रमाणात अधिकार देण्यात आले आहेत.या सर्व अधिकारांचा फायदा हा नागरिकांच्या कल्याणासाठी झाला पाहिजे.
- प्रत्येक स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांमधील लोकप्रतिनिधींनी विकास योजनांच्या प्रभावी अंमलबजावणीसाठी प्रयत्न करावेत. आर्थिक गैरवापर आणि गुंडगिरीपासून निवडणूक प्रक्रिया मुक्त करण्यात यावी.

विभागीय परिषद

पुणे (ग्रामीण)

१७ जानेवारी २०१८

अ.क्र.	वक्त्यांची नावे	विषय
प्रथम सत्र		
१	श्री. ब.म. वराळे, निवृत्त अतिरिक्त मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांची रचनात्मक व कार्यात्मक भूमिका आणि शासनाशी असलेला संबंध आणि भूमिका
२	श्री प्रदीप कंद, माजी अध्यक्ष, जिल्हा परिषद, पुणे	
३	श्री शरद बुट्टे पाटील, जिल्हा परिषद, पुणे	
४	श्री सुधीर ठाकरे, माजी प्रधान सचिव, ग्राम विकास	
द्वितीय सत्र		
१	श्री. भीम रासकर, संचालक, आरएससीडी	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांसाठीचा ७३ व्या घटनादुरुस्ती कायदा आणि त्यांचे अस्तित्व: महिलांचा सहभाग
२	श्रीमती भाग्यश्री भाग्यवंत, माजी अध्यक्षा, जिल्हा परिषद, सातारा	
३	श्रीमती लीना बनसोड, अतिरिक्त मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी	
४	श्री. राजेंद्र भारुड, मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी, जिल्हा परिषद सोलापूर	
तृतीय सत्र		
१	श्रीमती दीपा सडेकर, उपसंचालक, लेखा आणि कोषागार विभाग	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थाना असणारा उपलब्ध निधी आणि त्याचा उपयोग
२	श्री. शरद बुट्टे पाटील, जिल्हा परिषद सदस्य, जिल्हा परिषद, पुणे	
३	श्री. राहुल कदम, उपमुख्य लेखा व वित्त अधिकारी, कोल्हापूर	
४	श्री. पोपटराव पवार, अध्यक्ष, आदर्श गाव योजना	

चतुर्थ सत्र		
१	श्री. इंद्रजीत देशमुख, अतिरिक्त, मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी, जिल्हा परिषद कोल्हापूर	मतदारांमधील जागरूकता आणि निवडणूक प्रक्रियेमधील आवश्यक सुधारणा
२	श्रीमती मोनिका सिंघ, उपजिल्हाधिकारी, निवडणूक विभाग, पुणे	
३	श्रीमती किशोरी गद्रे, निवृत्त उपजिल्हाधिकारी	
४	श्री. कुणाल खेमनर, मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी, जिल्हा परिषद, कोल्हापूर	

शिफारशी :

- विद्यार्थ्यांच्या माध्यमातून पालकांपर्यंत मतदार जागृतीचा संदेश पोहचविला पाहिजे.
- मतदान केंद्राच्या बाहेर उमेदवारांचा परिचय करून देणारी माहिती प्रकाशित केली पाहिजे.
- आचारसंहितेचे उल्लंघन करणाऱ्यांवर कडक कारवाई झाली पाहिजे.
- आचारसंहिता आणि भारतीय दंड संहितेमध्ये सुधारणा झाली पाहिजे.
- सोशल मिडियाच्या माध्यमांतून होणाऱ्या गुन्ह्यांसंदर्भात कठोर कारवाई केली पाहिजे.
- बोगस मतदान थांबविण्यासाठी आधुनिक तंत्रज्ञान आणि आधार ओळख पत्राचा उपयोग केला पाहिजे.
- सलग तीन निवडणुकांमध्ये मतदान करणाऱ्या मतदाराला शासकीय योजनामध्ये प्राधान्य देण्यात यावे.
- मतदानाचे प्रमाण वाढवण्यासाठी योगदान देणाऱ्या अधिकाऱ्यांचे कौतुक झाले पाहिजे.
- बूथ पातळीवरील अधिकाऱ्यांवरील कामाचा भार कमी करण्यासाठी ऑनलाईन मतदान नोंदणी पत्राचा उपयोग केला पाहिजे.
- मतदान खर्चासाठी शहरी, ग्रामीण आणि डोंगराळ प्रदेश असे वर्गीकरण करण्यात यावे.
- राजकीय पक्षाने त्यांना मिळालेल्या निधीचा सार्वजनिक पातळीवर लेखाजोखा द्यावा.
- निवडणूक कार्यासाठी वेगळी यंत्रणेची तरतूद करण्यात यावी.
- निवडणूक प्रक्रियेचे अभिलेख ठेवण्यात यावेत, तसेच सर्व माहिती एकत्रित जतन करण्यात यावी.
- संकेतस्थळावर आधारित ऑनलाईन तक्रार निवारण व्यवस्था निर्माण केली पाहिजे.
- एखाद्या पक्षाला मिळालेली मते आणि त्या पक्षाने गुन्हेगारी प्रवृत्तीच्या लोकांना दिलेली उमेदवारी या आधारावर राजकीय पक्षाची नोंदणी ठेवायची की रद्द करावी, याबाबत धोरण आखावे.
- उमेदवारांच्या विरोधात गंभीर गुन्हा असेल तर त्याची उमेदवारी कायमची रद्द करण्यात यावी.
- उमेदवाराला परत बोलावण्याचा अधिकार मतदारांना देण्यात यावा. निवडणूक साक्षरतेबद्दल जागृती वाढवली पाहिजे.

विभागीय परिषद

नांदेड

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अ.क्र.	वक्त्यांची नावे	विषय
प्रथम सत्र		
१	श्री.दत्तात्रय बनसोड, माजी अध्यक्ष, जिल्हा परिषद, लातूर	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था आणि शासन : ३ एफ (वित्त, कार्य आणि यंत्रणा) यांच्यातील संबंध
२	श्री. राहुल रेखावर, भा.प्र.से. महानगरपालिका आयुक्त, परभणी	
३	प्रा.डॉ.अ.न. सिद्धेवाड, विभागप्रमुख, राज्यशास्त्र विभाग, पीपल्स महाविद्यालय, नांदेड	
द्वितीय सत्र		
१	श्रीमती शैलजा स्वामी, महापौर, नांदेड	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था : महिला आणि मागासवर्गीय घटकांचा समावेश, विकास आणि प्रशासन
२	श्री.रामचंद्र तिरुके, उपाध्यक्ष, जिल्हा परिषद, लातूर	
३	डॉ. सुनील शिंदे, ज्ञानोपासक महाविद्यालय, परभणी	
४	डॉ.शोभा वाघमारे, सामाजिक कार्यकर्त्या, नांदेड	
तृतीय सत्र		
१	जी. श्रीकांत, जिल्हाधिकारी, लातूर	आवश्यक निवडणूक सुधारणा
२	श्री. माधवराव पाटील शेळगावकर, सामाजिक कार्यकर्ते, नांदेड	
३	श्री. गणेश देशमुख, महानगरपालिका आयुक्त, नांदेड	
४	श्री. एम. ए. पठाण, माजी नगर सचिव, महानगरपालिका, औरंगाबाद	
५	डॉ. बालाजी कतुरवार, देगलूर महाविद्यालय देगलूर	

शिफारशी :

- ग्रामपंचायतीने किंवा पंचायतराज संस्थांनी महसूल/उत्पन्न वाढविण्यासाठी प्राप्त अधिकारांचा उपयोग करावा.
- सरपंचांची निवडणूक प्रत्यक्ष लोकांमधून नसावी.
- खर्च न झालेला निधी खर्च करण्यासाठी धोरणात्मक निर्णय घेऊन व्यवस्था निर्माण केली पाहिजे.
- महसुलानुसार महानगरपालिकेला वस्तू व सेवाकरात वाटा मिळाला पाहिजे.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थामधील वित्तीय व्यवहारांमध्ये पारदर्शकता ठेवण्यासाठी संगणकीय प्रणालीचा उपयोग करावा.
- महानगरपालिकेच्या अधिकाऱ्यांच्या बदल्या ३ वर्ष पूर्ण होण्यापूर्वीच करू नये.
- ११ व्या परिशिष्टामधील सर्व विषयांचे हस्तांतरण स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांकडे झाले पाहिजे.
- एक गाव एक ग्रामसेवक धोरणाचा अवलंब केला तर कार्यक्षमतेत वाढ होईल.
- कर भरण्यासंदर्भात लोकांच्या मानसिकतेत बदल केले पाहिजेत
- महिलांना, बाल कल्याण समितीच्या सदस्यांना आणि नवनिर्वाचित सदस्यांना प्रशिक्षण देण्यासंदर्भात सुविधा निर्माण केली पाहिजे.
- मतदान ओळखपत्रासोबत आधार ओळखपत्र जोडले गेले पाहिजे.
- जे मतदार मतदान करत नाहीत त्यांना मिळणाऱ्या शासकीय सुविधांवरती टाच आणली पाहिजे.
- VVP-T मधील चिठ्ठ्याद्वारे मतमोजणी करू नये. मतमोजणीबाबत वाद निर्माण झाल्यास किंवा न्यायालयाच्या परवानगीनेच या चिठ्ठ्यांची मोजणी करावी.
- एकापेक्षा अधिक मतदारसंघातून एका उमेदवाराला निवडणूक मतदान लढवण्याची परवानगी देऊ नये.
- शासकीय कर्मचारी, शिक्षक आणि महाविद्यालयातील प्राध्यापकांना निवडणूक लढवण्यासाठी प्रतिबंध घातला पाहिजे.

विभागीय परिषद

नागपूर

१८ जानेवारी २०१८

अ.क्र.	वक्त्यांची नावे	विषय
प्रथम सत्र		
१	श्री. देवराव भोंगाले, अध्यक्ष, जिल्हा परिषद, चंद्रपूर	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांची सद्यःस्थिती
२	श्री. ई.झ. खोब्रागडे, निवृत्त भा.प्र.से.	
३	श्री.मोहन हिराबाई हिरालाल, सामाजिक कार्यकर्ते, लेखामेंडा, गडचिरोली	
४	प्रा. शेषकुमार येरलेकर, हिंणघाट	
५	श्री. चंदू पाटील मारकवार, सरपंच, राजगड	
द्वितीय सत्र		
१	श्रीमती. निशाताई सावरकर, अध्यक्षा, जिल्हा परिषद, नागपूर	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या कामकाजात महिलांचा सहभाग (ग्रामीण)
२	श्री.अ. र. शेख, निवृत्त विकास अधिकारी	
३	श्रीमती जयश्री गफट, सभापती, शिक्षण आणि आरोग्य, जिल्हा परिषद वर्धा	
४	डॉ. प्रवीण भागडीकर, नागपूर	
	श्रीमती सुवर्णा दामले, प्रकृती संस्था, नागपूर	
तृतीय सत्र		
१	डॉ जयराज फाटक, माजी सचिव, नगरविकास विभाग	वित्त, कार्य आणि यंत्रणेचे हस्तांतरण
२	श्री अनुप कुमार, विभागीय आयुक्त, नागपूर	

शिफारशी :

- विविध विभागाचे हस्तांतरण स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या कार्यक्षेत्र झाले पाहिजे.
- ग्रामपंचायतीला आवश्यक तो तांत्रिक आणि लेखाविषयक कर्मचारीवर्ग पुरवला गेला पाहिजे.
- प्रत्येक निवडणुकीनंतर नवनिर्वाचित सदस्यांसाठी प्रशिक्षणाची सुविधा असावी.
- राजकीय अधिकार लोकांच्या कल्याणासाठी असल्याबाबत जनजागृती अभियान राबवण्यात यावे.
- अधिकारांचे विकेंद्रीकरण करून, पंचायत पातळीवर अधिकारांचे हस्तांतरण झाले पाहिजे.
- खेड्यांचे महत्व वाढविण्यासाठी शेतमालाला योग्य भाव मिळला पाहिजे.
- स्थानिक शासन संस्थांचे अर्थसंकल्प हे मराठी भाषेमध्ये असावे.
- पंचायत समित्यांचे अधिकार वाढवण्यात यावेत.
- जिल्हा परिषदांना जिल्हा नियोजन समित्यांकडून मिळणाऱ्या निधीत वाढ झाली पाहिजे.
- संस्थांच्या वित्तीय स्वावलंबीपणाकडे लक्ष दिले पाहिजे.
- जाती आणि अंधश्रद्धा निर्मूलनाकडे सर्वांचे लक्ष वेधले पाहिजे.
- शाळांमध्ये भारतीय राज्यघटनेच्या प्रस्तावनेच्या वाचनाची संस्कृती रुजवली पाहिजे.
- पंचायत समितीला कर जमा करण्याचे अधिकार देण्यात यावेत.
- ग्रामसभेचा अध्यक्ष हा सरपंच असावा.
- जिल्हा परिषद अंतर्गत चालवल्या जाणाऱ्या शाळांबद्दल लोकांचा दृष्टीकोन नकारात्मक होत आहे. वित्तीय आयोगामध्ये शाळा आणि अंगणवाडीसाठी अधिक तरतूद केली पाहिजे.
- सर्व विकासकामांचे स्थानिक पातळीवर नियोजन करण्यात यावे.
- महिला सभेचे अध्यक्षपद महिलेकडेच असावे.
- दलित वस्ती सुधार योजनेसाठी मिळणाऱ्या धनादेशावर गट विकास अधिकाऱ्यांच्या सहीऐवजी सरपंचाच्या सहीची तरतूद करण्यात यावी.
- आताची त्रिस्तरीय पंचायत व्यवस्था चालू राहिली पाहिजे.
- एक मतदारसंघ एकाच कालावधीसाठी आरक्षित करण्यात यावा.
- जातपडताळणी समितीने ६ महिन्यांच्या आत नवनिर्वाचित उमेदवारांचे जातप्रमाणपत्र दिले नाही तर त्याचे सभासदत्व रद्द करण्यात येऊ नये.
- स्थलांतरित मतदारासाठी ऑनलाईन मतदानाचा पर्याय उपलब्ध करून देण्यात यावा.
- बूथनुसार झालेल्या मतदानाबद्दल गुप्तता राखण्यात यावी.

विभागीय परिषद

पुणे (नागरी)

२० जानेवारी २०१८

अ.क्र.	वक्त्यांची नावे	विषय
प्रथम सत्र		
१	श्री. रमानाथ झा, निवृत्त भा.प्र.से.	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांची रचनात्मक आणि कार्यात्मक भूमिका आणि शासनाशी असलेला संबंध आणि भूमिका
२	श्रीमती मुक्ता टिळक, महापौर, पुणे	
३	श्री. सुहास पळशीकर, माजी विभागप्रमुख, राज्यशास्त्र विभाग, पुणे विद्यापीठ	
द्वितीय सत्र		
१	श्रीमती किशोरी गद्रे, निवृत्त अप्पर जिल्हाधिकारी	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांसाठीचा ७३ व्या घटनादुरुस्ती कायदा आणि त्यांचे अस्तित्व: महिलांचा सहभाग
२	श्रीमती सीमा सावळे, अध्यक्षा, स्थायी समिती, पिंपरी चिंचवड, महानगरपालिका	
३	श्रीमती राजेश्वरी देशपांडे, विभाग प्रमुख, राज्यशास्त्र विभाग, पुणे विद्यापीठ	
तृतीय सत्र		
१	श्रीमती पदमश्री तळदेकार, मुख्य लेखाधिकारी, पिंपरी चिंचवड महानगरपालिका	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थाना असणारा उपलब्ध निधी आणि त्याचा उपयोग
२	श्री. अंबरीश गालिंदे, मुख्य लेखाधिकारी, पुणे महानगरपालिका	
३	श्री. मनोहर शिंदे, उपनगराध्यक्ष, मलकापूर नगरपंचायत, सातारा	
४	श्रीमती शीतल तेली-उगले, अतिरिक्त आयुक्त, पुणे	

चौथे सत्र		
१	श्री. दीपक नलावडे, उपायुक्त (पुनर्वसन), पुणे विभाग, पुणे	मतदारांमधील जागरूकता आणि निवडणूक प्रक्रियेमधील आवश्यक सुधारणा
२	श्री. सिद्धार्थ धेंडे, उपरहापौर, पुणे	
३	श्री. अजित रानडे, संस्थापक विश्वस्थ, एडीआर, मुंबई.	

शिफारशी :

- उत्पन्नाचे स्रोत वाढवण्यासाठी दरवर्षी स्थावर मालमत्ता आणि इतर करामध्ये वाढ केली पाहिजे.
- आवश्यक गोष्टींचा प्राधान्यक्रम विचारात घेऊन खर्च करण्याचे नियोजन केले पाहिजे.
- महानगरपालिकेच्या हद्दीत असलेल्या सर्व मालमत्तांचे सर्वेक्षण करावे.
- स्थापत्य कार्यातर्गत खर्च कमी झाला पाहिजे.
- वीज आणि भ्रमणध्वनीचा उपयोग आवश्यक तेव्हाच करावा.
- दरवर्षी मालमत्ता करांचा आढावा घेतला पाहिजे.
- भांडवल मूल्य आधारित मालमत्ता कर, भांडवल आधारित कर प्रणालीची अंमलबजावणी केली पाहिजे.
- उपभोगता शुल्क आणि इतर शुल्क यांचा दर वर्षी आढावा घेतला पाहिजे.
- रेकनर पद्धतीनुसार वेळोवेळी विकास शुल्कामध्ये बदल केले पाहिजेत.
- दरवर्षी पाणी कराबद्दल आढावा घेतला पाहिजे.
- प्रलंबित मालमत्ता कर वसुली झाली पाहिजे.
- उपलब्ध निधीतून प्राधान्यक्रमाने विविध गोष्टींवर खर्च करण्याचे नियोजन करावे.
- प्रभाग समित्यांना वित्तीय अधिकार प्रदान केले पाहिजेत.
- निर्वाचित प्रभाग सदस्यांना आवश्यक ते अधिकार प्रदान केले पाहिजेत.
- करांची आकारणी आणि भरणा ही प्रक्रिया सुलभ असावी.
- उत्पन्नाचे स्रोत वाढवणे आवश्यक आहे.
- नागरिकांना मीटरच्या आधारे पाणी पुरवठा केला पाहिजे.
- महिला सबळीकरणाच्या विविध योजनांची अंमलबजावणी प्रभावीपणे झाली पाहिजे.
- महानगरपालिकेच्या कामाच्या आधारावर शासनाकडून निधी उपलब्ध करून दिला पाहिजे.
- जिल्हा नियोजन समितीकडून मिळणाऱ्या निधीमध्ये मोठ्या प्रमाणात वाढ केली पाहिजे.
- केंद्र व राज्य शासनाच्या इमारतीवर मालमत्ता करांतर्गत कर आकारणी झाली पाहिजे.
- ऐच्छिक करांची अंमलबजावणी करावी.

- निधीचा योग्य असा वापर करावा.
- प्रशासकीय कामासाठी व प्रशासनावर होणारा खर्च हा ३५ टक्क्यांच्या आत असावा.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांना स्वतंत्रपणे निर्णय घेण्याचे अधिकार प्रदान केले पाहिजेत.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या अंतर्गत असणारी कामे आणि निधी यांचा समतोल साधला गेला पाहिजे.
- ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीच्या पातळीवर केंद्र आणि राज्य यांच्यावर असलेल्या शहर विकासाच्या जबाबदाऱ्या स्पष्ट कराव्यात.
- शहरी स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांनी त्यांच्या उत्पन्न स्रोतांमध्ये वाढ करावी.
- उमेदवारांची नामनिर्देशन प्रक्रिया संपूर्णतः ऑनलाईन करण्यात यावी.
- आधार ओळखपत्र हे मतदान ओळखपत्रासोबत जोडले गेले पाहिजे.
- विधानसभा आणि लोकसभेच्या धर्तीवर स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांच्या प्रचाराचा कालावधी एकसमान असावा.

विभागीय परिषद

अमरावती

२० जानेवारी २०१८

अ.क्र.	वक्त्यांची नावे	विषय
प्रथम सत्र		
१	श्री. शेषराव खाडे, निवृत्त अतिरिक्त मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी	स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था आणि शासन यांच्यातील सहसंबंध
२	डॉ. प्रकाश पवार, प्राध्यापक, राज्यशास्त्र विभाग, शिवाजी विद्यापीठ, कोल्हापूर	
३	डॉ. सुभाष गवई, प्राचार्य, श्रीमती. शकुंतलाबाई धाबेकर महाविद्यालय, कारंजा लाड	
४	श्री. अजय लहाने, उपजिल्हाधिकारी, यवतमाळ	
द्वितीय सत्र		
१	श्री.मिलिंद चिमोटे, नगरसेवक आणि माजी महापौर, अमरावती	सर्व समावेशक प्रशासन आणि स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था
२	डॉ. अविनाश जुमले, सहाय्यक प्राध्यापक, ज.ड. पाटील सांगलुडकर महाविद्यालय, दर्यापूर	
३	श्री. संदीप तुडूनरवार, विभागप्रमुख, राज्यशास्त्र विभाग, श्री.बिंझाणीनगर महाविद्यालय, नागपूर	
४	श्री. तुकाराम टेकाळे, सहाय्यक प्राध्यापक, डॉ. पंजाबराव देशमुख संस्था, अमरावती	

तृतीय सत्र		
१	डॉ. विनोद गायकवाड, सहाय्यक प्राध्यापक, ग.ब.मुरारका महाविद्यालय, शेगाव	निवडणूक सुधारणा
२	श्री. श्यामकांत म्हस्के, उपजिल्हाधिकारी	
३	श्री. प्रवीण ठाकरे, उपजिल्हाधिकारी	
४	श्री. फिरदोस मिर्झा, विधितज्ज्ञ नागपूर	
चौथे सत्र		
१	श्री. पियुष सिंग, भा.प्र.से. विभागीय आयुक्त	खुले चर्चा सत्र
२	श्री. शेखर चन्ने, सचिव, राज्य निवडणूक आयोग	

शिफारशी :

- ग्रामसभा सक्षम झाल्याशिवाय अन्य संबंधित घटक क्रियाशील होणार नाहीत. त्यासाठी ग्रामसभेचे सबळीकरण केले पाहिजे.
- लोकप्रतिनिधींनी लोकांच्या भावना समजून घेतल्या पाहिजेत. त्यांच्यासोबत चर्चा करायला हवी.
- ग्रामसभेला अपेक्षित अधिकार देण्यावरच ७३ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीचे यश अवलंबून आहे.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या लोकप्रतिनिधींना आणि जनतेला तंत्रज्ञानाबाबत अवगत केले पाहिजे.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थाना आर्थिक स्वायत्त संस्था म्हणून मान्यता दिली पाहिजे. त्याचबरोबर स्थानिक पातळीवर लघुउद्योगांना चालना दिली पाहिजे.
- जनसमूहामध्ये प्रभावी स्थान असणाऱ्यांनी ग्रामसभेमध्ये क्रियाशील सहभाग नोंदवावा आणि ग्रामपंचायतीच्या विकासाची धोरणे मंजूर करून घ्यावेत.
- पंचायतराज संस्थांचा मूळ उद्देश साध्य करण्यासाठी; तसेच ७३ व्या व ७४ व्या घटनादुरुस्ती अंतर्गतच्या ११ व १२ व्या परिशिष्टातील तरतुदीबाबत लोकांमध्ये जनजागृती करण्यासाठी मोहीम हाती घेतली पाहिजे.
- लोकप्रतिनिधीना कायद्याचे मुलभूत ज्ञान असावे आणि त्यांना त्यांच्या जबाबदाऱ्यांचे भान असावे.
- कार्यालयीन कर्मचार्यांना प्रशिक्षण दिले पाहिजे.
- प्रत्येक जिल्हाच्या पातळीवर विभागीय परिषदेच्या धर्तीवर जिल्हा पातळीवर परिषदा घेण्यात याव्यात.
- कर्मचार्यांमध्ये विश्वासार्हता वाढीस लागण्यासाठी प्रयत्न केले पाहिजेत.
- राज्य घटनेला अपेक्षित बंधुता आणि समानतेच्या तत्वानुसार स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांचे कामकाज चालले पाहिजे.
- शहरी आणि ग्रामीण प्रशासन समान पातळीवर एकत्र येऊन संवाद झाला पाहिजे.
- महिला आणि दुर्बल घटकांच्या सहभागाशिवाय सर्वसमावेशकता प्राप्त होणार नाही.
- निवडणूक निकालानंतर एक महिन्याच्या आत नवनिर्वाचित उमेदवारांना योग्य आणि नामांकित संस्थेमार्फत आवश्यक ते प्रशिक्षण दिले पाहिजे.

