

Dr.JP faults parties on Liquor, Education and Electricity

Written by

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Lok Satta Party President Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan today charged the traditional Congress and Telugu Desam Parties and the newly formed YSR Congress Party of ignoring people's basic, burning problems in their unabashed pursuit of vote bank politics.

Addressing a media conference at the party headquarters, Dr. JP referred to the traditional parties' stand on three issues – liquor, education and electricity --- to drive home his charge that they are acting in collusion.

On liquor, Dr. JP referred to ACB raids on liquor syndicates in the State which revealed the nexus between them on the one hand and Ministers, officials, media and legislators belonging to all parties on the other. The Government has not made public the report, leave alone sanctioning prosecution of the guilty. Since the guilty belonged to all the traditional parties, they are maintaining a studied silence after muted protests initially.

No political party other than the Lok Satta is keen on saving the poor from the liquor menace. The Lok Satta has demanded that the Government take over retail outlets and limit their number and working hours.

The Lok Satta Party would seek details of the raids utilizing the Right to Information Act. If it fails in getting the information, it will seek legal redress, he said.

On education, Dr. JP referred to an OECD report which said that Indian higher secondary students are better than those only from Kyrgysthan among 74 countries surveyed. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) in its latest survey says that 40 percent of fifth class students in Andhra Pradesh schools – both private and Government – cannot read a single paragraph from a second class text book and that 60 percent of fifth class students cannot do division and 20 percent, subtraction. The traditional parties, Dr. JP charged, have remained silent on the state of education in Andhra Pradesh although they are vociferous on many other issues. If people remain illiterate and ignorant, political parties can continue to buy their votes with money and liquor and perpetuate their poverty.

On electricity, Dr. JP said that the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission has become a branch office of the Government and failed to discharge its statutory responsibility of ensuring Discoms (distribution companies) are in good health. A Government which has neither money to reimburse Discoms for the subsidies it offers to various sections of people nor courage to raise tariffs did not submit the annual certificate on the health of Discoms in earlier years. The APERC which had winked at Government failure now permitted Discoms to burden consumers with fuel surcharge for power consumed in earlier years. How could industrialists pass on the increase in costs for goods manufactured in previous years now, Dr. JP asked.

Dr. JP accused the Government of indulging in hypocrisy by claiming to attract investments worth lakhs of crores of rupees and provide jobs to tens of thousands of people even as it turns existing industries sick by starving them of power. The traditional parties continue to pursue bankrupt policies which will ensure darkness in our houses, and unemployment for our youth.

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Lok Satta has demonstrated what could be done by sensible management of power sector about a decade ago. In Kallacheruvu, in West Godavari district, Lok Satta franchisee managed a feeder line and saved 19% power, eliminated corruption, improved quality and showed the way of ensuring 24 hour power in all villages.

In reply to a question, Dr. JP said gas allocation for power generation has become a cash cow for those in power at the Center and in States.

Dr. JP appealed to youth not to suffer in silence but come forward to change politics by utilizing the Lok Satta Party as a forum. Otherwise, their future would be bleak.

Lok Satta Party leaders Y. D. Rama Rao, Ravi Maruthi, Narra Sridhar and Bhisetty Babji took part in the media conference.