

13th March 2016

Press Release

12th Annual National Conference on Electoral and Political Reforms: Day 2

Hyderabad, 13th Mar 2016: The second day of the 12th Annual National Conference being organized by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and National Election Watch (NEW) focussed on the role of the media in elections as well as the grave necessity to address the most pressing problems in the electoral and political arena.

Innovative Ideas to Decrease Money and Muscle Power in Elections at the Grassroots Level:

Panelists: *Shri V. Panduranga Rao (Former Sarpanch, Nalgonda), Shri Kusam Rajamouli (Former Sarpanch, Warangal), Shri Rajiv Kumar (Bihar EW), Shri Sudhir Pal (Jharkhand EW);*
Chairperson: *Maj. Gen. Anil Verma (Retd.) (Head – ADR & NEW)*

Political corruption is the root cause of corruption in all other spheres, therefore it is imperative that Political Parties function in a transparent and accountable manner.

Chairing the session, Maj. Gen. Anil Verma (retd.), Head of ADR & NEW said that similar to MP and MLA elections, a lot of money is being spent and liquor and other inducements are being distributed even in panchayat elections

Shri Sudhir Pal Coordinator for Jharkhand EW suggested that there should be close interaction with the State Election Commissioner. He said that the details of candidates contesting Panchayat elections should also be available in the public domain.

A former sarpanch from Nalgonda, V. Panduranga Rao stressed on the importance of spreading awareness among the citizens for improving governance.

Kusam Rajamouli, former sarpanch from Warangal opined that MLAs and MPs should be discouraged from participating in local body election campaigns.

Impact of the Internet, Social Media and Data Analysis on Elections & Governance:

Panelists: *Shri. Naveen Gattu (COO, Gramener), Shri Abhinandan Sekhri (Co-Founder, Newslaundry), Shri Nikhil Pahwa (Founder, Editor & Publisher – medianama.com), Shri Sanjay Dubey (Founder & Editor, satyagraya.com), Shri Rakesh Reddy Dubbudu (Founder – factly.in, Coordinator, AP & TEW);*
Chairperson: *Dr. Vipul Mudgal (Trustee of ADR)*

Voting in elections in India is done majorly by the poor, tribal and rural areas, said Vipul Mudgal, Trustee ADR.

Naveen Gattu, COO Gramener said that media, information and emotions are the 3 factors that affect elections largely. He said it is important to focus on data journalism as it gives info on perceptions and data should be exposed to people for spreading a positive atmosphere. Abhinandan Sekhri, co-founder Newslaundry.com said that media makes the invisible visible.

Hindi online media is yet to pick up in India, said Sanjay Dubey founder satyagraha.com. He also said that the proportion of rural voters increased during the 2014 lok sabha elections without the presence of social media.

Rakesh Dubbudu founder factly.in opined that data analysed in isolation may mislead the public and spreading them on social media without checking the facts might have dangerous outcomes.

Nikhil Pahwa founder medianama.com said that whatsapp is going to be the number 1 social media platform in the coming years. He advocated for strong privacy laws in India.

Data journalism and social media have started having a strong influence on elections and governance. Social media has played an important role in recent elections. Social media is overtaking conventional media and political parties have also understood the importance of social media.

National Election Watch

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Thanks & Regards

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