- मतदान करणे सक्तीचे केले पाहिजे. मतदान आणि शासकीय अनुदाने यांचे संबंध स्थापित करून जो मतदान करेल त्यालाच शासकीय सवलती दिल्या पाहिजेत.
- जिल्हा परिषद आणि पंचायत समित्यांच्या निवडणुकांसोबत ग्रामपंचायतीच्याही निवडणुका झाल्या पाहिजेत.
- राजकीय पक्षांचा निवडणूक जाहीरनामा केवळ मतदारांना भूलविण्यासाठी नसावा. तो प्रत्यक्षात अंमलात येण्याजोगा असावा आणि अंमलबजावणीची पडताळणी करणारी व्यवस्था असली पाहिजे.
- एका प्रभागांमध्ये जेवढ्या पदासाठी निवडणूक होत आहे तेवढ्या प्रत्येक पदासाठी स्वतंत्र इव्हीएम मशीन उपलब्ध करून दिले पाहिजे.
- एका कुटुंबाची एखाद्या संस्थेवरील मत्तेदारी मोडून काढण्यासाठी, एका व्यक्तीला एका संस्थेवर फक्त २ वेळेस पद भूषवणे कायदेशीर करावे.
- पक्षाला देणगी देणाऱ्यांची नावे प्रसिद्ध करण्यात यावीत. यामुळे राजकीय पक्षांमध्ये वित्तीय पारदर्शकता दिसून येईल.
- राजकारणातील स्पर्धेचा विचार करून निवडणूक आयोगाने आपल्या कामकाजात सातत्याने पारदर्शकता जपली पाहिजे.
- निवडणूक दिनांकाच्या ६ महिने अगोदरच निवडणूक आयोगाने मतदार यादी जाहीर करावी. त्यानंतर आलेल्या अर्जांचा स्वीकार करू नये.
- जात पडताळणी प्रमाणपत्र सादर करण्यासाठी निवडणूक झाल्यानंतर ६ महिन्यांऐवजी ९ महिन्यांचा कालावधी द्यावा. ९ महिन्यांमध्ये उमेदवाराने जात पडताळणी प्रमाणपत्र सादर केले नाही तर न्यायालयीन प्रक्रियेच्या माध्यमातून त्याच्यावर कार्यवाही करण्यात यावी, अन्यथा त्या उमेदवाराची उमेदवारी रद्द करून पुनर्निवडणुकीसाठी त्याच मतदारसंघातून आजीवन काळासाठी अपात्र ठरवण्यात यावे.
- एका उमेदवाराला एका वेळेस एकाच मतदारसंघातून निवडणूक लढवणे अनिवार्य करण्यात यावे.
- ज्या उमेदवारांना अर्ज माघारी घ्यावयाचा आहे त्यांनी स्वतः उपस्थित असले पाहिजे आणि त्यांनी स्वतः अर्ज माघारी घेतला पाहिजे. उमेदवारांमार्फत अर्ज माघारी घेण्याच्या प्रक्रियेचे छायाचित्रीकरण करावे आणि ते जतन करून ठेवावे.
- कर्मचाऱ्यांना प्रशिक्षण फक्त निवडणुकी पुरतेच मर्यादित राहू नये. निवडणूक प्रशिक्षणाचे सत्र ७ दिवसांचे असावे. निवडणूक अधिकाऱ्यांपासून ते मतदान केंद्राध्यक्षांपर्यंत असावे.
- निवडणूक काळात प्रसारमाध्यमांमध्ये वस्तुनिष्ठ बातम्या प्रसिद्ध झाल्या पाहिजेत. पेड न्यूज असल्यास त्याविरुद्ध दंडात्मक कार्यवाही झाली पाहिजे. त्यासाठी सर्वसमावेशक नियम करायला हवेत.
- निवडणुका जाहीर झाल्यानंतर निवडणुकीशी संबंधित अधिकाऱ्यांची बदली होता कामा नये.
- राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाच्या मागणी व गरजेनुसार शासनाने निवडणुकीसाठी त्वरित निधी उपलब्ध करून दिला पाहिजे.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या सर्व निवडणुकांचा जाहीर प्रचार समाप्तीच्या कालावधीबाबत एकसूत्रता असावी.
- प्रत्येक प्रभागामध्ये आरक्षणाचा कालावधी हा १० वर्षांपर्यंतचा असावा. त्यापेक्षा जास्त नसावा.
- ग्रामपंचायतींना विकास निधी मिळतो; पण पंचायत समित्यांना विकास निधी मिळत नाही. पंचायत समितीलासुद्धा निधी मिळाला पाहिजे.
- सरपंच पदासाठी इयत्ता ७ वी उत्तीर्ण असणे अनिवार्य आहे; पण ते वाढवून इयत्ता १० वी पर्यंत करण्यात यावे.

विभागीय परिषद

औरंगाबाद

२२ जानेवारी २०१८

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प्रथम सत्र		
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३	श्री.नवलकिशोर राम, जिल्हाधिकारी, औरंगाबाद	
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शिफारशी :

- पंचायतराज संस्थेच्या निवडणुका कोणत्याही पक्षाच्या पातळीवर नसाव्यात. त्या पक्षविरहित असाव्यात.
- वीज, रस्ते आणि पाणी यासारख्या मुलभूत गोष्टींकडे लक्ष्य पुरवले पाहिजे.
- शासकीय योजनांची माहिती लोकांपर्यंत पोहचवण्यासाठी मोठ्या प्रमाणावर जनजागृती अभियान राबविले पाहिजे.
- महिला वर्गासह सर्व दुर्बल घटकांचे सबळीकरण झाले पाहिजे.
- लोकप्रतिनिधींनी भ्रष्टाचार निर्मुलनासाठी त्यांची एक संस्था निर्माण करावी.
- सामाजिक चळवळीतील कार्यकर्त्यांनी कोणत्याही राजकीय पक्षाच्या दबावाला बळी न पडता काम करावे.
- नवीन धोरणे किंवा धोरण निर्मिती करण्यापेक्षा आहे त्या धोरणांची प्रभावीपणे अंमलबजावणी झाली पाहिजे.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांत महिलांना निर्भय आणि मुक्तपणे सहभागी होता आले पाहिजे.
- लोकप्रतिनिधी आणि प्रशासन यांच्यामध्ये सहकार्य आणि समन्वय असले पाहिजे.
- प्रशासकीय अधिकार्यांनी लोकप्रतिनिधींना कामाच्या नियोजनाचा आराखडा दिला पाहिजे.
- प्रशासकीय अधिकार्यांकडून झालेल्या चुकांकडे दुर्लक्ष करण्यात येऊ नये.
- शासकीय परिपत्रके आणि अधिनियमामध्ये सुस्पष्टपणा असावा.
- प्रत्येकाने आपापल्या कामाचे सामाजिक आकेंक्षण जाहीर करावे.
- लोकप्रतिनिधीना सरकारी योजनांची माहिती नसते. त्यांच्यासाठी उचित प्रशिक्षणाची व्यवस्था असावी.
- प्रत्येक गावाने स्वतःच्या विकासाचा आराखडा तयार करावा. शासनाने त्यांना आवश्यक वित्तीय तरतुदींची सोय करावी.
- महिलांसाठी विशेष ग्रामसभा आयोजित करण्यात यावी आणि त्या ग्रामसभेनेच महिलांचे प्रतिनिधी निवडावेत.
- ग्रामपंचायतीने स्वतःचे सामाजिक अंकेक्षण करावे.
- गावाच्या विकासाचा आराखडा निर्माण करताना तळागाळातील लोकांच्या विकासाचा विचार करण्यात यावा.
- गाव पातळीवरील प्रशासनामधील भ्रष्टाचार कमी करण्यासाठी ग्रामसभेमध्ये सर्व घटकांनी समाविष्ट व्हावे. ग्रामसेवकाच्या अहवालाची प्रत गावातील प्रत्येक नागरिकाला दिली पाहिजे.

- सार्वजनिक संस्थांनी आणि राजकीय पक्षांनी महिलांच्या सभा घेऊन त्यांचे प्रश्न समजून घेण्याचा प्रयत्न करावा.
- महिलांसंदर्भातील प्रश्न किंवा समस्यांकडे प्रशासनाने प्राधान्याने लक्ष पुरविले पाहिजे.
- प्रशासनाने आणि समाजाने उपकार केल्यासारखी महिलांना वागणूक देऊ नये. त्यांचे मुलभूत अधिकार त्यांना दिले पाहिजे. त्यांना समाजामध्ये अभिमानाने जगता आले पाहिजे.
- कोणत्याही पक्षाने गुन्हेगारी पार्श्वभूमी असलेल्या व्यक्तीला उमेदवारी देऊ नये.
- लोकप्रतिनिधींनी अधिकाराचा दुरुपयोग केल्यास त्याचे पद रद्दबादल ठरवण्याबाबत निवडणूक आयोगाने शासनास शिफारस करावी.
- उमेदवार दोन ठिकाणी निवडणूक लढवत असेल आणि दोन्ही ठिकाणी निवडून आल्यास एका ठिकाणाचे पद त्याने स्वीकारावे. दुसऱ्या ठिकाणाच्या निवडणुकीचा खर्च त्याच्याकडून वसूल करावा .
- उपमहापौर पदासाठी आरक्षणाची तरतूद करण्यात यावी.
- गुन्हेगारी वर्तणुकीविरोधात कठोर प्रतिबंधक कायद्याची आवश्यकता आहे.
- राजकीय पक्ष आणि लोकप्रतिनिधी माहिती अधिकाऱ्याच्या कक्षेत आणावेत.
- कायद्यामध्ये उमेदवाराला परत बोलावण्याची तरतूद करण्यात यावी. जेणेकरून नागरिकांना निवडून दिलेल्या उमेदवाराला परत बोलावण्याचा अधिकार प्राप्त होईल.
- एका वेळेस एकाच मतदार संघातून निवडणूक लढवण्याचे बंधन असावे.
- ज्या उमेदवाराविरोधात गंभीर प्रकारचे गुन्हे आहेत त्यांना निवणूक लढवण्यापासून रोखले पाहिजे. एखाद्या उमेदवाराविरुद्ध गंभीर गुन्हा असल्यास ईव्हीएम मशीनवर त्याच्या नावासमोर त्याची गुन्हेगारी पार्श्वभूमी दर्शवणारे चिन्ह किंवा खूण असावी.
- ग्रामपंचायतींच्या सदस्यासाठी शैक्षणिक पात्रता इयत्ता १० वी करण्यात यावी. महानगरपालिकेच्या निवडणुकीसाठी म्हणजेच नगरसेवक पदासाठी पदवी उत्तीर्णतेची अट असावी; परंतु निवडणूक लढवण्यासाठी कसलीही शैक्षणिक पात्रतेची अट नसावी, असेही मत काही जणांनी व्यक्त केले.
- मतदान कक्षामध्ये आणि ग्रामसभेच्या ठिकाणी सीसीटीव्हीचा उपयोग करावा. अविश्वासाचा ठराव हा निवडणुका पार पडल्यानंतर ३ वर्षांनंतरच सभागृहासमोर मांडता यावा. त्यापूर्वी नकोच.

गव्हर्नर्स कॉनक्लेव्ह

लोकशाही पंधरवडा समारोप कार्यक्रम

दिनांक : ९ फेब्रुवारी २०१८

स्थळ

सहाद्री अतिथीगृह, मुंबई

पार्श्वभूमी

१. राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने दर वर्षी २६ जानेवारी ते १० फेब्रुवारी या कालावधीत लोकशाही पंधरवडा साजरा करण्याबाबत ६ जानेवारी २०१८ रोजी आदेश निर्गमित केले आहेत. पहिल्या वर्षाच्या पंधरवड्याचा समारंभ ९ फेब्रुवारी २०१८ रोजी सहादी राज्य अतिथिगृह येथे पार पडला. या समारंभात श्री. विद्यासागर राव, मा. राज्यपाल महोदय आणि श्री. देवेंद्र फडणवीस, मा. मुख्यमंत्री महोदय यांची प्रमुख उपस्थिती होती. श्री. सुमित मल्लीक, मा. मुख्य सचिव आणि श्री. सतीश माथूर, मा. पोलीस महासंचालक हेदेखील उपस्थित होते. या परिषदेसाठी वरिष्ठ अधिकारी, कुलगुरू आणि स्वयंसेवी संस्थांच्या प्रतिनिधींना आमंत्रित करण्यात आले होते.
२. सर्व उपस्थितांचे प्रामुख्याने मा. राज्यपाल व मा. मुख्यमंत्री यांचे स्वागत करून मा. राज्य निवडणूक आयुक्त यांनी गव्हर्नर्स कॉन्क्लेव्हची पार्श्वभूमी थोडक्यात नमूद केली. स्थानिक स्तरावर लोकशाही सुदृढ करण्याच्या दृष्टीने व तसेच ७३ व ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीस २५ वर्षे पूर्ण झाल्यानिमित्त राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाच्या वतीने २ व ३ नोव्हेंबर २०१७ रोजी एक राष्ट्रीय परिषद व जानेवारी- २०१८ मध्ये ७ जिल्हांमध्ये विभागीय परिषदांचे आयोजन करण्यात आले होते. या परिषदांमध्ये अनेक ख्यातनाम आजी/ माजी पदाधिकारी/ अधिकारी, प्राध्यापक, विद्यार्थी, इत्यादी उपस्थित होते.
३. या बैठकीत खालील बाबी प्रकर्षाने नमूद करण्यात आल्या:
 - (i) लोकशाही, निवडणुका व सुशासन या विषयाबाबत जनजागृती करण्याकरिता निरंतर चालणारी उपाययोजना करणे आवश्यक आहे.
 - (ii) या सर्व परिषदांमध्ये व्यक्त करण्यात आलेल्या मतांच्या अनुषंगाने राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने आदेश क्रमांक-रानिआ/रापनों-२०१७/प्र.क्र.१४/का-११, दिनांक ६ जानेवारी २०१८ अन्वये दरवर्षी २६ जानेवारी ते ९ फेब्रुवारी या कालावधीत राज्य स्तरापासून ग्रामपंचायत स्तरापर्यंत शक्यतो सर्व ठिकाणी लोकशाही पंधरवडा साजरा करण्यात येणार आहे. या अनुषंगाने राज्यामध्ये पहिला लोकशाही पंधरवडा दिनांक २६ जानेवारी ते ९ फेब्रुवारी २०१८ या कालावधीत अत्यंत उत्साहाने साजरा करण्यात आला. या पंधरवड्याचा सांगता समारोप करण्यासाठी मा. राज्यपाल महोदय यांच्या अध्यक्षतेखाली व मा. मुख्यमंत्री महोदयांच्या उपस्थितीत तसेच निवडणुकीशी निगडित सर्व वरिष्ठ अधिकारी (आयएस, आयपीएस व इतर विभाग) यांची एक परिषद सहाद्री अतिथिगृह येथे लोकशाही, निवडणुका व सुशासन या विषयावर आयोजित करण्यात आली आहे.
४. वरील पार्श्वभूमी विशद केल्यानंतर मा. राज्य निवडणूक आयुक्त यांनी खालील मुद्दे उपस्थित केले:
 - (i) ७३ व ७४ व्या घटनादुरुस्तीच्या अनुषंगाने राज्य निवडणूक आयोग ही शासनापेक्षा स्वतंत्र एक सांविधानिक संस्था आहे. त्यांच्या निर्धारणाप्रमाणे सर्व साधनसामग्री पुरविणे शासनावर बंधनकारक आहे. तसेच सर्व निवडणुका निर्भय, मुक्त व पारदर्शक पध्दतीने घेणे ही राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाची मुख्य जबाबदारी आहे.

- (ii) राज्यातील २८,००० ग्रामपंचायतींपैकी ८० टक्के स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुका राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने २०१५ ते २०१७ या कालावधीत योग्य रितीने पार पाडलेल्या आहेत. या निवडणुकीच्या काळात नवीन मतदार नोंदणी करण्यात आली असून मतदानाच्या टक्केवारीमध्ये लक्षणीय वाढ (२०१६ मध्ये १२.०८ लक्ष, २०१७ मध्ये २१.७ लक्ष) झालेली आहे. २०१२ च्या महानगरपालिका निवडणुकीमध्ये ४८.५९ टक्के व २०१७ मध्ये ५६.४० टक्के इतके मतदान झाले.
- (iii) स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्था व राज्य निवडणूक आयोग या दोन्हीस सांविधानिक दर्जा असला तरीही याकडे पाहण्याच्या दृष्टीकोनामध्ये सुधारणा करण्याची बाब आहे. राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाला अनेक आव्हानांना तोंड द्यावे लागते. यापैकी काही खालीलप्रमाणे आहेत:
- गुन्हेगारी, अनैतिक व्यवहार, पैशांचा दुरुपयोग, सोशल मीडियाची तपासणी करणे.
 - कोणत्याही पक्षाची बाजू न घेता निर्भय व मुक्त काम करणे.
 - नियम/ निवडणूक प्रक्रियेमध्ये निवडणुकीपूर्वी बदल करणे, इत्यादी.
 - आयोगाचे अधिकार, स्वातंत्र्य, मूल्यांकन (निधी व मनुष्यबळ)
 - आदर्श आचारसंहितेची प्रभावी अंमलबजावणी
 - जागृती अभियान: मतदार नोंदणी/ अचूक मतदान
 - अचूक मतदान यादी तयार करणे (भारत निवडणूक आयोग)
- (iv) राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने जरी अनेक नवीन उपक्रम राबविले असले तरी वर नमूद केलेल्या आव्हानांना तोंड देण्यासाठी आणखी प्रयत्न करणे आवश्यक आहे.

५. मा. मुख्यमंत्री महोदयांनी आपल्या भाषणात खालील मुद्दे मांडले:

- (i) लोकशाही बळकटीकरणाकरिता राजकीय संस्कृती अधिक प्रगल्भ होणे आवश्यक आहे. निर्भय मुक्त वातावरणात निवडणुका पार पाडणे आवश्यक आहे. निवडणुकांमध्ये पैशांचा अतिरेक वापर होतो ही चिंतेची बाब आहे. पैशाचा हा वापर थांबला पाहिजे.
- (ii) निवडणुकांतील गुन्हेगारीकरण ही गंभीर बाब असून गुन्हेगारी प्रवृत्तीला निवडणूक लढण्यापासून रोखले गेले पाहिजे.
- (iii) राज्यामध्ये ज्या कायद्याद्वारे निवडणुका घेतल्या जातात, त्यात मतदान सक्ती करता येईल का, याबाबत विचार करणे आवश्यक आहे. काही लोक धोरणात्मक बाबींवर नेहमी बोलत असतात. परंतु ते मतदानाला जात नाहीत. यासाठी सक्तीच्या मतदानाची आवश्यकता आहे.
- (iv) राज्यात स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या सातत्याने निवडणुका सुरू असतात. त्याऐवजी एकत्रित निवडणुका घेता येईल का, असा विचार केला पाहिजे. एकत्रित निवडणुका घेतल्यास निवडणूक आयोग, प्रशासन व पोलीसांवरील ताण कमी होण्यास मदत होईल.
- (v) संविधानाने राज्याला जे अधिकार दिले आहेत त्यांतर्गत निवडणूक प्रक्रियेत अधिक सुधारणा करण्यासाठी तसेच स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांसाठी सर्वसमावेशक कायद्याचा मसुदा तयार करण्यासाठी मा. राज्य निवडणूक आयुक्तांच्या अध्यक्षतेखाली एक समिती नेमावी. या समितीचे सदस्य म्हणून मा. राज्य निवडणूक आयुक्तांना हवे असलेले अधिकारी/ जाणकार उपलब्ध करून दिले जातील.

(vi) सदर समितीने अर्थिक बळाचा दुरुपयोग टाळणे आणि गुन्हेगारी पार्श्वभूमीच्या उमेदवारांना रोखण, तसेच सर्वसमावेशक नवीन कायदा करणे इत्यादींबाबतचा अभ्यासपूर्ण मसुदा सादर केल्यास त्यावर तातडीने कार्यवाही करून त्याला कायद्याचे स्वरूप दिले जाईल.

६. मा. राज्यपाल महोदयांनी आपल्या मार्गदर्शनपर भाषणात खालील मुद्दे मांडले:

- (i) लोकशाही बळकट करण्यासाठी लोकसहभाग विशेषतः युवकांचा मोठ्याप्रमाणावर सहभाग वाढविण्याची आवश्यकता आहे. त्यासाठी राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने समाज माध्यमांचा प्रभावी वापर करावा.
- (ii) विविध सामाजिक संस्था, संघटना, गणेश मंडळे यांच्या मदतीने मतदान नोंदणी आणि मतदान टक्केवारी वाढविण्यासाठी प्रयत्न केले पाहिजेत.
- (iii) लोकशाही ही एक जीवनशैली आहे. ती आपल्या देशाची सांस्कृतिक परंपरा आहे. गेली ६९ वर्षे प्रत्येक टप्प्यावर लोकशाही सक्षम होण्यासाठी प्रयत्न केले गेले आहेत; परंतु निवडणुकांमध्ये पैशाचा होणारा वापर चिंताजनक असून ते भ्रष्टाचाराचे मूळ आहे.
- (iv) निवडणुकीत नोटाला अधिक मते मिळाल्यास करावयाच्या कार्यवाहीसंदर्भात आवश्यक त्या तरतुदी केल्या पाहिजेत. शक्य असल्यास याबाबत राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाने आदेश निर्गमित करावेत. अन्यथा राज्य शासनाने कायदा करण्यासाठी पुढाकार घ्यावा.
- (v) निवडणुकीनंतर गावात शांतता व सौहार्दपूर्ण वातावरण राखण्यासाठी प्रभावी प्रयत्न करण्याची आवश्यकता आहे.
- (vi) स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांसंदर्भात कर्नाटक व केरळ राज्यांमध्ये अधिक प्रभावीपणे काम सुरू आहे. त्याच्या अभ्यासासाठी राज्यातील विद्यापीठांच्या कुलगुरुंना व अभ्यासकांना या दोन राज्यांमध्ये पाठवायला हवे.
- (vii) स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांना अधिक सक्षम करण्यासाठी त्यांच्याकडे हस्तांतरित करावयाच्या विषयांसंदर्भात कालमर्यादित परिपूर्ण कार्यवाही झाली पाहिजे.

मा. मुख्य सचिव आणि मा. पोलीस महासंचालक यांनीदेखील या वेळी आपले मनोगत व्यक्त केले. श्री. शेखर चन्ने, सचिव, राज्य निवडणूक आयोग यांनी मान्यवरांचे आणि उपस्थितांचे आभार मानल्यानंतर परिषदेची सांगता झाली.

