

## **Disclose the names of liquor kickback recipients and act against guilty: Lok Satta**

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The Lok Satta Party today demanded that the Government straightway disclose the names of people's representatives, officials and others who have received kickbacks from liquor syndicates.

It may be recalled that the State's Anti Corruption Bureau had raided the offices of liquor syndicates and seized documents testifying to payment of bribes to influential people for conniving at their illegal activities.

Addressing a media conference, Lok Satta Party Acting Working President V. Laxman Balaji and leaders G. Raja Reddy, V. Vijayender Reddy and K. Gita Murthy said that the Government should inquire into the scam without delay and mete out stringent punishment including confiscation of ill-gotten property to the guilty.

The leaders recalled that it is only the Lok Satta Party which had agitated against auction of liquor shops as it anticipated its inexorable consequences. Those who obtained liquor shops at exorbitant rates have been indulging in malpractices like selling liquor at more than maximum retail prices, palming off spurious liquor, encouraging opening of belt shops and running unofficial bars at licensed retail outlets.

Traditional political parties like the Congress and the Telugu Desam, which believe in luring voters with liquor, running liquor shops in benami names and accepting party funds from liquor mafia did not join the Lok Satta in its agitation.

Both the Congress and the TDP had been guilty of turning liquor into a cash cow for the State exchequer and ruining the health and finances of the poor, they charged. The poor are squandering their earnings under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme on consuming liquor as liquor shops have become omnipresent. They demanded that the Government publish a white paper on the funds it spends on the welfare of the poor and the revenue it derives from liquor sales.

The Lok Satta leaders demanded that the Government run liquor shops by doing away with the auction system. It should put an end to belt shops and illicit liquor, and drastically regulate the number of liquor outlets. Village panchayats should have the freedom to decide whether there should be a liquor outlet in the village or not, they added.