

## **Lok Satta demands routing of funds to panchayats**

Written by

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The Lok Satta Party today demanded that the Union Government route not merely Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) but all funds directly to panchayats.

Union Minister for Panchayat Raj Kishore Chandra Dev had suggested to the Planning Commission that allocations under the BRGF should be made directly to village panchayats since allocation to districts resulted in their diversion to developed areas and defeated the very purpose of the scheme.

Commenting on the Union Minister's statement, Lok Satta Party Working President D. V. V. S. Varma said in a media statement that funds meant for local governments should be given to them directly without any intermediaries.

He pointed out that although the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments stipulated that State Governments devolve powers, responsibilities and funds on local governments, States like Andhra Pradesh have failed to implement them utilizing their discretionary powers. The States should be denied such discretionary powers by enacting the Constitutional amendment pending since 2010, Mr. Varma said.

Mr. Varma recalled that the Lok Satta had launched a movement as early as in 2003 by submitting a memorandum signed by more than one crore people for genuine devolution of powers on local bodies through decentralization. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission of which Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan, Lok Satta Party President, was a member recommended such devolution.

Mr. Varma demanded that funds be allocated to local bodies on a proportionate basis. Local bodies should be empowered to ensure proper utilization of funds meant for education and healthcare and reining in liquor consumption. Effective rural development will prevent migration of people to urban areas and influx into extremist ranks.