राजकीय पक्षांची कार्यशाळा

राजकीय पक्षांद्वारे सशक्त लोकशाही

दिनांक : ७ मे २०१८

स्थळ

पाटकर सभागृह, एसएनटीडी महिला विद्यापीठ, चर्चगेट, मुंबई

पार्श्वभूमी

राज्य निवडणूक आयोगातर्फे राज्य घटनेतील ७३ व ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीच्या रौप्य महोत्सवानिमित्त येथील एसएनडीटी महिला विद्यापीठाच्या पाटकर सभागृहात ७ मे २०१८ रोजी राजकीय पक्षांची कार्यशाळा आयोजित करण्यात आली होती. 'राजकीय पक्षांद्वारे सशक्त लोकशाही' हा कार्यशाळेचा विषय होता.

राज्य निवडणूक आयुक्त ज. स. सहारिया यांच्या प्रमुख उपस्थितीत उद्घाटन सत्र झाले. त्यांनी राज्य निवडणूक आयोगासंदर्भात सादरीकरण केले. आयोगाचे सचिव शेखर चन्ने यावेळी उपस्थित होते. ज्येष्ठ विचारवंत डॉ. सुहास पळशीकर यांनी 'राजकीय पक्ष: प्रतिमा आणि अपेक्षा' या विषयावर मांडणी केली. सामाजिक कार्यकर्ते विश्वंभर चौधरी यांनी 'राजकीय पक्षांकडून अपेक्षा' याबाबत विचार व्यक्त केले. पुणे येथील गोखले राज्यशास्त्र व अर्थशास्त्र संस्थेच्या प्रा. मानसी फडके यांनी 'महाराष्ट्रातील स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुका' या विषयावर सादरीकरण केले. उद्घाटन सत्रानंतर खुले चर्चासत्रही झाले.

कार्यशाळेत राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाच्या 'निवडणूक वार्ता'चेही विविध मान्यवरांच्या हस्ते प्रकाशन करण्यात आले. राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाकडील नोंदणीकृत सर्व पक्षांच्या प्रतिनिधींना कार्यशाळेसाठी आमंत्रित केले होते. राष्ट्रीय समाज पक्षाचे अध्यक्ष व मंत्री महादेव जानकरदेखील कार्यशाळेस उपस्थित होते.

श्री. शेखर चन्ने,

सचिव, राज्य निवडणूक आयोग

श्री. शेखर चन्ने यांनी उपस्थितांचे स्वागत केले व कार्यशाळेच्या आयोजनाची भूमिका विशद केली. त्यातील ठळक मुद्दे असे:

- निर्भय, मुक्त व पारदर्शक वातावरणात निवडणुका घेण्यात राजकीय पक्षांची भूमिका अत्यंत मोलाची असते. त्यादृष्टीने संवाद साधण्यासाठी या कार्यशाळेचे आयोजन केले आहे.
- लोकशाही सुदृढ करण्यासाठी राजकीय पक्षांनी चांगले उमेदवार उभे करणे अपेक्षित आहे.
- निवडणुकांत आर्थिक बळाचा दुरुपयोग टाळणे, गुंड प्रवृत्तींना लांब ठेवणे, मतदारांवर विपरित प्रभाव टाकणारी कृत्ये टाळणे, आचारसंहितेचे पालन करणे, पक्षांतर्गत लोकशाही असणे आदी मुद्द्यांवर या कार्यशाळेत चर्चा अपेक्षित आहे.

श्री. जे. एस. सहारिया,

राज्य निवडणूक आयुक्त, महाराष्ट्र

श्री. सहारिया यांनी ७३ व ७४ वी घटना दुरुस्तीची वैशिष्ट्ये, निवडणुकांसंदर्भातील चिंतेचे मुद्दे, अपेक्षित निवडणूक सुधारणा इत्यादी विषयांचा परामर्श घेतला. याबाबत व्यापक विचारमंथनाची आवश्यकता असल्याचे ते म्हणाले. त्यांच्या सादरीकरणातील ठळक मुद्दे असे:

- सन १९९२ मधील ऐतिहासिक ७३ व ७४ व्या घटना दुरुस्तीमुळे स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांना संविधानिक दर्जा.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांमध्ये महिला, अनुसूचित जाती-जमाती व इतर मागासवर्गीयांसाठी आरक्षण.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांसाठी सन १९९४ मध्ये राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाची स्थापना.
- राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाच्या स्थापनेपूर्वी स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांची जबाबदारी ग्रामविकास व नगरविकास विभागावर होती.
- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांद्वारे दर पाच वर्षांनी सुमारे २.५० लाख लोकप्रतिनिधींची निवड.
- राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाचा दर्जा, अधिकार व शक्ती भारत निवडणूक आयोगाप्रमाणेच.
- राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाचे निर्देश पाळणे शासनावर बंधनकारक.
- राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाच्या आदेशांचे पालन न करणाऱ्या २२० राजकीय पक्षांची नोंदणी रद्द.
- नामनिर्देशनपत्रे व शपथपत्रे संकेतस्थळाद्वारे भरण्याची सुविधा.
- उमेदवारांच्या गुन्हेगारी पार्श्वभूमीची व वित्तीय तपशिलांची मतदान केंद्रांबाहेर ठळक प्रसिद्धी.
- मतदार जागृती मोहिमेमुळे मतदार नोंदणीत लक्षणीय वाढ (सन २०१६- १२ लाख व २०१७- २१ लाख).
- मतदानाची टक्केवारीत मोठी वाढ (महानगरपालिका : सन २०१२- ४८.५९ व २०१७- ५६.४०).
- नगरपरिषदा/ नगरपंचायती: सन २०१२- ६५.१६ व २०१७- ७०.०० आणि जिल्हा परिषदा: सन २०१२- ६७.८१ आणि २०१७- ६९.०२.)
- आर्थिक बळाचा गैरवापर, गुन्हेगारी पार्श्वभूमीचे उमेदवार, मतदारांना प्रलोभने व आमिष देण्याची प्रवृत्ती, पक्षांतर्गत लोकशाहीबाबत प्रश्नचिन्ह आदी मुद्दे चिंतेचे ठरत आहेत.
- मा. सर्वोच्च न्यायालयाच्या निकालानुसार शपथपत्रांमध्ये उत्पन्नाचा स्रोत नमूद करणे आवश्यक.
- उमेदवारांच्या अर्हतेसंदर्भातील पात्रता, अटी व निकष व्यापक करण्याची आवश्यकता.
- नोटाला सर्वाधिक मते मिळाल्यास नव्याने निवडणुका घेण्याची गरज.
- राजकीय पक्षांसाठी खर्च मर्यादा निश्चित करण्याची आवश्यकता.
- पाच वर्षांमध्ये एकही उमेदवार उभा न करणाऱ्या राजकीय पक्षाबाबत गांभीर्याने विचार करण्याची आवश्यकता.
- राजकीय पक्षांनी स्वच्छ प्रतिमा व समाजिक बांधिलकी असलेले उमेदवार उभे करणे आवश्यक.
- मतदारांना प्रलोभने व आमिष देणे टाळून आदर्श आचारसंहितेचे कटाक्षाने पालन करणे आवश्यक.

डॉ. विश्वंभर चौधरी

डॉ. विश्वंभर चौधरी यांनी 'राजकीय पक्षांकडून अपेक्षा' या विषयावर आपली मते मांडली. निवडणूक यंत्रणेबाबतही त्यांनी काही अपेक्षा व्यक्त केल्या. त्यांच्या मांडणीतील ठळक मुद्दे असे:

- राज्य निवडणूक आयोग स्वायत्त आहे; पण स्वतंत्र नाही. निरपेक्ष निवडणूका आणि सरकारी पक्षाचा हस्तक्षेप टाळण्यासाठी स्वायत्ततेबरोबरच निवडणूक आयोग स्वतंत्रदेखील असणे आवश्यक आहे.
- 'भारतीय प्रशासकीय सेवा' व 'भारतीय पोलीस सेवा'च्या धर्तीवर 'इंडियन इलेक्शन सर्व्हिसेस' (खएड) असावी. या अधिकाऱ्यांचा शासनाच्या आस्थापनेशी संबंध नसावा.
- मतदार याद्यांचे अद्ययावतीकरण करण्याची प्रक्रिया निरंतर असावी. मतदार याद्या तयार करणारी यंत्रणा अधिक सक्षम करावी. याबाबत नागरिकांतही जबाबदारीची भावना निर्माण व्हायला हवी.
- निवडणूक जाहीरनाम्यातील अश्वसनांची पूर्ती होत नाही. त्यासाठी ग्राहक संरक्षणप्रमाणे 'मतदार (मालक) संरक्षण कायदा'ची गरज आहे.
- प्रलोभनांचा प्रश्न गंभीर आहे. लोकांच्या पैशातून नको ती आश्वासनेही दिली जातात. राजकीय पक्ष कमी पडत असल्यामुळे एकूणच लोकशाहीचे वैयक्तिकीकरण झाले आहे.
- नोटाला सर्वाधिक मते मिळाल्यास नव्याने निवडणूक घेण्यात यावी. फेरनिवडणुकीत सर्व जुने उमेदवार अपात्र ठरवावेत.
- इलेक्ट्रॉनिक मतदान यंत्रांमुळे उमेदवारांना मतदान केंद्रनिहाय मिळालेली मते जाहीर केली जातात. परिणामी मतदानाची गोपनीयता राहत नाही. याचा त्रास अल्पसंख्याक घटकांना सोसावा लागतो. त्यासाठी टोटलाईझरचा वापर करून उमेदवारांना मिळालेली मते मतदान केंद्रनिहायऐवजी एकत्रितरीत्या जाहीर करावीत.
- निवडणुका निर्भय, मुक्त व पारदर्शक असाव्यात आणि त्या तशा दिसाव्यातही. म्हणून मतदान यंत्रांबाबत शंका असल्यास त्यांचे निश्चितच निरसन केले पाहिजे.
- फ्लेक्समुळे शहरांचे व गावांचे विद्रुपीकरण होत आहे. विकासाऐवजी फ्लेक्समधूनच नेतृत्व येऊ लागले आहे, हे गंभीर आहे. राजकीय पक्षांनीच यावर मार्ग काढावा.
- राजकीय पक्षांना मिळणाऱ्या देणग्यांबाबत पारदर्शकता असावी. देणग्यांमुळे हितसंबंधांचा (काँफ्लिक्ट ऑफ इंटरेस्ट) प्रश्न निर्माण होतो. आयोगाने देणग्यांची किमान यादृच्छिक (रँडम) पद्धतीने तपासणी करावी.
- राजकीय पक्षांनी स्वतःहून माहिती अधिकाराखाली यायला हवे. ध्येय, धोरणांचा समावेश नसला तरी किमान त्यांचे आर्थिक व्यवहार माहिती अधिकारात असावेत.
- राजकीय पक्षांनी आपला जमा- खर्च संकेतस्थळावर स्वतःहून टाकावा. यातून पक्षांमध्ये पारदर्शकतेची स्पर्धा निर्माण होऊ शकते.
- जनता सक्षम होण्याऐवजी राजकीय पक्ष सक्षम होत आहेत. वास्तविक राजकीय पक्ष लोकांचे वाहक आहेत. लोक सक्षम झाले पाहिजेत.
- लिलावाद्वारे सरपंच निश्चित करून निवडणूक टाळण्याचा प्रकार गंभीर आहे. हा लोकशाहीच्या मूळ तत्वांवरच घाला आहे.
- निवडणूक काळात आचारसंहिता असतेच; पण ऐरवीदेखील कायमस्वरूपी किमान आचारसंहिता असावी. फक्त ही

आचारसंहिता अभिव्यक्ती स्वातंत्र्याच्या आड येऊ नये.

- एखादा पक्ष सार्वजनिक प्रश्नांवर काम करत असल्यास निवडणूक लढविली नाही, म्हणून त्याची नोंदणी रद्द होऊ नये. निवडणूक न लढण्याचा हक्कही मान्य केला पाहिजे.
- पक्षांतर्गत लोकशाही हा केवळ देखावा आहे. पक्षांतर्गत लोकशाहीला असलेला धोका मूळ लोकशाहीवरच घाला घालू शकतो.
- निवृत्तीपूर्वी काही अधिकारी एखाद्या राजकीय पक्षाचे हितसंबंध जोपासतात. निवृत्तीनंतर ते लगेचच संबंधित पक्षात प्रवेश करतात; थेट निवडणुकाही लढवितात. निवृत्तीनंतर यात किमान दोन- तीन वर्षे खंड असावा.

डॉ. सुहास पळशीकर

डॉ. सुहास पळशीकर यांनी 'राजकीय पक्ष : प्रतिमा आणि अपेक्षा' या विषयावर अत्यंत अभ्यासपूर्वक व चिंतनशील विवेचन केले. त्यांच्या मांडणीतील ठळक मुद्दे असे:

- राजकीय पक्ष म्हणजे सत्ता मिळविण्यासाठी आणि टिकविण्यासाठी खुल्या स्पर्धेद्वारे प्रयत्न करणारे गट होय.
- लोकांना संघटित करून आपल्या बाजूला वळवणे हा राजकीय पक्षांच्या कामाचा गाभा आहे.
- लोकांना आपल्याकडे वळविण्यासाठी कार्यक्रम, धोरणे, विचारप्रणाली, घोषणा, प्रतीके, भावनिक आव्हाने, नेतृत्व, लोकसेवा इत्यादींची राजकीय पक्षांना गरज असते.
- कोणत्याही समाजात मतभेद, गट आणि बहुविध हितसंबंध अपरिहार्य असतात.
- लोकशाहीच्या खुल्या स्पर्धेत आणि निवडणुकांमध्ये राजकीय पक्ष मध्यवर्ती असतात.
- स्वातंत्र्यपूर्व काळात विविध चळवळी, सुधारणा, वाटाघाटी, मर्यादित निवडणुका इत्यादींमधून राजकीय पक्षांची निर्मिती.
- स्वातंत्र्यानंतर संविधानाने प्रदान केलेल्या संघटना स्वातंत्र्याच्या बळावर व मताधिकारावर आधारित खुल्या निवडणूक पद्धतीमुळे राजकीय पक्षांना मोठा वाव.
- देशाचे नियंत्रण राजकीय पक्ष करतात; पण राजकीय पक्षांचे नियंत्रण कोण करतं? हा व्यवस्थेतील विरोधाभास आहे.
- आपणच आपले नियंत्रण करण्याचे भान न ठेवल्यास व्यवस्था कोलमळते. तसे झाल्यास लोक विरोधात जातात.
- एका अभ्यासाच्या निष्कर्षानुसार सन २००५ मध्ये राजकीय पक्षांवर ३६ टक्के नागरिकांना विश्वास होता. सन २०१३ मध्ये फारसा फरक जाणवला नाही. कारण ३७ टक्के लोकांनीच विश्वास दर्शविला.
- राजकीय पक्षांवर विश्वास दर्शविण्याचे प्रमाण सन २००५ मध्ये ४९; तर सन २०१३ मध्ये ४६ टक्के आढळून आले.
- साधारणतः पोलीस किंवा अधिकाऱ्यांविषयी अविश्वासाचे प्रमाण जास्त असते; परंतु राजकीय पक्षांवर अविश्वास असणे म्हणजे लोकांचे नेतृत्व करणाऱ्यांवरच लोकांचा विश्वास नसणे, हे गंभीर आहे.
- जागतिक विचार केल्यास तुलनेने भारतात लोकांचा राजकीय पक्षांवर जास्त विश्वास आहे, हे आपल्या राजकीय पक्षांचे श्रेय मानावे लागेल.
- राजकीय पक्ष आवश्यक आहेत; पण पक्षांचा व्यवहार लोकशाही पद्धतीचा असतोच, असे नाही. पक्ष सतत लोकांमध्ये

असतात. तरीही पक्षांवर ठराविक लोकांचेच वर्चस्व असते. तरीही अनेक समूह प्रतिनिधित्वाविना राहतात.

- लोक राजकीय पक्षांवर विश्वास ठेवत नाहीत; पण आपल्या कामांसाठी पक्षांकडेच जातात. यावरच आपल्या देशाचे राजकारण चालते.
- राजकीय पक्ष स्थापन करणे अतिशय सोपे आहे; पण टिकविणे कठीण असते. चालविणे त्याहून अवघड आहे.
- कार्यकर्ते, सभासद, निधी आदींचा कोणीही विचार करत नाही; पण पक्ष चालविताना हे लागते. काही पक्ष पदार्पणातच जोरदार यश संपादन करतात; पण नंतर फारसे यशस्वी होताना दिसत नाही.
- राजकीय पक्षांची बराच काळ छोटा पक्ष म्हणून राहण्याची तयारी असावी लागते. सत्ता आणि पदांचे उद्दिष्ट नैसर्गिक आहे; परंतु वाट पाहण्यास कोण तयार असते? अधीर नेते आणि कार्यकर्ते ही अडचण आहे.
- लोकसभेच्या सन २००९ मधील निवडणुकीत ४६५; तर सन २०१४ मधील निवडणुकीत ३६३ पक्षांनी आपले उमेदवार उभे केले होते. त्यापैकी या दोन्ही निवडणुकांमध्ये केवळ ३६ पक्ष लोकसभेत दिसले. त्यातही दोन्ही निवडणुकांत २० पक्षांचे केवळ ३ किंवा त्यापेक्षा कमी सदस्य होते.
- महाराष्ट्र विधानसभेच्या सन २००९ मधील निवडणुकीत २७३; तर सन २०१४ मधील निवडणुकीत २०२ पक्षांनी आपले उमेदवार उभे केले होते. त्यापैकी सन २००९ मध्ये १४; तर सन २०१४ मध्ये १२ पक्ष विधानसभेत दिसले. त्यातही सन २००९ च्या निवडणुकीत ७ आणि सन २०१४ च्या निवडणुकीत ८ पक्षांचे केवळ ३ किंवा त्यापेक्षा कमी सदस्य होते.
- छोट्या पक्षांसमोर टिकून राहण्याचे मोठे आव्हान आहे. कार्यकर्ते मिळविणे, टिकविणे आणि त्यांचा उत्साह वाढविणे महत्वाचे असते.
- राजकीय पक्षांना वर्गणी, देणग्या, निवडणुका या खर्चिक बाबीही पेलाव्या लागतात. परिणामी छोट्या पक्षांचा राजकीय यशाचा आलेख कमी असतो.
- पक्षाची संघटनबांधणी करण्यासाठी स्थानिक स्तरावरील यंत्रणा, संलग्न संघटनांचे जाळे, पक्षांतर्गत लोकशाही आणि सर्व कार्यकर्त्यांच्या अपेक्षांच्या संतुलनासाठी सजग राहावे लागते.
- पक्षाला जनमताचा पाठिंबा मिळवून देतो, अशी कंत्राटे घेणारे लोक तयार झाले आहेत; पण ते लोक निव्वळ थापा मारतात.
- लोकांचा पाठिंबा मिळविण्यासाठी राजकीय मानसशास्त्रात अनेक क्लृप्त्या असल्या तरी हे शास्त्र अवघड आणि अदृश्य आहे.
- सर्वात महत्वाचा मार्ग म्हणजे प्रसारमाध्यमांच्या माध्यमातून सतत लोकांच्या डोळ्यासमोर राहावे लागते; परंतु प्रसारमाध्यमातील जाहिरातींवर किंवा एकाच नेत्याच्या आधारे पक्ष चालविण्याचा प्रयत्न चिरंतन यश देत नाही.
- पाठिंबा मिळविण्यासाठी एका सामाजिक गटाच्या हिताचा पाठपुरावा करणे, मोठ्या सामाजिक आघाड्या उभारणे आणि लागेबांध्यांचे जाळे विणणे हेदेखील मार्ग अवलंबविले जातात.
- भावनिक आव्हानांद्वारे यश संपादन करण्याचा कल अलीकडे जगभर दिसतो आहे. त्याबाबत अमेरिका, रशिया आणि तुर्कस्तानातील निवडणुकांत ही प्रारूपे विकसित होताना दिसली; पण ही प्रारूपे फार काळ टिकत नाहीत.
- जगभरातील राजकीय पक्षांपुढे अधिमान्यता आणि विश्वासाहतेसंदर्भात मोठा पेचप्रसंग उभा ठाकला आहे. जगभर पक्षांची सभासद संख्या कमी-कमी होत आहे. कारण संशयाचे वातावरण आहे.

- लोकप्रियता मिळते; पण लोकांचा विश्वास मिळत नाही, अशा अवस्थेत राहायचे की विश्वास संपादन करायचा? हा महत्वाचा प्रश्न आहे.
- सत्ता संपादन करणे हे राजकीय पक्षाच्या जीविताचे उद्दिष्ट्य आहे; परंतु लोकप्रियतेच्या आधारे लोकपरमार्थ साधत लोकशाही भक्कम करायची की, केवळ निवडणुका जिंकून फक्त कार्यकर्त्यांची सोय लावण्यावर समाधान मानायचे, हा चिंतनाचा मुद्दा आहे.
- स्वार्थ आणि परमार्थाचा विचार करताना राजकारण हा पेशा आहे का? तो व्यवसाय आहे का? नसेल तर स्वतःचे व्यवसाय सांभाळून राजकारण कसे करायचे? याकडे गांभीर्याने पाहण्याची आवश्यकता आहे.
- स्वतःचे व्यवसाय किंवा हितसंबंध राजकीय कामांच्या आणि भूमिकांच्या आड येणार नाहीत, याची काळजी घेणे महत्वाचे आहे.
- राजकीय पक्षांच्या देणगीदारांच्या अपेक्षांचा आणि लोकहित साधण्याचा समतोल महत्वाचा ठरतो. त्यासाठी हितसंबंधांचा संघर्ष (काँफ्लिक्ट ऑफ इंटरेस्ट) टाळायला हवा. म्हणूनच राजकीय पक्षांनी स्वतःहून किमान बंधनांचा स्वीकार केला पाहिजे. अन्यथा मतदारांची नाराजी वाढत जाईल.
- भारतीय लोकशाहीच्या यशात राजकीय पक्षांचा मोठा वाटा आहे. मात्र लोकशाहीच्या विस्तारासाठी आणि तिची आशयघनता वाढविण्याची मोठी जबाबदारी राजकीय पक्षांवर आहे.
- लोकांच्या मनात राजकीय पक्षांविषयी तुच्छताभाव वाढू द्यायचा? की; आदरभाव वाढवायचा? हा विश्वासाहतेचा प्रश्न राजकीय पक्षांच्याच हातात आहे.
- राजकीय क्षेत्रात सगळे लबाड किंवा वाईट नसतात; परंतु वाईट प्रवृत्तींनी चांगल्या प्रवृत्तींना हद्दपार केल्यास लोकशाही अडचणीत येऊ शकते.

