



**LOK SATTA MOVEMENT**  
*People Power*

## **Media RELEASE**

### **“HISAB DO ABHIYAN” (For corporator accountability directly to voters)**

**Background:**

Mumbai, 27<sup>th</sup> Feb

Mumbai city's problems are a classic manifestation of poor and short-term urban management, under development of rural India, and the consequent unchecked migration. Each of the over 12.5 million citizens of this city is living in stressful conditions and is suffering. There is therefore an urgent need to search for winning solutions. Accordingly, LOK SATTA MOVEMENT, on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2006 had launched 'VOTE MUMBAI' Campaign for "systemic reforms" in the Governance so that in future one can hope to – [a] eliminate a 'repeat' of 26<sup>th</sup> July 2005, or, in the alternative, [b] minimize the damage caused by such catastrophic events. Path to the fulfilment of the hope lay in carefully examining the basic structure of the Management under the BMC Act and the method and manner of framing, reviewing and modifying the Development Plan.

The thrust of the Vote Mumbai campaign was:

- 1- Transparent local government, which is accountable to the citizens – DISCLOSURE NORMS, RIGHT TO RECALL, OMBUDSMEN, INDEPENDENT AUDITORS, CITIZEN CHARTERS WITH PENALTIES, BENCH MARKING OF SERVICE LEVELS, E-GOVERNANCE.
- 2- Local Self Government with legitimate platform for people's participation – AREA SABHA AT EVERY POLLING BOOTH FOOT PRINT
- 3- Decentralization and democratization of executive branch of local government – WARD COMMITTEES AT EVERY COUNCILLOR WARD.
- 4- Empowered local government which is directly accountable to citizen – DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYOR.
- 5- Better development plan process – DEMOCRATIC METROPOLITAN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE ALONG WITH INTEGRATED REGIONAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY.

During the campaign, various activities were under taken, including advocacy (with political leaders and government officials), street plays, signature campaign (Over 7

lakhs), human chain (Over 4500 children), Pamphlet distribution (2.5 lakhs), public meetings (Over 1000), inter collegiate debate etc.

It is heartening to note that most of the recommendations listed above like formation of ward committee at electoral ward level, area sabhas for each polling booth along with right to recall of ward committee members by her/his voters, disclosure norms, metropolitan regional planning committee etc have been accepted and are under implementation by the Maharashtra Government. It is further heartening to note that the recommendation of a directly elected empowered mayor has become a part of 6<sup>th</sup> report of five member second administration reforms commission appointed by the prime minister where Lok Satta Movement is represented by its leader Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan as a member.

Seeing the opportunity where citizens can organize themselves to form local self-government i.e. "Area Sabhas", at polling booth level and "Ward Committees" chaired by the corporator at electoral ward level, Vote Juhu campaign was launched in ward 63 before the Mumbai municipal elections in Feb 2007 with twin purpose (a) that the political culture of money power and criminalisation can change by winning elections by organising citizens as area sabhas in every polling booth (b) that local ward governance can improve if a ward committee is formed at every electoral ward level with citizen participation in the form area sabhas. It is heartening to note that the first experiment of winning election has been successful where a citizen candidate Mr. Adlof D'Souza won election by just spending Rs. 75,000/-. It has shown to the political parties that if they focus on people's involvement then that will reduce their dependence on money power and criminals to win elections.

## **"HISAB DO ABHIYAN"**

***In a true democracy, voters must be empowered***

In a true democracy, voters not only must be empowered but must also feel empowered. And, if knowledge is power, then, one of the ways of empowering voters is to keep them informed about the manner or ways in which their "REPRESENTATIVE" utilises or spends the public money put at her/his disposal. The CORPORATORS in Mumbai got elected by voters nearly a year ago. As a "CORPORATOR" they are allocated a fund of Rs. 35 Lacs each year and have the freedom to use those funds for benefit or welfare of people living in their ward. It is essential that voters from their ward be informed about the manner in which these funds are utilized or spent, and, whether, voters have had any "say" in deciding the manner in which the funds are spent. In other words, the people must know, whether they were consulted, if at all, before deciding on spending the amount, and if so, to what extent and how.

Therefore, on behalf of the voters Lok Satta Movement has posted a Questionnaire (Copy enclosed) to each of them. A letter (Copy enclosed) has also been sent to leaders of all political parties.

Young volunteers from **Yuva Satta** *youth wing of Lok Satta Movement* will approach each corporator in phases. **On Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Feb, young volunteers led by Campaign Coordinator 20 year old student Mr. Ruben Mascarenhas met the corporator (Mayor) Ms. Shubha Raul (Ward No; 7), Mr. Clive Dias (Ward No; 73), Mr. Dharmesh Vyas**

(Ward No; 81) and Mr. Adolf D'Souza (Ward No; 63) and obtained their concurrence that they will submit their response to the campaign questionnaire in a weeks time.

Lok Satta Movement intends to give wide “**PUBLICITY**” to the information provided by the corporator or their **FAILURE** to respond. The objective is to provide “knowledge” and empower the voters and make corporator accountable towards her/his voters.

*The Hisab Do Abhiyan is an endeavor to implement participatory democracy. Recent years have witnessed an increasing interest and a growing consciousness of the need and importance of local self-government as provider of services to the local community as well as an instrument of democratic self-government. Local government is an integral part of the national government structure, the level of government closest to the citizens and in the best position both to involve them in the decision making process of improving their living conditions and to make use of their knowledge and capabilities in the promotion of all round development.*

### **About LOK SATTA MOVEMENT:**

Lok Satta Movement- India's leading civil society initiative and people's movement for wide-ranging governance and political reforms with several notable successes to its credit. Through partnership with several organizations, Lok Satta Movement works on the Vote India ([www.voteindia.org](http://www.voteindia.org)), Vote Mumbai ([www.votemumbai.org](http://www.votemumbai.org)), Vote Juhu and Vote Police ([www.votepolice.org](http://www.votepolice.org)) Campaigns for political & governance reforms.

**For details on this campaign:**

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**To be part of ‘HISAB DO’ Abhiyan or understand it better citizens can e-mail at: [loksatta.maharashtrachapter@gmail.com](mailto:loksatta.maharashtrachapter@gmail.com) OR Tel: 0 22 2373 2454**