प्रा. मानसी फडके

पुणे येथील गोखले राज्यशास्त्र व अर्थशास्त्र संस्थेने महाराष्ट्रातील स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांच्या विविध आयामांबाबत प्रथमच संशोधन केले आहे; तसेच असोसिएशन फॉर डेमोक्रेटिक रिफॉर्मस या स्वयंमसेवी संस्थेने स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांतील उमेदवारांच्या आर्थिक आणि गुन्हेगारी पार्श्वभूमीसंदर्भात पहिल्यांदा विश्लेषण केले आहे. त्याचे सारांश स्वरूपात प्रा. फडके यांनी सादरीकर केले. ते असे:

- राज्यातील महानगरपालिका निवडणुकीतील साधारणतः ९ टक्के उमेदवारांविरोद्ध गंभीर स्वरूपाचे गुन्हे.
- बृहन्मुंबई आणि नाशिक महानगरपालिका निवडणुकीत सर्वाधिक प्रत्येकी २९ टक्के उमेदवार करोडपती.
- बहुतांश उमेदवार राजकीयदृष्ट्या सक्रिय कुटुंबातील व उमेदवारी देताना गुणवत्तेपेक्षा राजकीय पार्श्वभूमीच्या निकषाला प्राधान्य.
- नगरविकासाची दूरदृष्टी असणारे उमेदवार राजकारणाच्या गुन्हेगारीकरणामुळे राजकीय व्यवस्थेपासून लांब.
- श्रीमंत उमेदवार पैशाच्या जोरावर निवडणुका जिंकतात. खर्च मर्यादेपेक्षा कमीत कमी चौपट जास्तीचा खर्च करतात.
- उमेदवार माझे प्रश्न सोडण्यासाठी उपलब्ध असावा, अशा मतदारांच्या सर्वसाधारण अपेक्षा.

- उमेदवार सुशिक्षित असावा, प्रभागस्तरीय मुद्दे स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थेच्या बैठकीत उपस्थित करण्यासाठी तो सक्षम असावा.

खुले चर्चासत्र

उद्घाटन सत्रानंतर खुले चर्चासत्र झाले. यात श्री. चन्ने यांनी खुल्या चर्चासत्रात राजकीय पक्षांच्या प्रतिनिधींच्या प्रश्नांचे व शंकांचे निरसन केले. आरएससीडीचे संचालक भीम रासकर, राजकीय अभ्यासक डॉ. मृदुल निळे, डॉ. ए. एन. सिद्धेवाड, डॉ. सुनंदा तिडके, सीएलजीएफच्या अनुया कुवर आदीदेखील खुल्या चर्चासत्रात सहभागी झाले होते. या चर्चासत्रात काही सूचनाही आल्या त्या अशा:

- इलेक्ट्रॉनिक मतदान यंत्राऐवजी ई-वोटिंग असावे. कुठूनही मतदान करता यावे. मतदानाचा एकच दिवस नसावा. मतदानाचे १५ दिवस असावेत.
- प्रसारमाध्यमांनी सर्व पक्षांना समान वागणूक द्यावी, यासाठी उपाययोजना कराव्यात.

केवळ राजकीय पक्षांच्या उमेदवारांनाच निवडणूक लढण्याची संधी असावी. अपक्षांमुळे घोडेबाजाराला वाव मिळतो.

- नोंदणीकृत पक्षांना सर्व निवडणुकांमध्ये समान चिन्हे मिळावित.
- आधार कार्डशिवाय मतदार यादीत नाव नोंदविले जाऊ नये आणि मतदार यादीत नोंदविलेल्या नावाला आधारकार्ड जोडायला हवे.
- नामनिर्देनपत्रे मागे घेण्याची सुविधा नसावी. त्यामुळे भ्रष्टाचाराला संधी मिळते.
- लहान पक्षांना सीएसआरच्या धर्तीवर निधी मिळावा.
- सर्व पक्षांनी एकाच ठिकाणी येऊन प्रचार करावा. त्यासाठी आयोगाने बैठक किंवा सभा आयोजित करण्यासाठी पुढाकार घ्यावा.
- नामनिर्देशनपत्र भरताना उमेदवारासोबत त्याच्या जवळच्या २५ जणांची माहिती घ्यावी व निवडणुकीचे सर्व व्यवहार त्यांच्यामार्फतच व्हावेत.
- आरक्षित जागेवरून निवडणूक लढविण्यासाठी लागणाऱ्या जातवैधता प्रमाणपत्राबाबत कायमस्वरूपी एकच धोरण असावे.

कार्यशाळेचा सारांश

डॉ. मृदुल निळे यांनी सामारोपप्रसंगी कार्यशाळेतील विचारमंथनाचा सारांश मांडला. तो असा:

- राजकीय स्वरूपाचे गुन्हे व इतर गुन्हे यातला फरक लक्षात घेतला पाहिजे.
- राजकीय पक्षांकडून मतदारांना देण्यात येणारी प्रलोभने आणि आमिष; तसेच आर्थिक बळाचा दुरुपयोग टाळण्यासाठी सक्षम कायदा आवश्यक आहे.
- पक्षांतर्गत लोकशाही सुदृढ करण्यासाठी निवडणूक आयोगाने पुढाकार घ्यावा.
- नोटाला सर्वाधिक मते मिळाल्यास निवडणुका रद्द करून फेर मतदान घ्यावे व आधीचे उमेदवार अपात्र ठरवावेत.

- लहान पक्षांनाही वाव मिळावा, यासाठी एकत्रित प्रचार करण्याच्या सुविधेबाबत निवडणूक आयोगाने पुढाकार घ्यावा.
 - स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांसंदर्भातील कायद्यांत सुसूत्रता आणणे आवश्यक आहे.
- डॉ. मृदुल निळे यांनी सूत्रसंचालन केले. आयोगाचे जनसंपर्क अधिकारी जगदीश मोरे यांनी आभार मानले.

राजकीय पक्षांच्या विभागीय कार्यशाळा

मुंबई येथे ७ मे २०१८ रोजी राजकीय पक्षांची राज्यस्तरीय कार्यशाळा आयोजित करण्यात आली होती. 'स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या मुक्त, निर्भय व पारदर्शक निवडणुका आणि राजकीय पक्ष' या विषयावर या कार्यशाळेत विचारमंथन झाले. त्याच धर्तीवर अमरावती, नाशिक व पुणे येथे विभागीय कार्यशाळा आयोजित करण्यात आल्या होत्या. या विभागीय कार्यशाळेत विविध राजकीय पक्षांचे प्रतिनिधी, निवडणुकीशी संबंधित अधिकारी/ कर्मचारी आणि राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाचे प्रतिनिधी सहभागी झाले होते.

कार्यशाळेचे ठिकाण	दिनांक
अमरावती	१ सप्टेंबर २०१८
राहुरी	१ सप्टेंबर २०१८
पुणे	२९ सप्टेंबर २०१८

Workshop of Experts

“Better Elections for Healthier Democracy”

Initiative by

**Institute of Democracy & Elections for Good Governance
(a wing of State Election Commission, Maharashtra)**

and hosted by

Department of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai

Venue

Virtual Classroom, Pherozshah Mehta Bhavan

On 6 July 2018

Workshop of Experts

Background

6th July, 2018

1. Enthused by the results of the National and Regional Conferences held from November, 2017 to January-2018 a Workshop of experts on the subject “Better Elections for Healthier Democracy” was organized by SECM through the University of Mumbai, on 6th July 2018 at Mumbai. The objective of the workshop to the find out various vacuous areas and take remedial measures so that elections could be made better leading Healthier Democracy.
2. Workshop focused on the following 5 main themes:
 - i) Ownership of Elections by Public / Civil Society Organisations
 - ii) Inclusiveness of Multifaceted Society of India
(Poor, Downtrodden, Women, Disabled, etc.)
 - iii) Use of Social Media, Fake News during Elections
 - iv) How to develop the “Institute of Democracy and Elections for Good Governance” established by State Election Commission, Maharashtra
 - v) Strategies for Combatting Misuse of Money and Muscle Power During Elections
3. Structure of the Workshop was as follows: (09.00 -18.00)
 - i) Inauguration
 - ii) Introduction of the 5 themes by one expert each
 - iii) Formation of groups and discussions on 5 themes
 - iv) Presentation of recommendations by the 5 groups
 - v) Guidance by 6 Experts
 - vi) Valedictory function

Inaugural Session

Host - Smt. Anuya Kuwar

Project Coordinator, Asia Region, Commonwealth Local Government Forum

Panel

- ❖ Shri. J.S. Saharia, Commissioner, State Election Commission, Maharashtra
- ❖ Shri. Shekhar Channe, Secretary, State Election Commission, Maharashtra
- ❖ Dr. R.D. Kulkarni, Pro Vice Chancellor, University of Mumbai

❖ Dr. Sudha Mohan, Head of Department, Department of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai

Shri. J.S. Saharia

Commissioner, State Election Commission, Maharashtra

Hon'ble State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra, after welcoming the various experts gave the brief background behind organising this Workshop through a power point presentation. He mentioned that, though State Election Commission, Maharashtra (hereinafter as SECM) has taken several major initiatives in the last 4 years, challenges before the elections to Local Self-Governments (LSGs) continue to be large and demanding. The present Workshop has been organised with a view to discuss the various challenges and find out the possible way ahead. He thereafter mentioned the following points:

- Following major challenges are faced while conducting elections to LSGs:
 - i) LSGs Elections being voluminous are more intimate, complex and fiercely contested
 - ii) Higher authorised expenditure by candidates in aggregate than Parliament and Assembly
 - iii) Supposedly higher misuse of money, social media and fake news etc.
 - iv) Little knowledge and research about the dynamics of the elections
 - v) Democracy not owned by Public and not inclusive etc.
- Hon'ble State Election Commissioner thereafter drew his attention to the following judgements of the Hon'ble Supreme Court:
 - i) Mohinder Singh Gill and Anr. Vs. The Chief Election Commissioner, New Delhi dated 2nd December 1977.
 - ii) Lok Prahari Vs. Union of India in W.P.No. 784 of 2015 dated 16th February 2018
“Unfortunately, in our country, neither the Parliament nor the Election Commission of India paid any attention to these problems etc..... (undue accretion of assets of legislators and their associates)”.
- Following major activities have been undertaken by SECM through the newly established “Institute of Democracy and Elections for Good Governance”.
 - i) Partnership with Universities for 1st year University Students
 - Revised Admission form – undertaking to enrol as voter on attaining the age of 18 years
 - Introduced Compulsory module on “Democracy, Election and Good Governance”
 - ii) Undertook Research Projects through Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune and University of Mumbai, etc. on various subjects like:
 - Electoral and Functional Dynamics of ZP and PS
 - Voter Perception in Municipal Councils
 - Use of Technology in electoral campaigning etc.
 - iii) National / Regional Conferences on -
 - “25 Years of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments – Progress so far and future challenges”
 - iv) Celebrated “Democracy Fortnight” from 26th January to 9th February 2018 from State to Gram Panchayat level
 - v) Conducted Workshops on “Role of Political Parties for healthy democracy” of all the registered Political Parties on 7th May 2018
- SECM proposes to undertake the following projects in future:
 - i) International Conference of Election Commissioners / Authorities (Responsible for conducting elections to Local Self Government) in October 2018
 - ii) Develop a Democracy Index

- iii) Issue orders in vacuous areas using plenary powers
- iv) Draft a new Act for the local body elections on the lines of RP Act
- After giving the above presentation, Hon'ble State Election Commissioner requested the experts present to give their views on the challenges facing the elections and democracy at the grass root level with a special focus to the following points:
 - i) Ownership of Elections by Public / Civil Society Organisation
 - ii) Inclusiveness of Multifaceted Society of India (Poor, Downtrodden, Women, Disabled etc.)
 - iii) Use of Social Media, Fake news during elections
 - iv) How to develop the " Institute of Democracy and Elections for Good Governance"
 - v) Strategies for combatting misuse of money, muscle power in elections

Dr. R.D. Kulkarni,

Pro Vice Chancellor, University of Mumbai

1. Reiterated his support and co-operation of all sorts within the jurisdiction of University of Mumbai
2. Assured that the course developed by State Election Commission will be taught in the first-year of Bachelor's Degree across all streams; implemented with effect from 18-19 Academic Year.

Dr. Sudha Mohan,

Head of Department, Department of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai

1. This workshop will bridge the existing gaps between the state and academia through cooperation, collaboration and coordination between different sectors and actors as well as by engaging meaningfully with institutes of governance.

Session I

Introduction and Paper Presentation on 5 Themes

Chair - Shri. S.M. Vijayanand, Rtd. Indian Administrative Service Officer

Panel

- ❖ *Dr. Rajas Parchure, Director, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune*
- ❖ *Shri. Bhim Raskar, Director, Resource and Support Centre for Development*
- ❖ *Shri. Balsing Rajput, Superintendent of Police, Cyber, Maharashtra*
- ❖ *Dr. Shri.Mrudul Nile, Associate Professor, University of Mumbai*
- ❖ *Dr. T.R. Raghunandan, Rtd. I.A.S. Officer*
- ❖ *Shri. Mahesh Zagade, Ex-Principal Secretary, General Administration Department, Government of Maharashtra*
- ❖ *Shri. Avinash Sanas, Deputy Commissioner, State Election Commission, Maharashtra*

Ownership of Elections by Public Civil Society Organisations

by Dr. Rajas Parchure, Director, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune

1. **Related Studies** – Conducted a study on voter turnout in Pune Municipal Corporation Elections. The phenomenon is a decline in voter turnout.
2. **Dimensions of voter turnout** – Two important aspects of the voter turnout are the size of the voter turnout and the composition of the voter turnout.
 - a. Due to bad size and composition of voter turnout what kind of representatives might get elected and will they translate the preferences of the citizens into policies and actions
3. **Voter Turnout** – National level elections have highest voter turnout followed by the federal level and local level.
 - a. In USA and Western Europe studies shows that the people who vote are typically older, are from wealthier community are more educated and are white.
 - b. Non Voters have a different profile than the profile of the people who vote thus raising the question of quality of representatives.
4. **Strategies to Increase Voter Turnout** – To consider compulsory voting as a measure.
 - a. Improving registration and close down the gap by use of AADHAR and mobile numbers.
 - b. Make people aware about the case of no vote the information will be shared with neighbours thus creating pressure to vote.
 - c. TV ads to be targeted at young audiences, door to door movement by volunteers prior to and on Election Day etc.
 - d. Inclusion of e-voting i.e. voting through internet or mobile phone.

Inclusiveness of Multifaceted Society of India (Poor, Downtrodden, Women, Disabled, etc.)

By Shri. Bhim Raskar, Director, Resource and Support Centre for Development

1. **Introduction** – Working with MahilaRajsattaAndolan for past 18 years. Without social support, reservation doesn't help women to come into power in governance thus inclusion is necessary.
2. **Primary Issues with Reservation** –
 - ❖ How to vote for free and fair elections without the support of husband and family members.
 - ❖ Issues like division of work i.e. women are not able to complete their term, character assassination, loss of connectivity, budget phobia etc.
3. **Exclusion** –
 - ❖ Recent instance of Mob lynching in Dhulia, which is against democracy.
 - ❖ Diversity is leading to exclusion of various groups in our country with respect to elections.
 - ❖ Fighting the creamy democracy which leads to exclusion of other groups in society and system.
4. **Excluded Groups** –
 - ❖ Unreached section consists of weaker, women, workers and weakest groups like Nomadic tribes, de notified tribes, Pavement dwellers, beggars etc.
 - ❖ Voteable and Reachable but non-registered groups consist of ST, SC, minority groups and physically challenged people.
5. **Issues related to voters** – Difficulty in getting a voter card.
6. **Strategies/ Recommendations** –
 - ❖ We need to reach out to the non-registered voters and register them.

- ❖ Implement policies like election appreciation policy, awards to consecutive voters so that voters are felicitated and thus motivate them to vote.
- ❖ Voters to be declared “anti-corrupt” by using stickers outside their doors, etc.
- ❖ Using good governance to enhance voters trust in democracy and elections.
- ❖ Multimedia campaigning can be used to change the mind-set of the voters.

Use of Social Media, Fake News during Elections

By Shri. Balsing Rajput, Superintendent of Police, Cyber, Maharashtra

1. Six challenges: Election Machinery, Fake News, Crimes Committed on Social Media, Social Media Awareness, Social Engineering, Social Transaction (Online Transaction and Expenditure)
2. There are Six Layers of the Internet: Real, Network, Information, Personas, People and Social.
3. The 6th Layer of Internet constitutes Social Media (SM). It includes personalities that may be real or only virtually existing. While, actions on SM have real life implications, there is hardly any attempt to understand this phenomenon.
4. There are three parts of the Web/Internet: Surface Web, Deep Web and Dark Web.
5. Most of SM and its identities are only limited to Surface Web and Deep Web. Whereas Dark Web has certain communities and a parallel setup of corporations (carryout dissemination and shaping of personas in the virtual world) and criminals – hidden groups manipulating most things on Internet.
6. There are about 18-19 types of SM, out of which 8-9 platforms are used most often. These latter platforms are often one-to-one encrypted, support formation of groups, user can edit, etc.
7. The role of SM has raised various questions that have led us to enquiry on aspects of data, keywords, information and facts.
8. Communication has become convenient in the virtual world, as large-scale mobilisation of people takes place, in the form of one-to-one and one-to-many.
9. Amongst other platforms, WhatsApp is the most highly used platform for information and fake news circulation. Its technical structure (end-to-end encryption) makes it difficult to control the fake news and information disseminated on this platform.
10. There are existing Troll Armies and Non-State Actors that perform organised syndicates to manipulate the psychology of the voter and information. There are terrorist organisations as well that use SM for the period of Elections. In addition, there are intelligence agencies from other adversary countries that use bots for spreading misinformation.
11. Psychological operations are carried out through groups; coordinated and syndicated misinformation campaigns; use of targeted ads, bots and Artificial Intelligence tools.
12. In the same, there is a crucial role of Big Data and Data Engagement during election period, while selling of data information – information based on communication -- excluding one-to-one -- is used.
13. Objectionable Acts: in Elections over SM, Trolling and Cyber Bullying are widely conducted acts, mainly to suppress the candidates and spread certain opinions. Defamation, naming and shaming happens, as image of the candidate is an important pillar during the elections.
14. The role of information warfare is crucial, and focus should be directed towards it, as countries such as the USA, China and Russia already have done. This is a tool used to control information and manipulation of the same – a phenomenon present today amongst Indian voters.
15. Similarly, Twitter accounts and YouTube news channels are used and wide scale information is spread, causing un-rest in society. Alongside this is the growing importance of Artificial Intelligence, increasing WhatsApp and Telegram Groups -- and their usage in the Indian Market.
16. A three-front strategy: 1. Declaration of parties and candidates; 2. Monitoring informatives and analytics

- of social media; 3. Expenditure and advertisement accounts.
17. Blocking the Fake News Content: as per Information Technology Act: Blocking and taking strict action against fake news content and content creators as well as disseminators under SECM's quasi-judicial powers. A portal should be setup to tackle the issue of Fake News; compiling fake news citizens received from different source on a common platform created by the SECM.
 18. Election Commission: Social Media Interaction/Engagement with the Voters along with Regulation and Monitoring of Social Media for Elections. While, there shall be disclosure of Social Media Accounts and Profiles + Platforms used by Parties and Candidates to the SEC as part of Form No.24. In addition, certification for paid and non-paid advertising on SM.
 19. Setting up of: Internet and Social Media Monitoring Unit; Online Transaction Monitoring; Cyber Security angle to Election Monitoring; Election-Cyber Security Campaign, particularly cyber hygiene; Digital Literacy – targeting of college going students for this purpose; Setting up a cell for SM monitoring
 20. Protection of Digital Assets of Commission: In Section 70 of the IT Act selected systems can be declared as protected systems – declaring the same as national critical information asset by the SECM

How to Develop “Institute of Democracy & Elections for Good Governance” Established by State Election Commission, Maharashtra

By Dr. Shri. Mrudul Nile, Associate Professor, University of Mumbai

- 1. Vision –** To create an academic and professional community to promote elections and democracy and this should percolate down to last man for empowerment of all sections of the society and participatory management at local level through increased participation in electoral process.
- 2. Form of Institute –** It should be autonomous and specialized agency to bring in those kind of changes which state, academia and local people would like to see in the society in future
- 3. Academic Programmes –** Will be run in collaboration with universities. Institute will endeavour to bridge the gap between Government and the governed.
- 4. Structure –** Three pillars Research, Training and Academia.
 1. Institute to build own resources.
 2. Institute should be some kind of depository of knowledge and for that data
 3. Management system is required.
 4. Should serve as an important training agency for electoral process for local
 5. Representatives and government officials also.
- 5. Affiliation and Courses –**
 - i. Institute should at least be affiliated to two universities
 - ii. PG degrees should be initiated in public policy and governance which is important in the view of policy decisions needed and
 - iii. Development programmes.
 - iv. Outreach programmes for representatives at district, block and Gram Panchayat level.
 - v. Working of all courses should be with university itself.
- 6. Work Distribution and Funds –**
 1. University will provide academic and infrastructure and SECM will provide guidance and finance.
 2. Make people aware of institution and research suggestion should be submitted to the government.
- 7. Summary –** Directions teachers and project coordinators.
 1. 1 coordinator for 1 district.

2. Research Fellows.
3. Field officers from government and University.

Strategies for Combating Misuse of Money, Muscle Power during Elections

By Dr. T.R. Raghunandan, Rtd. Indian Administration Service Officer

1. Satya, Ahinsa, Swaraj, Sarwodaya and Antyodaya:

There are 7 Inefficiencies in the Electoral Process: Inaccurate Voter List, Ineffective Monitoring of Campaign Expenses, Voter Intimidation and Bribing, Dilution of Secrecy of Ballot, Machine Unreliability, Weak Internal Management Processes and Distortion of Mandate by the First Past the Post system

i. Inaccurate Voter Lists:

Solutions:

- ❖ Proper Work Study on How Much Time Is Required To Do A Good Job,
- ❖ Deployment of Proper Staff,
- ❖ Use of Tech Such As Face Recognition Software to Identify And Simplify The Removal Of Duplicates,
- ❖ Online Application System to Be Made More Effective

ii. Ineffective Monitoring of Campaign Expenses

- ❖ Lots of effort in chasing pennies when the big ticket expenditures are not monitored.
- ❖ Has the effect of reducing visible campaign expenditure but cannot reduce bribing
- ❖ Innovative methods of voter intimidation – impounding of voter IDs and taking selfies, spreading rumours about VVPAT

Solutions:

- ❖ Strict deterrent action on parties, including warnings and disqualification of candidates
- ❖ More flying squads and staff on the ground on Election Day

iii. Dilution of Secrecy of the Ballot: Counting of votes, booth viz. enables winning parties to undertake reprisals on communities that have taken bribes but not voted for them.

iv. Totalisers: Use of Totalisers to lose the link between votes and booths. This weakens the incentive to bribe, as a bribe giver cannot have data to check whether bribe takers have (broadly) voted for them.

v. Weak Internal Management Process:

- ❖ Violation of orders relating to the conduct of polling agents and other facilitators on Election Day –
- ❖ Local police showing distinct bias to offer protection to sitting MLA and enabling him to drive into polling booth areas with police protection
- ❖ Police looking the other way when intimidation was being undertaken by political goondas
- ❖ Impersonation by counting agents on counting day
- ❖ Independents selling their counting agent privileges to mainstream political parties so that their supporters can enter the counting hall in larger numbers than permitted.

vi. First Past the Post System distorts the mandate:

- ❖ Constituency sizes vary dramatically, thus changing the value of each voter's vote, from constituency to constituency
- ❖ Small swings of the vote can dramatically change the result, which incentivizes bribing, intimidation and distortion of the voters list

Solution: We need to debate the merits and demerits of other systems of democratic representation

Additional Paper/PPT on “Strategies for Combating Misuse of Money, Muscle Power during Elections”

1. Avinash Sanas

- ❖ What is money power in election?- 'Need of money' due to inequity turns into money power. The abuse, misuse and negative effects of money creeps in the election campaigning.
- ❖ The nexus with muscle power, with criminals, with black money and with interest groups starts. This opens an array of evil effects, leading to vicious circle of need for money and then need to spend.
- ❖ The phrase "money buys speech" is true in election arena, and when candidates lack money to buy media time and space they are effectively silenced. Their inability to "speak freely" violates the most significant intentions of our nation's founders: that a sovereign citizenry elect its own leaders based on a free exchange of ideas.
- ❖ Future Plan and Strategy:
 - Bringing maximum Transparency as possible by (a) E-filing of accounts of Party and candidates made compulsory (b) Separate bank account for Campaign expense of the Political Party during election period (c) Funds received during campaign period by Political Parties and candidates need disclosure during election period (d) Limited Direct State funding of campaign expense of political parties, (media expense or Public rallies) to leverage transparency (e) Restraint on receipt of anonymous donations by parties and candidates during election period Effective implementations of rules, regulations and directions.
- ❖ Defining third-party campaigners and threshold for registration with ECI.
- ❖ Reporting obligations and expenditure limits for third-party campaigners. Prohibition on certain source.
- ❖ Use of technology to check the new methods and gather data.
- ❖ Formalizing and steering for new and strict regulations.
- ❖ Data should be made timely, reliable, accessible and intelligible.
- ❖ Timely information is key where civil society organizations get involved as watchdogs over political financing. Information available only months or years after the election of the end of the fiscal year makes the information less relevant for public discussion.

2. Mahesh Zagade

- ❖ Root causes: Use of Religion, Caste, sectarian feelings playing with subconscious.
- ❖ Re-unification of political sphere and economic sphere.
- ❖ Clear, mandatory, defined, time bound deliverables prior to voting.
- ❖ Mechanism to secure implementation of deliverables post-election.
- ❖ Segregation of roles assigned to Elected Representatives and accountability of bureaucracy.

SESSION II

POST-GROUP DISCUSSION

Chair – Shri. P.K. Dash, Ex-Director General, Election Commission of India

Panel

- ❖ Dr. Rajas Parchure, Director, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune
- ❖ Smt. Manasi Phadke, Project Consultant, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune

- ❖ *Dr. Ajit Ranade, Founder Member, Association for Democratic Reforms*
- ❖ *Shri. Balsing Rajput, S.P., Cyber Branch, Maharashtra*
- ❖ *Shri. Vishal Gaikwad, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune*
- ❖ *Shri. Avinash Sanas, Deputy Commissioner, State Election Commission, Maharashtra*

Ownership of Elections by Public/Civil Society Organisations

Dr. Rajas Parchure,

Director, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune

Recommendations:

- ❖ Paradoxical trend in India, where decline in voter turnout is not observed as compared to other democracies.
- ❖ Opposite trend of voter turnout observed in India. Gram Panchayat has the highest voter turnout, followed by state and national elections. Unlike other democracies where the hierarchy of turnout is exactly the other way round. In India, there is a big gap that exists between rural and urban voter turnouts; special steps are required to boost urban voter turnout.
- ❖ Large gap observed between Hindi belt (54 per cent) and South belt (68 per cent), with regard to voter turnout.
- ❖ Updating and cleaning of voter list by matching data with AADHAR Cards. Elimination of duplicate voters if any.
- ❖ Making voter registration process simpler by involving Housing societies, colleges and workplaces.
- ❖ Inclusion of voter registration and turnout as a parameter in all Government run incentive/awarding schemes, in rural areas.
- ❖ Election days to be weekends specifically, with the process stretching over two days.
- ❖ All local body elections, both urban and rural to be held on the same day; as far as possible.
- ❖ Messages/Reminders to be sent a day prior and on the day of election.
- ❖ Rapid process for development of e-Voting must start at the earliest.
- ❖ Media drives for voter awareness campaigns to be carried out, which resemble the campaigns of NRHM, NREGA.

Inclusiveness of Multifaceted Society of India (Poor, Downtrodden, Disabled etc.)

Manasi Phadke,

Project Consultant, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune

Recommendations:

➤ Women:

A. Observations:

- Exactly 50percent winners seem to be women. Women contest only on seats reserved for women, not on general seats.
- Percentage of women voters tends to be less compared to men.

- Women are proxy candidates for the dominant male politicians.
- Physical mobility hampers the political mobility/dynamics between bureaucracy and elected women representatives.
- Ad-hoc frequency of trainings including the induction training.

B. Suggestions:

- Could the SECM lay down rules regarding minimum participation of women/SC/ST within a political party consistent with the existing norms of democracy within the political party (Pakshantargat Lokshahi?)
- Induction training to be given to all elected representatives within one month of getting elected. Only after the successful completion of training, will the elected representatives be given the charge of the local body (Key role for Institute of Democracy, Elections and Good Governance).
- Training calendar to be issued by concerned department and SECM to facilitate.
- Need based and decentralized training.(budget and current affairs)

➤ **Affluent:**

A. Observations:

- It's the affluent across the entire creamy layer who seems to be the winners.
- Nexus between the candidates and contractors.

B. Suggestions:

- Random checking of the figures quoted in the affidavits.

1. Other issues:

A. Observations:

- Participation of STs/ Nomadic tribes/aboriginals – a challenge
- Direct election of Sarpanch – impact on inclusiveness; has it worsened inclusivity?

Use of Social Media, Fake News During Elections

Ajit Ranade,

Founder Member, Association for Democratic Reforms and Balsing Rajput, S.P., Cyber Branch, Maharashtra

Recommendations:

1. Introduction:

- i. WhatsApp Groups- Dr Ranade pointed out that there are statistics which show that dissemination of Fake News through these WhatsApp groups, one-to-one messaging, and out of these two types, the latter accounts for the larger chunk of the per cent.
- ii. There is a greater perspective that Fake News is carried out at the Group level rather than individual or one-on-one messaging. 90 per cent of the traffic is from person-to-person exchanges, and not exactly organised groups that are there; so it is like a viral phenomenon.

2. Supply Side and Demand Side:

- i. We have supplied side measures and we have demand side measures. So there are measures that the election authorities can specifically undertake we also have that can be taken up by

- individual people; we cannot ignore the role of people that become sceptical.
- ii. As we are pressurising that the Supply Side should be curbed: Political Parties, Politicians and Candidates. These people should be held accountable, which would in-turn affect the measures on the Demand Side of matters. So who are these people generally interested in Fake News?
3. **Suggestion 1:** Spreading of 'right' and 'good' information about and during Elections by influencing personalities; this may include the demand side i.e. Election Commission, Bureaucrats, Administration etc. against the flow of Fake News. We should be force multipliers for good news.
 4. **Social Media Listening Officers or Social Media Officers:**
 - i. Social Media Listening or Social Media Officers should be appointed. So just like we have enforcement squads for Money and Muscle Power, according to various constituencies; we shall also have these listeners in the same bracket. So the EC/SEC has to have full-time person/persons who has his eyes and ears on SM i.e. like you have for Money Monitoring etc. across different platforSmt. They also need to be empowered that at any point if there is a suspension they can conduct an investigation and enquiry into that issue.
 5. **Encouragement and Funding of Fact Checking Agencies, NGOs or Third-Party Agencies**
 - Presently, the Government and other respective bodies are also carrying out such fact checking but after a point this will be beyond their limit to do it alone; so there are some agencies present such as Social Media Hoax Slayer and Alt News. Then there is BOOM Live; there are also initiatives between Google, BOOM Live and Election Commission of India.
 - **Enhancing Reach through Collaborations:** This is an activity conducted by Google for the 5,500 journalists to help themselves better identify what is actual news and what is Fake News or Information. Our proposal is to the SEC we should also carry out a parallel exercise with Facebook or Google, maybe some other SM giants i.e. to teach the officers, journalists, 3rd party agencies, candidates as well as parties.
 - **Madras High Court Judgement** has given a verdict for WhatsApp forwards i.e. if you are forwarding a WhatsApp message that means you as an individual are in line with that WhatsApp message/writer etc. In the Shreya Singhal v. Union of India case where the Likes were not considered to be grounds for prosecution. In the light of the Madras judgment, we should highlight to the people, to SECs and other authorities if you forward Fake News you will be held equally liable as the creator.
 6. **Code of Conduct – Ethical and Moral Code for Journalists:**
 - There is no vivid Code of Conduct for the journalists and media houses from the ECI. There are some guidelines offered by the PTI. We should come up with Moral and Ethical code, not anything enforceable i.e. to be issued by SECM to the various media houses across different platforSmt. If there is a breach, we should seek PTI and measured response in a timely manner should be done.
 - i. Ads should also be stopped before 48 years of the Elections: ads, hashtags and mentions. SECs should work with SM giants to get this thing started. It is possible, and should be done under the quasi-judicial powers of the SEC.
 7. There should be specific mention of Electronic and Social Media in the SEC Act
 8. There should be Oath Taking by the Candidates that they will Not Spread Any Type of Fake News. We should run a campaign, in the schools and colleges the new voters can be made aware about these activities – how and why they should not encourage or be part of such activities.
 9. We should work towards protection and confidentiality of the information – we should encourage the people who come out and expose Fake News practices.
 10. **Online Transactions:** Regarding Online Transactions, we submit that wake of the Karnataka Elections

wherein the QR Codes and Money; transferred to different candidates – Scan the codes and get the decided money instantly.

- i. Collaborating with e-Wallet and Reserve Bank of India for Tackling the Issue with Online Money Transfer: So, by working alongside e-Wallet companies and RBI as well as other banks; these banks and e-Wallet companies can work with us and report such activities pre, during and post elections; banks have a system whereby they identify abnormality in the transaction pattern; so, from A account or branch this is the normal flow of transactions and there was some abnormality, it could be reported; during the Election period they should report it to the ECI/SECs

How to Develop the Institute of Democracy, Elections and Good Governance Established by State Election Commission, Maharashtra

Vishal Gaikwad,

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune

Recommendations:

➤ **Philosophy**

- a. Democracy
- b. Governance
- c. Elections

➤ **Mandate**

- a. This Should Be An Autonomous Institute.
- b. Governing Body- SEC, Govt. Officials, Academia, Civil Society.
- c. Physical Location Probably YASHADA.
- d. Faculty - Govt. Officials on Deputation, Civil Society, Academia, Media, Legal Experts, IT.
- e. Funding- One Time Corpus Fund from Govt., CSR, Corporate Chairs and Consultancy.
- f. Stakeholder-Co-Operative, SHG, NGOs

➤ **Functions**

- a. Research and Knowledge Centre
- b. Networking Centre
- c. Consultancy
- d. Lead Institute for all SECs
- e. Training centre for Resource Personnel

➤ **Organisational Structure**

- a. Director: Selection Should Be From Panel. Panel Constituted By SEC Commissioner.
- b. Tenure - Three Years (Can Be Extended By Two Years)

Misuse of Money Power and Muscle Power during Elections

Avinash Sanas,

Deputy Commissioner, State Election Commission, Maharashtra

➤ **Topics of Suggestions**

1. Regulate political financing
2. Bring more transparency
3. Preventive steps
4. Awareness Campaign
5. Create Fear Factor by Exemplary Cases
6. Effective enforcement of existing laws
7. Use of Technology
8. New Laws and Regulation
9. Other

➤ **Regulate Political Financing**

- Filing of accounts of Party and candidates be made compulsory.
- Ceiling on money receipts so as to encourage only small donations.
- Social Audit of Political Financing.
- Third Party campaigner expenses be regulated on lines of 3rd party campaigners Act in UK.
- Money movement even before MCC, intelligence on it be gathered. Involve local intelligence.
- Expenditure sensitive constituency can bring focus.
- Observer should be in discovery and action mode rather than just Observer. Guidelines needed. Action on intelligence gathered before the action period. Experience shows IT ends up doing only auditing.
- Only e-payments to receive and spend
- Monitor source of funds

➤ **Transparency**

- Disclose political finance in public domain
- Invite public objections and develop machinery to decide on objections
- Disclosure of pre-candidature expenditure on line of Federation Election Act in US (which makes any public activity 1 year before election by candidate mandatory to disclose).
- Compulsory manifesto submission to Election Commission and timely report card about fulfilling of promises from manifesto to Election Commission, as a legal requirement. Its display in public domain.
- E-filing of accounts of Party and candidates made compulsory
- Restraint on receipt of anonymous donations by parties and candidates during election period
- Data should be made timely, reliable, accessible and intelligible. Timely information is the key where civil society organizations get involved as watchdogs over political financing. Information available only months or years after the election of the end of the fiscal year makes the information less relevant for public discussion.

➤ **Preventive**

- Preventive action 6 months before for CRPC

- Why money is spent? Identify that. Make statutory tool to stop such making of money. Eg. Approval of tenders, etc. should be removed. Amend Laws in such area.
 - Failure of Official machinery is responsible for corruption. Strengthen machinery to take action. Put responsibility, held accountable highest boss eg Secretary.
 - Preventive action under CRPC be vested with police
 - CCTV and public activity video graphing of candidate be used for surveillance and collect evidence
 - Booth re-location away from caste dominant areas (NB)
- **Awareness Campaign**
- Awareness Observer role is important; seen in Bihar election – does great job – starts 2 to 3 months prior to elections
 - Make voters aware. Awareness is important. Enforcement should come later
 - Involvement of NGOs and civil society organizations to spread the message against bribery
 - Pledge by candidate and political parties: I do swear in the name of God/do affirm that:
 - i. I shall uphold the purity of election process, and
 - ii. make all efforts to curb the pernicious effects of Money power and Muscle power, and
 - iii. I shall cooperate with the Commission in conduct of free, fair and clean elections
 - Campaign for educating the voters on the legal provisions against bribery
 - Appeal to Political Parties: I. To exercise self-restraint. II. To avoid transactions in cash during the election process. III. To advise their party functionaries, candidates and agents not to carry huge cash in the constituency during election process.
- **Fear Factor By Exemplary Cases**
- It's a Game of cat and mouse. Create exemplary cases. Fry 2 or 3 big fish. Create fear. Take care of favouritism allegations.
 - Use present system to have a Demonstrative effect
 - Catch 2/3 candidates and make exemplary case
- **Effective Enforcement Of Existing Law**
- Peaceful election on poll day, but it does not mean 'free and fair elections'
 - Infiltration in campaign. Random checks. Have [aid and unpaid volunteers. Check hawala operators. Use secret funds
 - Bank to give money trail during elections to enable investigation and action
- **Use of Technology**
- E-filing of election expenditure and sources of funds. Online daily election expenditure submission
 - Implement Totalizer (to maintain secrecy of vote)
 - Use of modern technology to make efficient response on complaints. Redress the complaints faster. Complaints by parties, NGO, candidates, honest public only 4 sources. Use app to redress like police
- **New Law and Regulations**
- Representation of Panchayats and Municipalities Act on lines of Representation of the People Act, 1951
 - SEC can issue direction for 'Disclosure of pre-candidature expenditure' on line of Federation Election Act in US.
 - SEC can issue 'Third Party campaigner expenses' on lines of 3rd party campaigners Act in UK
 - ECI guidelines cannot be followed blindly for Local elections. SEC to make its own guidelines
- **Others**
- Committee in SEC which includes Police, IT etc.
 - SEC is like an umpire in football match; yellow card for 2 violations and 3rd violation be red card,

- removing all permissions and privileges.
- Make AADHAR mandatory.
- Need regulation of outsiders / non-residents in elections.
- Public debates on the topic, roles, manifestos, achievements can bring a constructive change.
- **Internationally Recognised 4 Pillars For Clean Elections**
 - Transparency - by Reporting and Disclosure
 - Deterrence – by Banning and Limiting
 - State Oversight – closing gap between law and practice and government neutrality to elections
 - Media and Civil Societies (watchdogs) – larger and active role towards strengthening the democracy.
- **SEC Future Plan**
 - Learn from past experiences and international best practices
 - Take cue from the field and expert agencies and from the observations of court
 - Combat the new methods and techniques by using modern technology
 - Bringing maximum transparency
 - Effective implementations of rules, regulations and directions
 - Data and reports should be made timely, reliable, accessible and intelligible, to the voters.
 - Wherever possible plenary power to make elections free, fair and transparent

KEY SPEECHES

List of Speakers

- ❖ *Shri. P.K. Dash, Ex- Director General, Election Commission of India*
- ❖ *Shri. S.M. Vijayanand, Rtd. Indian Administration Service Officer*
- ❖ *Shri. Ravindra Shisve, Additional Commissioner Police (Special Branch)*
- ❖ *Smt. Rashmi Sharma Shukla, Rtd. Indian Administration Service Officer*
- ❖ *Shri. Sanjiv Jain, Additional Director, Income Tax*
- ❖ *Shri. Deven Bharti, Joint Commissioner of Police (Law and Order), Mumbai*
- ❖ *Shri. Jagdeep Chhokar, Founder Member, Association for Democratic Reforms*

Shri. P.K. Dash

ex-Director General, Election Commission of India

- **Disqualification of Candidates:** Initially he congratulated SECM for --
 - **Disqualification of Candidates:** SECM has disqualified 200+ candidates, whereas ECI has disqualified only three candidates in the latter's entire history. Adding that the procedure of disqualification should be done on real time basis.
 - **Deregistration of Political Parties:** The Deregistered/Disqualification Political Parties has been really remarkable.
 - **None of the above/NOTA:** NOTA can be a very important point for disqualification of candidates, expressing his desire to contribute to SECM in such areas.
- **He highlighted:**
 - **Detrimental Effects of Money power:** Money Power as a whole has a detrimental effect on the elections, acting as a spoiler of democracy. As a result, the whole process is vitiated.
 - **Democracy in Surrounding Countries:** India is located in a geopolitical setup surrounded by

Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka. All these are countries where democracy has not taken roots so far, while India is the only country where we have a functional democracy.

- **Objective and Amendments in Act Varies:** There have been certain Amendment in laws, brought for greater transparency and accountability in election spending and preventing future generation of black money. But, the Amendments are in the favour of the political parties, allowing them to hide the source of their income.
Political parties are using public funds; donors are getting tax exemptions for the donations they are giving to political parties; these political parties are public entities as they get some benefits from the govt, like free electoral roll, free office space.
- **Role of Civil Societies, Citizens and Political Parties:** For holding elections, ECI/SEC can just go to certain extent, and the Civil Society, Citizens and Political Parties, need to take steps beyond and check the mechanism; create an eco system wherein all of us can come together and contribute for the betterment of democracy.
- **Step by Step Action can be taken for Breach of Code of Conduct (MCoC):** The local level the elections are very fiercely contested. This leads to various sorts of misuse and malpractices. For first-time breach of MCoC, a notice can be given to the offender. Then if required, yellow flag or Red Flag can be raised, effectively to withdraw all the privileges that are enjoyed by the candidate for example: Campaign vehicles, campaign materials, campaign meetings etc. This will give proper message about the candidate.
- **Third Party Campaign:** Political parties and candidates have to disclose the donations received from a third-party, and the third-party reporting system on donations to pol. Parties and candidates should also be introduced in the election mechanism, and further providing upper cap for any donor on amount of donations to pol. Party or candidates should also be considered.
- **IDEGG:** The IDEGG should primarily focus on voter awareness. It will have greater impact than training govt. officials or political parties.

Shri. S.M. Vijayanand

Rtd. I.A.S. Officer

- On the issue of elections and money power, he shared a case study of Scotland Yard and his election experience from Kerala. He described that even if there is no system there must be a culture that during elections, election machinery and police will not be influenced by politicians.
- In Kerala, there is formal control over the staff by law, as they are on deputation. In the Election Period, they have quasi-judicial function that enhances the state; they can disqualify a person based on non-submission of accounts, defection and not holding Gram Sabha.
- **Curbing of Money Power:** control on the use of Money Power should not just be during elections, it should be earlier.
- Social Audit of Election Expenditure is possible and some experts are trying to develop a technique for that.
- Funding IDEGG can be done by the Government or the local-governments donations. While, the training on elections and democracy should be mixed -- from the beginning, not only post-election.

Shri. Jagdeep Chhokar

Founder Member, Association for Democratic Reforms

- **Electoral Democracy:** Democracy is not only elections; democracy is not a destination; elections are an

event in democracy, it is a method of operationalising the democracy.

- **Election is an on-going activity:** In election monitoring internationally, there are three accepted phases: pre-elections, during elections and post-elections. Election is an on-going activity. Political Parties should be required to declare their Election Expenditure; not only for the period of the election, but one year before the election is due to take place.
- **Institute of Democracy, Elections and Good Governance:** Elections are not meant for leaders to get elected, but they are meant for citizens and voters to elect their representatives. We train candidates, college students, but we do not train citizens. People should come-up and talk of educating the concept of citizenship. The IDEGG, if it has an ambition to become an institute for democracy, then there must be some provision for education of citizenship.
- **Electoral Reforms-** Electoral reform is a never ending process. In the electoral and political systems, they are considered as a low intensity long duration task.
 - When the State Election Commissions will do something, it will become very difficult for the ECI, not to do it.

Smt. Rashmi Shukla Sharma

Rtd. I.A.S. Officer

- The State Agencies and State Election Commission(s) can intervene for better as well as more capable enforcement of law and strengthening of institutions
- There is repeated failure to recognise the positives in the elections that have been conducted so far, both at the national and state level; along with the crucial role Public Administration has played, in the same.
- If one is thinking about long-term and sustained solution related to problems of Elections, it remains crucial that more and improved attention should be placed on SECs as compared to the ECI, particularly when considering resources in hand.
- Understanding Public Administration through Knowledge Creation and Sharing.
- Drawing and developing on the close relationship between Politics and Society, and putting it to better use through Knowledge Creation.
- Understanding and exercising the importance of Knowledge Creation at the local body level, in terms of understanding the governance process, functioning of the Government and its processes, etc.
- The role of public support is unparalleled; with the kind of importance it brings to finding solutions to the problems present, in terms of elections in the urban and rural setup.
- The role of Mass Media in finding these solutions should be treated in the light of making them more responsible and accountable for their conduct – more specifically with reference to Social Media.

Shri. Sanjeev Jain

Additional Commissioner, Income Tax

The prime objective today of the candidate is to recover his/her money that has been spent during elections. All the political parties are having their own call centres disseminating messages based on caste and other things. Important suggestions:

- To make a Call Centre under SECM that will disseminate messages which will clarify fake versus correct news
- It must be made mandatory to make the candidate sign the undertaking that he/she will not give bribe. Then the undertaking should be published, as a public statement. The affidavit/undertaking should be put on SECM's website and call centres shall disseminate the message.

- Call Centre can be used for giving the Asset Records and Criminal Records of the candidate to the voters.
- Notice Boards having information regarding the candidates records to be put-up near voting stations, near bus stops to inform the voters. The same information regarding the candidate can be put-up on Social Media.
- It is also important to set-up examples against dishonest candidates by taking strict actions. Using movies, as a tool to point-out certain people, can be an important way to communicate this message; showcasing the person who has been disqualified.
- An Act is needed according to which expenditures by other persons on behalf of the candidate can be reported.
- Cash transactions should have a limit above which the parties shouldn't be allowed to deal in cash transactions.

Shri. Ravindra Shisve

Additional Commissioner of Police (Special Branch), Mumbai

- Rethinking our approach towards challenges proposed at local body elections, as directives that come from State Election Commission of India are similar to that of Election Commission of India, which are not really applicable.
- The State Election Commission should be given proper machinery to check the misuse of money power. (By P.K. Dash)
 - **Moral Code of Conduct:** At LSG Elections MCoC happens only on the deterrence factor. So at least these Moral Code of Conduct violations if are dealt with instantly under the powers with SEC, exemplary results can achieved.
 - **Proposed Study:** Wherever Elections are conducted using the EVM machine, one can study about NOTA factor; its selections in the central and local body elections, across urban and rural areas.

CONCLUDING SESSION

Panel

- ❖ *Shri. S. Channe, Secretary, State Election Commission, Maharashtra*
- ❖ *Dr. Ajit Ranade, Founder Member, Association for Democratic Reforms*

- Summarised the outputs of the conference and extended their remarks for the support and contribution of participants.
- The issues that were discussed in the workshop by different stakeholders will now be taken forward and presented in terms of policy.
- This will done to better understand the scope of the information and presentation made today.
- In organizing yet another successful dialogue of experts, at the local-body elections level, the Institute of Democracy, Elections and Good Governance and State Election Commission, Maharashtra has further strengthened on its efforts to build towards conducting of free, fair and transparent elections.

तज्ज्ञांच्या विभागीय कार्यशाळा

राज्य निवडणूक आयोगाच्या पुढाकाराने जानेवारी- फेब्रुवारी २०१८ मध्ये विविध ठिकाणी विभागीय कार्यशाळा आयोजित करण्यात आल्या होत्या. त्याचप्रमाणे सप्टेंबर- ऑक्टोबर २०१८ मध्ये विविध ठिकाणी निवडणूक विषयक तज्ज्ञांच्या विभागीय कार्यशाळा आयोजित करण्यात आल्या होत्या. मुंबईत ६ जुलै २०१८ रोजी आयोजित तज्ज्ञांच्या कार्यशाळेनंतर विभागीय स्तरावरदेखील अशा कार्यशाळा आयोजित करण्यात याव्यात, अशी संकल्पना पुढे आली होती. त्यामुळे अमरावती, नागपूर, नवी मुंबई, धुळे, पुणे आणि औरंगाबाद येथे अशा प्रकारच्या कार्यशाळा घेण्यात आल्या. या कार्यशाळांमध्ये निवडणुकीसंदर्भातील तज्ज्ञ, अभ्यासक, अधिकारी/ कर्मचारी, स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांचे प्रतिनिधी आदी सहभागी झाले होते.

विभाग	कार्यशाळेचे ठिकाण	दिनांक
अमरावती	अमरावती	१ सप्टेंबर २०१८
नागपूर	नागपूर	१९ सप्टेंबर २०१८
कोकण	नवी मुंबई	२७ सप्टेंबर २०१८
नाशिक	धुळे	२७ सप्टेंबर २०१८
पुणे	पुणे	२९ सप्टेंबर २०१८
औरंगाबाद	औरंगाबाद	६ ऑक्टोबर २०१८

International Conference
on
***“Better Elections for
Healthier Democracy”
(Local Self-Governments)***

25th and 26th October 2018

Mumbai, India

an Initiative of

**Institute of Democracy & Elections for Good Governance
(a wing of State Election Commission, Maharashtra)**

Knowledge Partners Logos

Background

An International Conference on “Better Elections for Healthier Democracy” was organized on 25th and 26th October 2018 at Mumbai by “Institute of Democracy and Elections for Good Governance”, a wing of SEC Maharashtra with the help of following “Knowledge Partners” :

- i) Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)
- ii) Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)
- iii) Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune (GIPE)
- iv) International IDEA
- v) University of Mumbai
- vi) Resource and Support Centre for Development (RSCD)

2. Structure of the said Conference was as follows :

(i) Session One -

Inaugural session : Shri Ch. Vidhyasagar Rao, Hon'ble Governor, Maharashtra, Smt. Pankajatai Munde, Rural Development, Women and Child Development Minister, Govt. of Maharashtra, Shri Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, Leader of Opposition, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, Shri J. S. Saharia, Hon'ble State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra, Shri Shekhar Channe, Hon'ble Secretary, State Election Commission, Maharashtra

(ii) Session Two-

Public Ownership of Democracy

(iii) Session Three-

How to check the Misuse of Money Power

(iv) Session Four-

Inclusiveness

(v) Session Five-

International Participants

(vi) Session Six-

How to control the Menace of Social Media, Fake News, etc.

(vii) Session Seven-

Role of Various Stakeholders

(viii) Session Eight- Valedictory Session

Shri Devendra Fadanvis, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Sudhir Mungantiwar, Finance and Planning and Forest department Minister, Shri Dhananjay Munde, Leader of Opposition, Maharashtra Legislative Council, Shri J. S. Saharia, Hon'ble State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra, Shri Shekhar Channe, Hon'ble Secretary, State Election Commission, Maharashtra

3. Following 5 themes, which were finalised in the Workshop of Experts dated 6.7.2018 were discussed in great detail in the above Conference:
- i) Public Ownership of Democracy
 - ii) How to check Misuse of Money Power
 - iii) Inclusiveness
 - iv) How to control Menace of Money Power
 - vii) Role of various Stakeholder.

4. Following booklets were released during the said Conference

Sr. No.	Name of the Publication	Year of Publication
1	Profile of all SECs in India	Oct 2018
2	Profile of all Municipal Corporations in Maharashtra	Oct 2018
3	Profile of all Zilha Parishad in Maharashtra	Oct 2018
4	Compilation of base Papers for International Conference-2018	Oct 2018
5	A Compilation of election watch Reports 2015-2017 (2018)	Oct 2018

5. An exhibition was arranged by SEC and 6 Knowledge Partners displaying their publications and the work done.
6. A cultural programme at the end of the first day was presented by the students of University of Mumbai and S.N.D.T. University with the basic themes of “Unity in Diversity” and “Decentralised Governance”.
7. The Conference was attended by nearly 150 eminent persons including 14 delegates from various countries and 10 State Election Commissioners.
8. At the end of the Conference, “Mumbai Declaration” was adopted by the participants which charts out the future course of action both at the National and International level for bringing Local Governments and their elections to the centre stage of political discourse.

Session 1

Inaugural Session

Persons on the Dias:

- ❖ *Shri. CH. Vidyasagar Rao, Hon'ble Governor, Maharashtra*
- ❖ *Smt. Pankaja Munde, Rural Development, Women and Child Development Minister, Government of Maharashtra*
- ❖ *Shri. Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, Leader of Opposition, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly*
- ❖ *Shri. J.S. Saharia, Hon'ble State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra*
- ❖ *Shri. Shekhar Channe, Hon'ble Secretary, State Election Commission, Maharashtra*

Shri. CH. Vidyasagar Rao

(Chief Guest)

- Sharing of experience and ideas by national and international delegates, knowledge partners, non-governmental organizations, researchers and people's representatives will help us in creating a more participatory, people-friendly and transparent mechanism for the effective functioning of democracy and for the smooth conduct of elections at all levels, particularly at the grassroots level
- decentralization of public administration and the introduction of local elected bodies have produced systems of governance that are better able to meet the needs of the poor, the tribal and other vulnerable groups
- It is necessary to treat the State Election Commissions on par with the Election Commission of India and to provide it adequate funds, functions and functionaries
- there should be a broad consensus among all political parties that candidates with criminal background are not offered party tickets
- Election Commission must keep a strict watch on the overt and covert efforts made to bribe of voters through enticements and sops
- State and the Central Election Commissions work closely to enhance youth participation in the democratic process: Starting 'Democracy Clubs' in schools and Colleges to engage students with democracy and election process
- Election Commission to work closely with Colleges and Universities
- Deliberations may be held on making our electoral process more inclusive and friendly for Persons with Disabilities and officials who are unable to cast their vote on account of national duty
- State Election Commission must take advantage of these factors to reach out to every youth through social media e.g. voter registration campaigns and voter awareness programmes
- State Election Commission to create a digital platform for the sharing of experiences and success stories by various states and countries

Smt. Pankaja Munde

(Guest of Honor)

- A realistic approach towards elections, expenditure, contesting candidates' background and promises (she or) he made to the people
- In a democracy, who is buying and who is selling becomes a big question. She said that she expresses good points about herself so voters vote for her, but there are occasions when voters sell their vote; raising the question of transparency, that's expected only from the higher strata of the society. Somewhere, and in elections, transparency should be looked at from the sides (candidate and voter); make the voting process transparent
- SECs shall be considered at par with the ECI, at the state level; support is required by SECs, not just during elections, as democratic activities, issues, cases, etc. are on-going. So they should set up their own departments, officers, finances, etc. – I am sure necessary steps will be taken in that direction
- In order to achieve healthier democracy, it will be important the local self-government can be made stronger. They should be strengthened as much, and provided with funds
- There should segregation of various elected representatives about their responsibilities and rights; the credit taking for the work done is to attract votes
- Social Media is the biggest challenge. Track the campaign expenditure on social media – to be done by ECs.

- Mandatory Voting, as a policy, should be provided with a thought

Shri. Vikhe Patil

(Guest of Honor)

- It is not only the job of the State Election Commissions to conduct the free, fair and transparent elections but it is also the duty of all machinery, every citizen and all stakeholders
- Duty to protect and safeguard the independent structure and functioning of the State Election Commission
- Areas of concern- lesser importance given to local body elections, insensitiveness of various stakeholders, insufficient devolution of functions, finances and functionaries; not treating State Election Commissions at par with Election Commission of India in terms of its independent status and administration
- Lack of awareness about the role and responsibility of local bodies and status and authority of State Election Commission
- Create awareness amongst the people for voter registration, voter turnout and ethical voting for strengthening democracy
- Effective implementation of model code of conduct
- The government needs to ensure that autonomous and independent nature of the State Election Commission
- The government must provide finance and staff as per the assessment of SEC; ensure no arrears of election expenses
- The government must impress upon them again about the status, authority and powers of SEC
- Initiate electoral reforms for curing the ills like: banning persons with a criminal background, the upper limit of expenditure.
- Transfer functions, funds, functionaries to LSGs in a time bound manner (as announced by Government on 9.2.2018). Make arrangements for the training of both prospective and elected representatives especially women maximum with 6 months of elections.
- Amending the 5 State Acts and bring Uniformity in election-related clauses (as suggested by SEC), for the smooth administration, management and uniformity of elections at the Local Body level
- Election Commission of India should be impressed upon for error-free voter list for Assembly since the same is used by SEC for LSGs

Shri. J. S. Saharia

(Keynote Address)

Hon'ble State Election Commissioner after welcoming the dignitaries, especially the Hon'ble Governor, Hon'ble Minister Smt. Pankaja Munde, Leader Opposition Shri. Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, gave the brief background behind organising the International Conference through a PPT. He mentioned the following main points:

- Local Self Governments (LSGs) in various Democratic Countries are facing more or less similar challenges like:
 - i) Lesser importance by various stakeholders as compared to National / Regional Governments,
 - ii) Insufficient devolution of 3 Fs (Funds, Functions and Functionaries),
 - iii) Inability of LSGs to assert for their rights etc.
- These challenges become more pronounced for larger democracies since the elections to the LSGs

are not only voluminous but also intimate, complex and fiercely contested. Further the misuse of money power and social media was spreading fast.

- Inadequate resources with LSGs and SECs.
The present International Conference has been arranged with the following main objectives:
 - i) to bring LSGs, their elections and SECs at the centre stage of political process, and
 - ii) to create an International platform to exchange ideas and good practices etc. for making LSGs and SECs more effective and vibrant.
- SECM took the following major initiatives during the last 4 years:
 - i) Deregistration of 220 political parties
 - ii) Compulsory Online submission of nomination papers and affidavit by all candidates
 - iii) Compulsory disclosure in Affidavit (by candidates) of:
 - a) Sources of income, and
 - b) Contract details
 - iv) Compulsory public display of financial assets and criminal background etc. of candidates outside polling stations and at main crossings of city
 - v) Innovative partnership with various stakeholders for citizens education
 - vi) Use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) for all the LSGs
(Customized, multiple post, Stand-alone, Tamperproof and hack free)
 - vii) Established “ Institute of Democracy and Elections for Good Governance (IDEGG)”
 - viii) Signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)
 - ix) Compulsory vision document “Constituency Development Plan” by each candidate.
- Possible strategies for the LSGs and their elections to get prominent position in the political process, could be as follows:
 - i) Create International platform of LSGs and SECMs for :
 - a) continuous exchange of ideas, good practices
 - b) training of Election Managers and their exchange
 - c) system of Election Observers etc.
 - ii) Local Self Governments to form Professional Associations for conducting research, training and asserting themselves
 - iii) Governments to:
 - a) Devolve funds, functions and functionaries in a time bound manner
 - b) Create mechanism for training of both prospective and elected representatives especially women maximum within 6 months
 - c) Encourage LSGs to form International Association
 - d) Undertake urgent electoral reforms to cleanse the system like
 - Debarring candidates with criminal backgrounds
 - Maximum 2 terms in a local body etc.
 - e) Ensure no arrears of election expenses
 - iv) State Election Commissions should:
 - a) Use Constitutional powers and be fiercely independent
 - b) Fill vacuous areas, wherever possible
 - c) Develop Electoral index for LSGs
 - d) Use Innovative methods for increasing the citizens’ participation like Award system by Government / Corporate / University etc.
 - e) Rank Corporators on the basis of their objective performance

- Hon'ble State Election Commissioner thereafter requested all the participants, especially the State Election Commissioners of other States, foreign delegates and the experts to give their views and suggest remedial measures for making the elections better.

Shri. Shekhar Channe

(Welcome Remark)

- Several surveys, studies and media comments posit that the Election Commissions' are one of the most popular and effective public institutions in India.
- The effectiveness of the Election Commission is due to four parameters i.e. the inclusiveness, rule of law, efficiency and accountability of the election process.
- The popularity of such an enormously important institute derives its strength from all stakeholders of the society.
- SEC, Maharashtra has made elections to local bodies more inclusive and accessible, engaging various stakeholders; thereby being able to overcome challenges, safeguarding the purity of elections.

Session 2

Theme 1, Public Ownership of Democracy

Persons on the Dias:

- ❖ *Dr. Rajas Parchure, Director, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) – Chair*
- ❖ *Shri. Akshay Raut, Director General, Special Projects, Swachh Bharat Mission, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Govt. of India*
- ❖ *Shri. Rajeev Sabade, Sr. Journalist and Ex-Member of Press Council of India*
- ❖ *Shri. T. R. Raghunandan, Former Joint-Secretary, Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Govt. of India and Founder Member, Avantika Foundation*
- ❖ *Shri. Gareth Wall, Research Officer, Commonwealth Local Government Forum*
- ❖ *Shri. Wawan Wiraatmaja, Commissioner of Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia*

Dr. Rajas Parchure

- Ownership of elections is diffused; it is spread across a number of stakeholders: primary, voters – engagement with the election is the act of voting; candidates and political parties. Processes that involve each other is at times based on cooperation and at times based on conflict.
- Whenever there is conflict, there is a need for regulators – regulating the voting process, candidates, and political parties. Regulators are the ECs.
- The government provides for the legislative framework, which defines that what the ECs can and cannot do.
- The decline in voter turnout – preserve and enhance voter turnout. There are two aspects to it: the size of the voting population and the size of the population they are representing
- India has a better voting percentage across different democracies, especially compared to the developed democracies. But there is stagnation.
- While the general trend is a decline in voter turnout in Maharashtra for state/centre elections; voter

percentage is higher in local bodies in Maharashtra, especially in rural LBs. In ULBs, the voter turnout has been steadily declining, if the last election is not considered.

- (In last elections) It was found in Municipal Corporations in Maharashtra, voter lists were not up to date. 20percent of the people in Pune who went for voting came to realize that their names are not there in the electoral roll.
- AADHAR-Mobile-GPS can be used as a technological bridge to improve the voter registration process
- It is seen that in India's case the poor that turn-up for voting
- While the no. of the candidates has increased, their seriousness to actually engage and win an election is seriously doubtful
- How do you want a candidate to be? Educated, Accessible, Get the Work Done; Voters do not find a corrupt candidate ineligible, as corruption as a characteristic is 4th or 5th on the character list of the voter.
- NOTA can be more potent. Re-election, in the light, when NOTA get the highest votes.
- Institutionalizing monitoring, assessment and publication of a representative's deliverables/manifesto agenda

Shri. Akshay Rout

- Democracy-Elections-People have to remain seriously connected for perpetuity to have a better world
- The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was a movement that was owned by the public. It has become a JanAndolan. Similarly, the elections, has to go on the same road i.e. elections should be owned by the public.
- If we don't have willing and informed participation of citizens, we will have a difficult time
- Disengagement of people from the instrument of elections. As compared to people owning the elections, what has happened is consistently in the democratic world, voting percentage in the elections is on the decline and what is also noticed is that the youth is a bit disinterested. This is a democracy deficient.
- If the no. of candidates contesting elections is increasing and the voting percentage is declining, it suggests that there is apathy, disinterest, indifference, people thereby getting disengaged and they do not own the democracy
- Should voter participation and ownership of the elections be pursued as a policy or programme within the work of ECs which are responsible for the regulation of elections – is there a job to do? In the RP Act, the voter should be induced to be brought to the polling station... so a voter registration campaign was said okay too but not a campaign for voter turnout.
- Compulsory voting: does that match the spirit of democracy and elections? While it can also be said that voluntary and compulsory voting gives (more or less) the same result. And in a country like India, what will be penalized? How many court cases are you going to be fought?
- Voter participation is important; public ownership is a key to the betterment of democracy. Then are we going to bring it to the centre of election management table? Yes (I think)
- Regional disparities: urban-rural, old-young, etc. How to engage the disaffected alienated and excluded?
- Everyone who doesn't vote does not vote for the same reason, there are different reasons. There should be the identification of the voters, and voters should understand the importance of voting
- Information (voter-based), motivation (apathy) (voter-based) and facilitation (supply side initiative) are the most important.
- Voting as a business transaction – is it profitable enough? Considering the material base of the world is growing. Is it enough fashionable for teenagers?

- Ethical Voting – how to tell voter, whom to vote for and whom not to vote?
- SVEEP (10-11) – Systematic Voter Education and Electoral Participation; focused on urban apathy, women and youth turnout, disadvantage turnout
- This resulted in the highest ever voter turnout in 2014 in the country, highest ever female participation; least gender gap

Shri. Rajeev Sabade

- During the 70s and 80s in the south, elections were held with quite a fanfare and larger than life cutouts; midnight rallies; no awareness of time restrictions, election expenses restrictions for a particular campaign
- Booth capturing; theft of ballot boxes; bogus voting; black money; it was said that election process is the biggest generator of black money in this country.
- The Naxalite and Kashmir valley region; impact on people in recent years. People even these contested areas, wish to vote, as they believe in their choices and that their elected representatives will be accessible to address upon their daily needs.
- A new phenomenon that has gripped the election process is paid news. Press Council of India was the first organization to take cognizance of what was happening in the media circles that were affecting the election process in the country. A report was published that brought to light, much to the shock of many observers, the way paid news was being used to propagate the campaign of a political candidate or political party.
- A pilot project was taken up Bisauli, Uttar Pradesh, and one very powerful candidate, used paid news as an instrument through one of the newspapers. This report was sent to the ECI, and the latter took a very strong notice of it and the candidate was unseated/disqualifying him to not contest the elections for a few years. Unfortunately, this was the last action of its kind...
- PCI and ECI should be empowered to take such hard decisions so that this phenomenon of paid news cannot go on for a long time. PCI is a very powerful body, but often it is called as a toothless tiger. When it was formed, nobody thought that freedom of speech and expression would take such an ugly turn; electronic media does not come under the purview of the Council, making for a major limitation the PCI has to face
- If the government, SECs/ECI and PCI at large think that there has to be 'better elections for healthier democracy', these bodies – ECI/SECs and PCI should be empowered to take such actions so that all such malpractices can be curbed and taken care of.
- Youth participation: the University of Mumbai recently introduced the subject of elections, in the curriculum of their media studies course. This should also be encouraged in other universities. So that at a young age these students are made aware of the importance and their role in the election process and therein democracy.
- Apart from the days of the election, the political parties hardly care about what the ECs are doing. In Maharashtra, at least, there is YASHADA; similar courses (e.g. University of Mumbai course on elections) should be conducted for politicians and political parties. Helping them understand the powers of ECs.
- Use of social media and other forms of media, programmes can be conducted on various platforms for voter education at different levels

Shri. T.R. Raghunandan

- Three major trends – 1. Majoritarianism, a threat to the majority by the minority, direct and effective solutions to the problem of building walls, excluding violence, distorting history, etc.; 2. Institutions that have been built for checks and balances in the democracy are aligning towards majoritarianism; 3. A complete distortion of the Media, the fourth estate.
- How to strengthen accountability? Because elections are a process of public accountability; because accountability is of different types. Democratic accountability towards the voters; but looking at democracy in the wider picture, it would look require to strengthen all forms of accountability, not just towards voters, but legislative accountability towards parliament, political accountability, political parties from within, legal accountability towards courts, organizational accountability within organizations.
- Political accountability as a blunt form of accountability, in a sense that you can only hold political parties to account once every five years. In Democracy, we are passive recipients of a monologue. Citizens are called upon in substantial periods of time to provide basic input and essentially accept or reject people in the same system; that is the bandwidth of elections today. The simple yes or no question answered at the time of casting a vote, is too inadequate a response to really mean much. It may have sufficed to the meet the demands of democracy so far, but is it enough for the future; there is a whole lot of rejection of representative democracy – and with this, there a number of new generation developments happening over the last two decades.
- Social accountability; social audit of different aspects of government, public accountability; hybrid measures, e.g. in Andhra Pradesh, the government sponsored an NGO, and it gave the latter the freedom to do a social audit of a government programme, and it did succeed. All this leading towards a ‘nebulous’ called empowerment.
- Empowerment = existence of choice, use of choice, the outcome of choice.
- Today, success is signed upon with just by providing access.

Session 3

Theme 2, How to Check the Misuse of Money Power

Persons on the Dias:

- ❖ *Shri. P. K. Dash, Ex-Director General Election Commission of India – Chair*
- ❖ *Shri. Brijesh Singh, Secretary and DG, Information and Public Relations*
- ❖ *Shri. Milan Vaishnav, Sr. Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Washington*
- ❖ *Shri. R. Parshuraman, State Election Commissioner, Madhya Pradesh*
- ❖ *Shri. V. Nagi Reddy, State Election Commissioner, Telangana*
- ❖ *Shri. Jagdeep Chhokar, Founder Member, Association of Democratic Reforms*

Shri. P.K. Dash

- Source of transparency is very important → from where the flow of income is coming? Loopholes in the monitoring process – being manipulated by the system
 - In a Money Bill, for bringing about greater transparency and accountability in political funding while preventing future generation of black money – reason: the donors expressed reluctance in donating by cheque or other transparent methods in order to not disclose their identity and Intel – RP Act

amended which requires now under 29(C) that any political party receiving more than 20,000 from any person has to disclose to the election commission of India ← this has been amended and now no political parties will disclose the receiving of money to the ECI

- Company Act 2013 has been amended which put a limitation that only 7.5 percent of the company's profit can only be donated to a political party. This has been done away with.
- Taking a loan from the bank; taking equity from the market can donate (the same) to the political party. Any company donating to a political party has to mention in their AGM, this has been amended – no mention is needed in their AGM or in their annual report. Income Tax amended, 13(A) mentioned that no donation exceeding 2000 can be made by cash, but this does not say about the transparency above the amount prescribed and anonymous donations.
- Electoral Bonds – RBI has issued instructions, anonymous bearer banking instrument issued in the nature of promissory note; KYC norms will be followed, but the banks will not disclose the name of the donor to anyone. So it does not qualify under the purview of RTI.
- How the candidate's expenditure is distributed? Mass Media, Campaign Material, Rallies and meetings, Travel and Logistics, Money direct benefits (12 percent) (in the US and other European nations)
- In India, in 2014, from the candidate's record, it was analysed, Mass Media (TV and Radio) is only 7.5 per cent; campaign material 14.5 per cent, rallies and meetings 28.3 per cent, travel and logistics 32.3 per cent... (this does not include expenditure on paid news and expenditure by political parties)
- There is no restriction on third party expenditure
- Reporting is only limited to theory but lack practical functionality
- Pre-certification ad of electronic media – a requirement for any ad given in electronic media that has to be certified by the ECI. But so far as paid media is concerned, social media is concerned, this is not covered.
- ECs have the plenary power, these powers are subject to restrictions, they are plenary power so far as the election is concerned; before and after elections they do not have any power; ECI and SECs have the power to fill the vacuous areas left by the law to fill
- Case: Direction issues by ECI post-2014 general elections – transparency guidelines for political parties by the commission. (2014) it said names and addresses of the donors have to be maintained; the law says the political parties will disclose to the ECI only accounts of more than 20,000 rs. The suggestion was made to maintain the records of such donors as specified by the condition, and not disclose it (either to ECI or commission).
- Whatever cash donations the political parties receive, the political party was directed that the amount is deposited in the party's bank account within the reasonable time frame of 10 days; so that in the pre-election days when the cash is mobilized in the market and distributed without being deposited in the bank will be curtailed. A suggestion was made by PK Dash for SECs to implement this.
- Copy of the audited account, to be sent to the ECI. The audited accounts of the political parties are not submitted to the ECI until the said instruction was issued. This is being followed, as the parties fear the threat of their recognition getting withdrawn.
- Red Card and Yellow Card; EC issues directions after the election are over, and by then disqualification factor does not help, why not show a yellow card or a red card to the candidate? Thereafter what? Withdrawal of all the facilities can be considered (after giving of two yellow cards). Real-time basis things can be controlled
- Disclosure at the time of nomination by the candidate on the amount of funds raised by herself or himself, the source of the fund, etc.
- Real-time monitoring of reports; whatever reports which are received by the EC can be disclosed on the

website so people can know.

- Devising regulation for the third party. If the third party does any donation from the date of notification till the date of the election, the third party has to disclose it directly to the commission. So figures can be matched (cross verified). (the USA has this practice)
- Banning receipt of donation to political parties in excess of Rs. 2,000 during the election process; provision for disclosure of assets and liabilities at the time of nomination.

Shri. Milan Vaishnav

- 4 overarching questions:
 - How much does a candidate's wealth actually matter in determining electoral outcomes in India?
 - What is it that campaigns spend on? Why do they spend in that manner?
 - How does money interact with different levels of government? (from panchayats to MLAs and MPs)
 - What are the reform steps to consider?
- Background on the regulatory environment:
 - Virtually zero transparency for political contribution, impossible to identify who has given (money) and who has received it;
 - no independent scrutiny of political party finances;
 - the existence of an outdated regulatory framework
- How much does a candidate's wealth actually matter in determining electoral outcomes in India?
 - It is nearly impossible to win an election unless you reach a certain threshold of wealth.
 - The number of candidates with a personal wealth of one crore or more has been growing with time; there has been a growth of crorepatris amongst contesting candidates, and in addition, of crorepatris actually winning the elections. It is no secret that why parties are attracted to these candidates because they have a huge advantage of winning.
 - If you are lucky enough to be in the top 20 percent of candidate wealth, you are more than 20 times more likely to win than somebody who is in the bottom 20 percent. There is a clear advantage to having deployable resources at the time of elections.
 - Even if you disaggregate wealth by those who are competitive (meaning they finish first or second in a constituency) and those who are not competitive, most of the wealth is unsurprisingly concentrated in the most competitive candidates (the top 2 finishers)
 - Even just looking at competitive candidates, it is worth considering the wealth ratio of the richest to the poorest candidate.
 - If the wealth ratio is 1, meaning they are using the same amount of wealth, there is no difference in their chances of winning the election.
 - As the wealth ratio increases, the gap between the richer and the poorer competitive candidate increases, the probability the election diverges as well; wherein the richer candidate has a substantial advantage over the poor.
- Self-financing candidates are one form of how candidates infuse into the system. But if parties are demanding these candidates, what is their campaign spending on?
 - While sources may be legal or undocumented, a lot of the spending is on mundane legal activities – paying for meetings, rallies, processions, salaries of workers, etc. – things that are done to mobilize a constituency
 - However, there is an illicit aspect of funding, vote buying or handouts/gifts – typically carried out through local intermediaries/influencers, distributed directly at the individual level.

- Why are candidates distributing handouts?
 - The conventional wisdom is that they are buying votes. In India, there is almost no evidence of such a quid pro quo; (because at the end of the day, you have a secret ballot, you go to the polling booth, you cast a vote for whom you want to vote for)
 - So why do campaigns distribute handouts?
- Providing a signal about their credibility and viability that they have what it takes to impress their party members or brokers but also to show to the average voter that they are viable
- Many cases show, handouts are a defensive strategy, you handout gifts not to buy votes – but just to remain in the game; you are afraid that if you do not give gifts then you will surely be defeated
 - To call it to vote buying is incorrect > it is gift giving – because there is no conclusive way to buy someone's vote
- How does money operate at each level of the government? How do the sources of campaign finance vary?
 - Political parties only really matter for the very highest levels: MPs and MLA. Political parties as a major source for political finance are non-existent for district councils or below.
 - Personal resources matter for everybody but they disproportionately matter more for the Panchayat Raj officials and candidates, who do not have other sources of income they can rely upon
 - Ability to raise money from private sector groups, companies and bureaucrats, tends to be restricted to the upper sections of the government
 - When you ask candidates what their perceptions the most common source of candidate funding— black money is a sizeable percentage of the candidate funding, particularly for MPs and MLAs, who state that it is half of their overall budget
 - When it comes to gift giving and spending black money, the percentage of politicians who believe that illicit funding is prevalent ranges from one-third to two-thirds, but it is acknowledged across the board
 - In terms of feeling pressure to deliver gifts, at least 50 per cent if not more (92 per cent of MPs) feel the pressure to give gifts. They estimate anywhere between a quarter or third of their voters are going to get these gifts
- What are the reform steps to consider?
 - Move towards greater transparency of all contributions; it is striking that post Demonetization so many Indian's were asked to Digital Payments; one group was not asked to do anything and that was political parties. That's one way of fixing this gap.
 - While limits placed on expenditure are far too low, and they should be lifted provided that political parties and candidates would adhere to step up norms of disclosure and enforcement if they are found to be violating this expenditure or not disclosing their expenses on time
 - Rather than Political Parties auditing their own accounts, either CAG or a Panel of Auditors should be chosen to scrutinize the accounts
 - Public funding – if you introduce public funding in the environment we are now political parties will have their cake and eat it too. They will be happy to take the white money, but they will also be taking the black money. The only way this can work is when you set up a grand bargain whereby enforcement, disclosure, transparency and an agreed upon set of rules and norms in exchange parties and candidates willing to subscribe to those norms, can we start about state funding? Otherwise, I think we are pushing good money after bad.

Shri. Brijesh Singh

- Suppose a candidate is very thoughtful and asks 100s of people to send 100s of people some kind of promo codes, coupons, prepaid/paytm, gift cards, etc., how is the one going to trace it? As India digitizes, things are moving into the digital sphere.
- Now influencing the voter and influencing the elections before and after is one part, but are the parties spending on right now? So if you look at the preparatory aspects of elections, parties would be working on campaigns or propaganda. This is a space where you would never be able to link money because – there would be electronic trails – but since you would be able to link identity to a person it will be very difficult to find an electronic trail. Their number of trails itself is so large, and we don't have a mechanism to work on this
- What would in theory any political party or stakeholder interested in elections be doing to run an influence campaign? First, gathering databases; purchasing of databases; Facebook allows you targeted advertisements to a geofenced area (for certain demography). Cheap ads (cost effective).
- Paid news: (print media), the digital version of these newspapers become much more important. Any digital paper is at least 50 times more popular and consumed than its print version. And the print and digital versions are different. So the digital versions do not run the same content they run in the print. So it is difficult, say tomorrow I do not keep track of the digital editions or I change it on the server, how are you going to prove it? Unless you have taken a screenshot and even then the onus is upon you to prove that the image is not morphed. Difficult to track the source of propaganda.
- These offline practices will move into the digital space if they have not already moved into it. Stepping back, the danger is not just to the voters or leading them to vote or not vote for a particular candidate – the larger fear is disenfranchisement. The larger fear is across the world, how Russians meddled in the US elections – now there are three court indictments. 1. against the internet research agency (...). These kinds of disinformation campaigns apart from helping the candidate or others, which may not be in the interest of the country may also create a lot of confusion of the narrative and they take away in a manner that affects the legitimacy of the elections.
- Rather than overt kind of influence, there is a covert kind of propaganda that is being run. The second thing to influence elections is hacking. What do people hack? The threat to election infrastructure, critical information about candidates [for political advantage]; care should be taken – right from election infrastructure to candidate's own social media accounts is hardened.
- Countermeasures can be taken in the form of 1. Educating public 2. Proper awareness and telling people how disinformation is spread and its prevalence 3. Putting responsibility purely on platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Google, etc. 4. Data localization 5. Handbooks on Cyber Security for Elections (a case study of European Commission) 6. Mechanism for Fact-checking

Shri. R. Parasuram

- There is every apprehension that LB representatives are becoming conduits for election finances for the higher-ups. Favours – past, present and future to be traded.
- The scale of corruption at the local body level is entirely different. Many of the challenges are legal, institutional and structural. Also due to lack of interest and participation by CSOs, media, the academia and the intelligentsia, no searching questions are asked and issues posed for consideration in the public domain.
- Two anecdotes: 3,67,000 elected representatives are elected in Madhya Pradesh, of whom 90 per cent in a 2-month window for a 5-year period. So the scale of monitoring on the field, looking at 1 million or

10 lakh nominations at the same time. Elections are fought on political party lines only in municipalities, not in Panchayats. In MP, there are 382 Municipalities; there are more 7000 Corporators, 382 directly elected mayors and presidents.

- Non-statutory accounts practised in MP. SEC, MP, disqualified candidates including an elected President, for not opening a bank account for election expenses related transactions. However, the HC later struck down the SEC's order by stating that the punishment meted out was far greater in relation to the offence committed. A double bench passed it.
- In a small municipality, wherein there were 20 wards, and one directly elected president, in 13-14 wards all candidates for ward members and all candidates for the President except from one political party withdrew their nominations on the day of nomination withdrawal. Allegedly money had played a huge hand. However, in the absence of no complaints in time, whatsoever precluded any action by the SEC.
- Expansion of the role of monitoring, in the light of dimensions of SECs across India. Unfortunately, LBRs are looked at more as conduits of supply for money rather than an investment.
- There is a huge reluctance on part of the state governments to come up with progressive legislation. That is where the problems of SECs get stuck... If CSOs come up, academia come up, it will be a different environment. What will happen today in the municipalities could one day happen for elections to the Vidhan Sabha and the Lok Sabha.
- Control of poll machinery poses problems of a different order. In the case of elections to the Vidhan Sabha and the Lok Sabha, those who are at the head of administration/ governments i.e. ministers are up for elections as candidates, and therefore amenable to ECI's directives. In the case of Panchayats and Municipalities, they are not themselves the contestants, making it difficult for the SECs to get their orders/directives carried out.

Shri. V. Nagi Reddy

- The subject of money power requires to be researched. There are provisions in the Act, but they are inadequate. There is no way of just ECs able to intervene and correct it.
- Unless and until these inadequacies are probed, through academic investigation and publication of papers, thereby coming out in the open, it will not be possible to correct the same and stop the use of money power in the political domain.
- Muscle power has been replaced by money power, in its attempt to alter the fortunes
- Since the Returning Officer and ECs are provided with adequate powers (under related Acts) at their immediate disposal for the re-poll, political parties have come to terms against the use of force/violence/ muscle during elections, maintaining the security of ballot boxes.
- Unfortunately, the money power is equally rampant today. Similar repercussions to that of muscle power – are now being faced with the increasing use of money power in elections. Money power cannot be traced (seen), captured, etc., because the giver, as well as the receiver both, are satisfied, how can it be found out?
- What is available? There is only the availability of 'negative' powers. Set the limits of expenditures – it is very difficult to enforce. These are adversarial measures. It is the adversaries who should bring these matters into the public forum, in order to take necessary actions if need be.
- Acts should also have limits on the political parties.
- Today bribing is a non-cognoscible offence, meaning if somebody is bribing somebody else you cannot catch and take them to the court. It is either of the two (giver or receiver) who has to complain. The non-cognoscibility of the Act is also to be looked into. Telangana has put across to the Government of the

state to turn the Act into a cognoscible offence.

- Suggestion: Fast track courts

Shri. Jagdeep Chhokar

- Who wants to check the misuse of money power?
- The problem of political finance is not limited to India. It is not limited to Parliament, state or local elections. It is also applicable to university elections; wherever there is an election, there is money.
- Political funding is the fountainhead of corruption
- The CSOs, media and judiciary should work in sync to achieve this goal. All these three entities are dispersed in themselves, and there is no formal way to work together.
- US SC: “Democracy involves hardship. The hardship of the unceasing responsibility of every citizen, where the entire people do not take a continuous and considered part of public life. There could not be any democracy in any meaningful sense of the term. Democracy is always a beckoning goal and not a safe harbour. For freedom is an end remitting endeavour, never a final achievement.” And if we need better elections for a healthier democracy, the term healthier democracy is inappropriate – it should be healthy. Our democracy is not healthy, we should first make it healthy, then think of healthier. “That is why no office in this land is more important than being a citizen.”

Session 4

Theme 3, Inclusiveness

Persons on the Dias:

- ❖ *Shri. George Mathew, Institute of Social Sciences – Chair*
- ❖ *Shri. Bhim Raskar, Mahila Rajasatta Andolan*
- ❖ *Smt. Indrani Malkani, V Citizens' Action Network*
- ❖ *Shri. Eric Asplund, International IDEA*
- ❖ *Shri. N.N. Pandey, State Election Commissioner, Jharkhand*

Shri. George Mathew

- We live a highly stratified and patriarchal society...
- Not created a 'Culture' of Local Government despite Constitutional provisions – leading to not achieving inclusiveness
- Conflict – nearly 2000 men and women have lost their lives due to the 73rd and 74th CAA – as a result of elections to LBs; fight against conflict.

Shri. Bhim Raskar

- While policies exist, there has to be a change in the mindset of citizens (towards issues discussed). Any policy or law does not have its own leg. Citizens need to take initiative.
- Confidence amongst female candidates and elected representatives is a major challenge. There has been an increase in their confidence, working independently, in recent years.

- Problems/Issues – 1. Alternative power centres 2. Budget phobia 3. Character assassination of women 4. Division of terms 5. Elections (women does not have the capacity to challenge their counterparts due to the absence/lack of money power in women politics)
- Lack of information, training and exposure (for women)
- Power centers excluding women leaders, excluding youths, etc.; three types of exclusion:- self exclusion (rich, upper-class; they are not worried about the democracy), social exclusion (party- , patriarchy- , caste-, religion-, class- control → in the existence of these controls/barriers, females come to the forefront of electoral politics (as candidates/representatives/voters)); state-society-market, voter has become the consumer and elections have become the marketplace, systemic exclusion: imperfect voter list
- Implementation of the PESA Act has issues and needs auditing. Also, 74th amendment needs to be checked, as how far it has been successful.
- Reach-out media campaigns for awareness: street plays, songs, slogans, krantijyotimanuals, etc.; separate manuals for elected female representatives
- Campaigns on voter education pre and post elections: throughout 5 yrs.
- Mobile Polling
- ASHA Workers, AanganWadi workers being made part of the programme
- AADHAR Card linking with Voter ID
- Sarkaar Darshan programme: visiting local bodies and knowing about its functions and operations

Smt. Indrani Malkani

- Inclusiveness is a societal issue. Inclusiveness should not be looked at from the viewpoint of the elections but from the viewpoint of society. E.g. PwDs; Transgender
- Electoral rolls: dependent on the unique relationship b/w two autonomous bodies that conduct elections – ECI and SEC of all states/UTs. Electoral rolls are prep and updated which is an all India exercise, the same is used by SECs. The purity of the same, and its onus does not entirely lie on EC, it points back at the citizens/voters.
- Lack of access to information is a major issue. (Governor: digital platform)
- Accessibility of SEC websites (WCAG 2.0); provision for feedback, sites should be developed after consultation with user, training, etc.: registration as voters, accessibility for citizens, people with cognitive disabilities, PwDs, etc.
- Attitude towards the less fortunate (empathy for sympathy), stigma and misconception
- All polling booths are maintained by local bodies; these polling stations (elections of ECI or SEC), should be accessible for PwDs. These infrastructure issues should be sorted out and all related standards should be maintained.
- Training of electoral staff for elections – efficient and effective elections for all secs of the society including the disabled. Ramps (gradient of the ramp/on slippery surface, etc.), signage and communications for PwDs as well as others; chronic fatigue syndrome – a person suffering under this condition cannot stand in a queue; so the person should be aware of it.
- Personal accommodation: braille stickers are provided on EVMs – but it true not all blind persons read braille. Provision for... (56:35). Instructions such as this should be incorporated in the training manual. Should not be a static but dynamic training model.
- Transgender – “others” to “third gender”; recognition for the third gender as voters
- Transgender as standing for elections- they have to register as male or female only. There needs to

parity when the electoral process is carried.

Shri. Eric Asplund

- Election training and facilities worldwide help to ensure excluded segments of society are brought into the fold → focus on approach → BRIDGE (building resources in democracy, governance and elections) programme – face-to-face
- Capacity development and education ensure it is achieved – department level or electoral training centre for core or temp staff as well as key stakeholders.
- Electoral training centre: duties – capacity development (job training, stakeholder development, awareness training), peer to peer exchange; voter and civic education (voter info, education at division and unit level and civic education) and engagement; research and innovation (in the field of elections) and tech. advisory support
- Targeted voter and civic education for women and youth and PwDs, etc.
- Equipping election managers with skills to ensure inclusion, as part of their professional development
- Sharing of knowledge and resources, best practices on inclusion
- Developing a skill set within the election management body on target groups: point person (or person to contact with PwDs)
- Acquiring high-tech and low-tech solutions used to engage marginalized or disadvantaged groups
- Continuous training is the key – capacity to do so is important

Shri. N.N. Pandey

- PESA Act and its impact on the increase of voter turnout in the state that has a lot of tribal population and high rate of migrants
- Women reservation has brought more of them to the forefront and thereby resulting in alternative centres of power in the society
- Election Commission, local media, NGOs – stakeholder involvement in the increase of voter turnout in the state of Jharkhand – a success story
- Form 6,7,8 and 8A could be made available in banks and various offices so that people can register themselves as voters
- Organize camps at each polling booth, Panchayat buildings, schools, colleges, etc.; campus ambassadors and district officers could brief and train campus ambassadors – who can then train to these places, spreading awareness
- Special registration camps particularly tribal areas using Mobile vans
- Meeting with political parties at Panchayat level
- Work with CSOs, NGOs and media for interventions and work with disadvantaged sections, women and youth
- Urban apathy is an area of concern that is to be addressed

Session 5

International Participants

Sri Lanka

Best Practices: Women, Youth, Differently-abled and Marginalized Groups/Excluded Sections to be brought into the mainstream.

- In 2015, the SL EC prepared a strategic plan for 2017-2020. It comprises of 7 goals, and goal 4 and 5 refers to inclusiveness. Goal 4: an all-inclusive updated voter list is (should) be in place before every election. Goal 5: All citizens in the marginalized sections of the society should engage in the process of elections in a confident and adequate manner.
- How female participation is ensured? In SL, there are no major barriers to voter registration of women. But there is a huge gap when it comes to women's role in the decision-making process.
 - According to Census and Statistical Department, male to female ratio is 48:52.
 - Major govt. sector jobs as compared to major private sector jobs are dominated by women. But women in the Parliament are just at 5.3 per cent of its total strength.
 - In local authorities, it was less than 2 per cent; with the local authorities Amendment to the Act no. 16 of 2017, 25 per cent of female participation was ensured.
- As per the Strategic Plan, EC conducts a lot of awareness programmes for women. Before the recent local authorities' elections, in the last yr (Feb.), EC conducts a workshop for women (She Leads Sri Lanka) with the support of IFES (International Foundation for Electoral Systems); the goal is to empower female candidates, out of which 40 per cent are alumni participants (from the She Leads SL programme).
- 2.5 youth in SL become eligible to vote every year, close to 300,000 thousand amongst them get disenfranchised every year (because only people who have completed 18 yrs before June 1 become eligible for voter registration).
 - SL does not have an open registry, such as in India. Therefore EC SL conducts Youth Votes SL social media campaign towards a petition to parliament asking for reforms in SL's annual voter registration process.
- To celebrate Int. Youth Day, EC organized Fight for Rights event. It includes polling and counting simulations and participants part of the event, fight with some logos/symbols and slogans on the importance of voter registration
- Voter awareness camps are conducted throughout the yr, especially for women and youth
- SP, EC SL conducts youth camps and workshop regularly. Along with the support, National Support Centre youth parliament programme has been conducted. Also associated with the Ministry of Education, the establishment of school parliamentary programme has taken place for students of secondary section.
- Approx. 1.7 million are PwDs in SL. Voter education workshops are conducted by EC for PwDs. Use of sign language, interpretations, etc. is provided simultaneously along with voter registration videos for the differently abled with the support of the Centre for Monitoring Election Managers (Sign Language videos).
- EC launched Enable Election programme to ensure reasonable access to voters under the category of PwDs. As part of this programme, every polling station plans to prepare for differently-abled friendly polling stations.
 - Plans to establish ramps, ensure all polling stations are established on the ground floor
 - EC plans to introduce braille ballot paper for the blind voters (currently this does not exist for the

blind, and only support/assistance is given while a blind gives his or her vote)

- Major marginalized people in SL are estate sector workers. People living in slums are streets. In order to address these people, EO conducts awareness programmes in the estate sector, on Salary Dates
 - EC sent msgs to all mobile phones w.r.t. regarding dates for registration and its importance
- 1 June every year, EC conducts various drives to create voter awareness and provide for the importance of elections and democracy
 - Outcome: Increase in voter registration
 - Feb. 2018: Voter turnout ratio increased for recent elections, and decreased the amount rejected votes.
- SL does not have provisions for overseas citizens, criminals, hospitalized people as well as private sector workers; a system to address these challenges should be brought in
- No law for controlling Social Media, Fake News, Viral Msgs; plans are there to introduce the same with the support of Int. Orgs.

Bangladesh

- Bangladesh Election Commission, in order to ensure ownership of democracy, creates an accurate voter list. So that all eligible voters are there in the electoral list. Correct and efficient voter list.
- Voter registration programme, starts at the time all over Bangladesh, and one enumerator is appointed per 2000 people; door-to-door – to get data and provide registration date and time.
- Enumerator collects data on the dead voters as well – to delete them from the voter list
- A technical team collects biometric information such as figure prints, iris scans, photographs from the registration centre.
- In 2007, there were a lot of duplicate voters in Bangladesh; with the help of Army, personnel data was collected along with biometric information to prepare an accurate voter list. Now this programme is continued every year in the specific period
- Revising authorities are appointed for the purpose of ensuring efficiency and correct of voter list
- Ads for the same is carried out in the form of posters, leaflets, TV ads and dramas amongst localities; announcements in mosques, temples, pagoda, etc.
- Smart National IDs are produced for every voter in the country – as a bi-product of this voter list that ensures every citizen to be a voter
- In LBs elections, EC Bangladesh did 66,465 total elected representatives wherein 15,497 were reserved women representatives
- Created a monitoring judicial, law enforcement agencies and administrative team with RO to ensure MCC and protect from money and muscle power
- 3 Local Govt. Associations in Bangladesh: Rural – Union Parishad, Association at Upper Zilha level and Association of Local Govts. at Urban level.

Indonesia

- Indonesia, 2 types of elections: national and regional
- 34 provinces; head of the state is the Governor; 514 regencies or cities. Villages or sub-villages; Wards.
- The existence of schedule for concurrent elections: budget, simplification of the process, security, regulation, is ensured
- Last election 27 June 2018; next election 2020; Concurrent elections will be scheduled in 2024; All

provinces, regencies and cities will be seeing elections at the same time in 2024; In 2024 parliament and presidential elections. Next yr, there will be national elections of Indonesia.

- In 2018, 171 elections in Indonesia. There are 3 silent days before the day of elections.
- Turnout: 2015 > 69percent in 2017 > 77percent but in 2018 about 73percent
- Punching method is used in elections; includes candidate number, name, and photo -- used to identify the vote. If there is the only candidate, there is still an election and other spots are left blank; if the candidate does not have more than 50percent voter he or she will not be elected.
- Braille template is used in ballots
- There is no reservation for women in elections.

Bhutan

Money Power

- Constituency Development Grant, 2M per constituency, oversteps the jurisdiction of the local government, sway the outcome of future elections, construed as election campaign, compromise the free and fair elections. Control of the approval process of state fund, Office of profit which is violation of laws.
- Voluntary contribution ceiling, parties wants to increase
- State fund for parliamentary elections, no fund for LG but spending limit increase from 15,000 to 50,000 from July 2008 Assembly
- Monitoring of expenditure by National Observer for permissible such as hiring of vehicles, stationaries, printing of manifestoes, DSA, rental offices, communication, etc. Weekly report submission
- Expenditure on media, banners, pamphlets, posters, etc. aid by state differently
- Submission of expenditure accounts within 30 days from polls

Social Media

- Social Media Rules and Regulations 2018
- Facebook participation
- Social media contents to complaints lodge with ECB
- Arty denouncing violence
- Winning arty urging people to refrain from divisive politics
- Adding WeChat groups of candidates and supporters
- Passenger left bag containing money and taxi driver reported to police. Social Media making false claims relating election on-going activities.
- Goal smuggling and money laundering case reported as well

Best practices in Bhutanese Elections

- Bhutan Electoral data based system for voter registration, web based and VPIC
- Bhutan Electoral Education and Training, General and Specific Round
- Royal Families and Religious personalities are above politics and do not participate in electoral process. Religion is kept separate from politics to prevent divisiveness and any rapture of the social fabric.
- State financing of parliamentary election campaigns to keep money and muscle power out of elections
- National Council and local governments are not affiliated to political arties
- Academic qualification of candidates, bachelors and functional literate and age 25 to 65
- Election dispute settlement body, three tier system i.e. District, Central and Commission
- Public Debates and Common Forums
- Civil Society for promotion of Democracy

- Postal Ballots System or Facilitation Booths
- Sealing of Border
- Election Advertising Board
- Use of EVMs
- Declaration of results on the same day of poll
- Learning from Experience programme
- Code of Conduct for political parties, candidates and election officials

Inclusiveness

- Women registered Voter higher than Men
- Women Member of parliament in 2008 > 10, 11 per cent and in 2013 > 6, 8 per cent, in 2018 > 11, 15 per cent
- Prisoners, highlanders, people living with disability through mobile booths
- Lady security

Role of Stakeholders

- Media, public debate and campaign coverage
- Office of media arbitrator and social media monitors
- Office of attorney general, legal service
- Judiciary, dispute training
- Local Government Functionaries, law and order, coordination, etc.
- Civil Servants as Election Officers
- Election Coordinators
- Security personals
- Civil Society Organizations, promoting through Education i.e. BCMD
- Political parties
- Voters
- Corporates, helicopter services under CSR
- Transport, telecom, banking and power services

Session 6

Theme 4, How to Control the Menace of Social Media, Fake News, etc.

Persons on the Dias:

- ❖ *Shri. Ajit Ranade, Founder Member and Trustee, Association for Democratic Reforms, Sr. Economist and Political Analyst*
- ❖ *Shri. Balsingh Rajput, Superintendent of Police, Cyber Branch Maharashtra*
- ❖ *Shri. Moiz Haque, Sr. Journalist and HoD, Nagpur University*
- ❖ *Shri. Dalip Singh, IAS, State Election Commissioner, Haryana*

Shri Moiz Haque,

Sr. Journalist and HoD, Nagpur University

- Suggested that the problem of lies in social media is that public act on it. It is up to us to use it properly.
- The fake news affects the political opinion of the public. Voters and consumers are not passive, they

are active. News should be credible. All news is bested but not all bests are news. Fake news is given through 3 routes –

- Social network websites
- News feed and message groups
- Mainstream media such as radio, telephone and newspapers republishing falsities
- The fourth pillar of democracy is the media; hence media responsibility must be maintained. There exists a problem in defining fake news published with bad intents.
- Fixing responsibilities: In the world, many countries have tried to put a restriction on fake news. In India too internet is under the IT Act 2008 and that marks evaluation and criminal loss due to mainstream media including those that create defamation and disturbs social harmony.
- Fixing liability- fixing the liability of people who engage in the forwarding of malicious contents.
- Making laws
- Using technology: consumer awareness, education and restricting false information from gaining ground.
- There are new methods and laws for tackling fake news- European Union guidelines, German laws etc.
- For fact checking- Google reverse image search, TinEye etc.
- Indian news portal The Quint has started Webqif.
- Finding network offensive materials.
- The need for development of critical thinking among citizens and feedback is essential from the citizens. While framing new policies, a need to focus on senders but on receivers for creating awareness.
- Media literacy skills should be imparted to healthy youths and adults.
- To develop critical thinking, institutes and the media messengers shall be our culture.
- The public should recognise bias in mass information.
- Media literacy campaign,
 - Nurturing an informed public
 - Re-enforcing social cohesion and trusts
 - Promoting fact checking
 - Disrupting online falsehoods
 - Dealing with threats to national security and sovereignty

Shri. Balsingh Rajput

- Stated that there are three layers of the internet: surface web, deep web and darknet.
- There are different misuses of media-
 - Trolling And Cyber Bullying
 - Defamation And Shaming
 - Fake News
 - Coordinated And Syndicated Misinformation Campaigns
 - Psychological Operations Through Targeted Messaging
 - Data Harvesting
 - Social Engineering
- Similarly, there are various perpetrators of fake news as state-sponsored actors, hired corporate entities, individuals, parties and trolls.
- Different approaches are essential for tackling the menace of fake news on different platforms.
- He further expounded important incident of Bharat Band on 2/4/2018 where the use of AI, GIS and Big Data by US-based Dalit activists.

- stopfake.org of Ukraine can be replicated for use of SEC for monitoring fake news.
- One of the invitees asked a question as penetration of internet is very different in rural and urban areas especially when it comes to implementation of various government schemes through apps. How to monitor rural and urban usage of the internet? (What solution should we have to control social media fake news in rural and urban areas?)
- Impact of Social Media on Indian Election System. What is the solution?
 - Protection
 - Prevention
 - Detection
 - Mitigation
 - Protection of the social assets of the commission
 - Creation of crowdsourcing
 - Blocking fake news content as per IT act.
 - Recognition and monitoring of social media for election through blanket strategy
 - Declaration by parties and contestants about SM
 - The Election commission social media policy for use of all social media dissemination and education
 - Voter Bribing through Election transactions should be monitored.
 - Team to team information exchange
 - Appoint Security Observer
 - Cybersecurity groups to review model code of conduct
- How cybersecurity and election should be maintained? We should have a thorough review of cyber assets of the election commission. The election assets need to be protected. IT information should be reviewed. The review of the process and engaging proper technology to protect it.

Session 7

Theme 5, Role of Various Stakeholders

Persons on the Dias:

- ❖ *Shri. Jagdeep Chhokar, Founder Member, Association for Democratic Reforms*
- ❖ *Dr Shri.Mrudul Nile, Associate Professor, Department of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai*
- ❖ *Shri. S. M. Vijaynand, Former Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala*
- ❖ *Shri. Shujau Hussain, President, Local Community Initiative, Maldives (Member of Commonwealth Local Government Forum), Former Vice President, Local Government Authority, Maldives and Former President, National Youth Council, Maldives.*
- ❖ *Shri. Asok Kumar Chauhan, (Retd.) I.A.S., State Election Commissioner, Bihar*
- ❖ *Shri. Girish Kuber, Editor, Loksatta*

Shri. Jagdeep Chhokar

- The real players, in this game, from the top to the bottom, are political parties.
- The voter's choice is pre-constrained by a setup of candidates picked up by Political parties. So it is the Political Parties we need to deal with from the top to bottom.

Dr. Shri.Mrudul Nile

- Functionalism as a theory about serving all the roles that the society has, and work towards the survival of it.
- According to Amartya Sen, political and civil rights are the most the essential parts to deal with development.
- Development cannot come unless and until there is some type of a political participation.
- Political socialization is one of the cornerstones of the gamut And Building of entire political participation.
- In socialization, there are dysfunctions that result in inequalities resulting in a discriminate society; reflecting directly to elections and participation therein. This dysfunctional behaviour causes non-participation.
- Effective participation: community mobilization and social consultations – discourse on political participation.
- Community mobilization as a capacity building process. Right or duty to participate becomes important as part of it.
- Social Consultation: two aspects – organic participation (collective action, unity, political action to counter the state); induced consultation (people come out and talk about state schemes/programmers through decentralized community-driven development).
- Community orgs with informal legitimacy can bring-in a discourse in a duty centric scenario where elections become the mandatory duties.
- At primary and secondary level education, people should be exposed to elections.

Shri. S. M. Vijaynand

- Real-est accountability is probably electoral accountability
- Local Self-Governments are extremely weak in India and the connection between local democracy and local government is not understood.
- Elections from local to national-level are less contested on ideas and more contested on parties and personalities.
- Citizens are the primary stakeholder, but are the least powerful; they cannot have a real say; they may not know their stake.
- State Election Commission, is the most powerful, protected by law, tradition, judiciary, the most knowledgeable, the most permanent and the only non-partisan and most active stakeholder.
- S. E. C. can draw posters, such as Smoking posters identify; this is Corruption, this kills.
- Continuous capacity building, more during the non-election season so that people during the election time are more aware to cast an informed vote.
- Political Parties to: Announce their plan of action, on how they are going to observe the (Mode) Code of Conduct and publish it, political education of the voters.
- Media: highlight issues and force response from candidates; QandA columns and campaigns for voter awareness.
- Media as a watchdog function with an expose or sting operations.
- The NGOs can connect with voters better and instil larger values like democracy, inclusion and social justice; convince people that the vote is secret.
- Media and Academia have been away from the local self-government, they need to be attracted.
- The roles of corporate houses will be largely CSR funding, for research and public interest advertisements.

- CRPs and SHGs to engage as vehicles of citizen education in India and strengthen Gram Sabha.
- Hard devolution and soft devolution – the hard devolution is political and the soft devolution is social.

Shri. Shujau Hussain

- Political Parties vs. NFOs: Electoral Circle
- Making election free and fair depends on the society, it depends on the culture, it depends on the people who are there on the ground
- NGOs are the initial layer of the founding of political parties. In societies, NGOs play a huge role contributing into the political arena,
- When the NGOs endorse certain candidates they tend to become more favourable in the eyes of the voters. In doing so, these NGOs become more powerful than the political parties, in the CS.

Shri. Asok Kumar Chauhan

- Political Parties do not participate in LB elections but political will can do wonders w.r.t. women participation and Bihar is an example of that.
- Media Support for elections, in an attempt to conduct a transparent environment in the conduct of elections at the LB elections.

Shri. Girish Kuber

- In cities and rural areas, it is much more fashionable, to talk about National and State Assembly Elections
- LSGs are controlled by the party in power just like any other department of the state government.
- LSGs should have more connected with the cities/areas/its people but that has not been the case. It can be found that they have resulted in the ghetto-isation of society.
- The people are not aware of SEC and its role, failing to understand and care about the faith of the cities they are living in.
- GST – Centrist type of tax structure – will further cause funding issues to RLBs and ULBs (especially)

Session 8

Valedictory Session

Persons on the Dias:

- ❖ *Shri. Devendra Fadnavis, Hon'ble Chief Minister*
- ❖ *Shri. Sudhir Mungantiwar, Finance and Planning and Forests departments Minister*
- ❖ *Shri. Dhananjay Munde, Leader of Opposition, Maharashtra Legislative Council*
- ❖ *Shri. J.S. Saharia, Hon'ble State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra*
- ❖ *Shri. Shekhar Channe, Hon'ble Secretary, State Election Commission, Maharashtra*

Shri. Devendra Fadnavis

(Chief Guest)

- Elections to Local Self-Government Institutes could be part of 'One Nation, One Election' concept; all elections should happen at one time: Committee under Shri. Sudhir Mungantiwar, Minister of Finance and Planning and Forests, Govt. of Maharashtra, for the study of One Nation, One Election.
- Because Local Body elections are held throughout the year, there is a prolonged period for which the Model Code of Conduct is implemented; this gives rise to a lot of complex challenges in the decision-making process
- In order to overcome this issue, the concept of 'One Nation, One Election' can also incorporate Local Body elections
- Due to agitations and protests, various types of FIRs are filed against political leaders; On the basis of this, the candidates are considered criminals, but it should not be the case; To overcome these issues, not just a transparent approach but also a practical approach is necessary for the electoral process
- Not only devolution of funds, functions and functionaries to Local Body Institutes will bring about change, we should also provide for capacity building for elected representatives
- There should be trickling down of knowledge and information to the Local Self-Government Institutes; Through this trickling down of knowledge and information, elected representatives should be made aware of their duties and responsibilities
- In order to increase voter turnout, efficient and correct voter list should be prepared: AADHAR Card can be linked to Voter List, Mandatory Voting.

Shri. Sudhir Mungantiwar

(Guest of Honor)

- Recommended for better elections with better selections for a healthier democracy
- We have restrictions to control expenditure by candidates during election period only, but no restrictions otherwise; this is a paradox which should be given a serious thought.
- We should try to inspire and motivate good people because, for a healthier democracy, better elections should be complemented with a better selection.
- We should also make an effort for 100percent voter turnout in Local Body elections
- The onus also lies on the voter when it comes to making election better
- We should think about the expenditure incurred by the candidate/parties throughout the 5 yrs. and not just in the 45 days period while the MCC is applied
- Understand the impact of having an upper limit for expenditure on candidates

Shri. Dhananjay Munde

(Guest of Honor)

- It is our duty to protect and safeguard the independent structure and functioning of State Election Commission and elections at large, and the purpose to preserve the democratic values and ethos of this country
- The governments and State Election Commissions should take into account 5 themes/issues seriously and address them as immediate concerns that have deeply affected the trickling down of democracy and its ethos at the local body level
- The direction of the State Election Commissions should be followed by the State Government; Most

- important is that the State Election Commission is totally independent than the State Government
- For better elections and healthier democracy, the state governments should always ensure the independent and autonomous status of State Election Commissions, and should not be compromised at all
 - Strongly supportive of the challenges we face in terms of inclusiveness, wherein not just the voter participation on Election Day is important but also making them an active participant in the everyday functioning of democracy
 - The State Election Commissions should also ensure that the electoral process is smoother.
 - The Government must provide finance and staff as per the assessment of SEC, as it seems some Departments and officers still question the authority of SEC
 - The common act instead of five different acts for all local body elections
 - There is an issue regarding disqualification of candidates due to non-submission of caste validity certificate on time. Though it is difficult to hold someone accountable, we should think of a possible solution to this problem.

Shri. J.S. Saharia

(Concluding Remark)

- Hon'ble State Election Commissioner after welcoming the dignitaries, especially Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri. Devendra Fadnavis, Hon'ble Finance Minister Shri. Sudhir Mungantiwar and Leader Opposition Shri. Dhananjay Munde, informed that the said International Conference had been arranged with the following two main objectives in mind:
 - to bring LSGs, their elections and SECs at the centre stage of political process, and
 - to create an International platform for exchange of ideas and good practices etc.
- Hon'ble State Election Commissioner while briefing about the discussions held over last 2 days.made the following presentation:
 - Problems faced by the LSGs and the Electoral Authorities are more or less the same in all the Democratic Countries.
 - It is unfortunate that the LSGs and SECs do not get the required respect and treatment from the Government.
 - There was an urgent need to create an International platform for continuous exchange of ideas, good practices and training of election managers etc.
 - There is a need for LSGs to form Professional Associations for asserting themselves.
 - Governments must undertake the exercise of devolving 3Fs (Funds, Functions and Functionaries) in the true spirit of the Constitution besides undertaking urgent electoral reforms to cleanse the electoral system from the misuse of money and muscle powers and social media.
 - State Election Commissions must use the Constitutional powers and try to be fiercely Independent. They must fill all the vacuous areas wherever possible.

Shri. Shekhar Channe

(Sum-up)

- Landmark feat to provide for a platform for dialogues in the international community, on matters of Elections to Local Self-Government Institutions
- Able to discuss on a wide and signature-mix of topics, issues and common areas of interest that are

core to not just reforming election to local bodies but at the same time a must for strengthening the democratic institutions that safeguard the citizens and their role for a healthier democracy

- Misuse of Money is a big threat to democracy and needs urgent remedies
- Voting percentage is much better at the Gram Panchayat and Panchayat levels, but there is apathy amongst voters in Urban Local Bodies
- A key factor to the functioning of all societies is the active participation of Women, especially Elected Women Representatives. This is an area needing more and more work, as challenges and dynamics herein are highly complex
- Another important factor, we deeply feel is fundamental to the purpose of elections, across the world, is of inclusiveness.
- Discussions and deliberations have set the ball rolling for creating awareness not just in India, but amongst other democratic nations, on the subject of local body elections

National Workshop of Senior Officers of SECs
on
**“Expectations of Constitution –
Role of SEC”**

by

**Institute of Democracy and Elections for Good Governance
(a wing of State Election Commission, Maharashtra)**

27 and 28 March 2019

The Dukes Retreat Hotel, Lonavala-Khandala, Maharashtra

***National Workshop of Senior Officers of SECs
on
“Expectations of Constitution – Role of SEC”***

26 / 27 / 28 March, 2019

Lonavala

A two-day National Workshop of senior officers of the various State Election Commissions on the subject, "Expectations of Constitution – Role of SECs" was arranged by the State Election Commission, Maharashtra on 26th, 27th and 28th March, 2019 at Lonavala. The Workshop was attended by 4 State Election Commissioners and 19 representatives from 12 State Election Commissions as per add annexure.

2. **26th March 2019 – Pre-Workshop Meeting (6 -7 p.m.) –**

Hon'ble State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra briefed all the participants about the genesis of the said Workshop. He informed that though the State Election Commissioners meet regularly and discuss ways and means of making the elections more free, fair and transparent as per the expectations of the Constitution, the same was not being done for the senior officers of the State Election Commissions. It is not only necessary but essential also that the officers / staff of SECs should also work in an Independent manner as per the Constitutional provisions. The present Workshop has therefore been arranged as per the suggestions given by the various State Election Commissioners from time to time in the past.

3. Hon'ble State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra further explained that this being the first Workshop of its kind, it has been deliberately kept as a paid workshop so that the various SECs own it and feel fully involved in the entire process.

4. Representatives of various SECs agreed that there was an urgent need for the senior officers / staff of the SECs to work in terms of the Constitutional provisions. They all welcomed the initiative taken by SECM.

5. **27th March 2019 –** Details of the day long programme are as follows :

i) 9.00 to 11.00 – Hon'ble State Election Commissioners of Maharashtra, U.T., Haryana and Gujarat expressed their views in the Inaugural function. They informed that the subject of the Workshop had been discussed amongst the various State Election Commissions from time to time in the past in one form or the other. All the SECs generally felt that:

- Various stakeholders including Government treat SECs either as a department of the Government and / or subordinate office of ECI.
- Several State Election Commissioners and their senior officers / staff seek guidance from the Government on various issues which is not correct.
- Various provisions in the State Laws which are inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution, are required to be amended.
- State Governments do not provide staff and / or finances as per the assessment of the State Election Commissioners.
- State Election Commissions have to identify and fill vacuous areas by issuing orders under their Plenary Powers.
- There is an urgent need to conduct awareness workshops for senior officers of the State Government, local representatives, various stakeholders etc.
- State Election Commissions must take any and / or all activities required to ensure free, fair, transparent and timely elections as per the expectations of the Constitution.
- State Election Commissioners must assert themselves and use the authority given to them by the Constitution.

ii) 11.15 to 12.15 – Session II – Shri Kiran Kurundkar, Secretary, SECM, Prof. Shri.Mrudul Nile, O.S.D., IDEGG and Shri. Avinash Sanas, Dy. Commissioner, SECM expressed their views on “Laws on Election and landmark judgments of Apex Courts”.

iii) 12.15 to 13.30 – Session III – Dr. Manasi Phadke, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune, Smt. Anuya Kunwar, Asia Cordinator, Commonwealth Local Government Forum, Prof. Shri.Mrudul Nile, O.S.D., IDEGG and Shri. Avinash Sanas, Dy. Commissioner, SECM gave details of “Innovative and Good Practices adopted by SEC Maharashtra”.

iv) 14.15 to 15.30 – Session IV – Shri. Anil Pande, AVP and Global Head, Land T Infotech, Dr. Kulkarni, Sr. Director, CDAC, Dr. Bhirud, HoD, VJTI, talked about “Possible future technologies which may impact the electoral processes”.

v) 15.30 to 16.45 – Session V – Shri. Parimal Maya Sudhakar, MIT, and Shri. Jagdish More, PRO, SECM talked about “Communication strategies for tapping the untapped”.

vi) 17.00 to 17.45 – Session VI – Shri. Ajit Ranade, Co-Founder, Association for Democratic Reforms, talked about “Electoral Reforms with special focus on financial transparency”.

vii) 17.45 to 19.00 – Session VII – Participants were divided into 4 groups and asked to finalise their strategies on the following subjects :

- a) Role of SEC
- b) How to ensure Independence of SEC
- c) How to ensure Government abides by directions of SEC and provide all the resources (staff / finance etc.) as per its assessment
- d) How to involve maximum stakeholders, increase voter turnout, Awareness generation, research, etc. and use of Modern Technology

6. **28th March 2019 :**

i) 9.00 to 9.30 – Shri.. Bhim Raskar, Resource and Support Centre for Development, gave detailed presentation on “Communication strategies for tapping the untapped”.

ii) 9.30 to 11.00 – Thereafter all the 4 groups gave their detailed presentation on the identified themes.

iii) 11.00 to 11.30 – Concluding Session - Shri. Kiran Kurundkar, Secretary, SECM, Shri. Shekhar Channe, Transport Commissioner, Govt. of Maharashtra, and Shri J.S.Saharia, State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra, gave their views.

7. Presentations given by the various persons including State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra have been sent separately to all the SECs and Knowledge Partners of SECM.
8. Most of the participants agreed with the views expressed in the Workshop specially the following:
 - (i) Need for SECs to assert themselves and take all possible steps in terms of the Constitutional provisions,
 - (ii) Need to adopt modern technology and computers in handling the voluminous and complex elections, and
 - (iii) Need to devise strategies for handling future challenges etc.
9. After detailed discussion, following decisions were taken:
 - (i) All the State Election Commissions shall try to implement the various new initiatives at the earliest, say in 3 months time (add annexure)
 - (ii) 2nd Workshop of senior officers of SECs for sharing their experiences should be arranged in June /

July 2019, wherein some Commissioners should also be invited.

- (iii) All the SECs should send the details of their best practices to SECM by 15th of April 2019 so that they could be compiled in a book form.
 - (iv) Each SEC should devise strategies for using the services of “Institute of Democracy and Election for Good Governance” established by SECM.
10. The Workshop thereafter ended with vote of thanks to all the Election Commissioners, participants and the organizers.

