



सत्यमेव जयते

Speech of Hon'ble Governor of Andhra Pradesh

Sri Biswa Bhusan Harichandan

participates as Chief Guest

at the National Voters Day Celebrations at 11.30 AM

on 25th JANUARY 2020 Thummalapalli Kalakshetram, Vijayawada

Sri K. Vijayanand, Chief Electoral Officer, Guests on the dais, friends from media, Ladies and Gentlemen. A Very Good morning to you all.

It gives me immense pleasure to be here amongst you all on the occasion of National Voters' Day Celebrations in the State, which is also popularly referred to as "Celebration of Democracy". This year, the 10th National Voters Day is being celebrated all over the country with theme of "Electoral Literacy for Stronger Democracy."

As we all know, National Voters' Day is being celebrated all over the country since 2011, on 25th January every year, the day on which Election Commission of India (ECI) was formed in the year 1950.

Today, as we celebrate the National Voters' Day, we are celebrating our power as voter, which has been granted by our Constitution. The vote is not just a right to be exercised mechanically as and when elections are conducted, but, it is a powerful instrument in the hands of the people. It is the power to cast our vote that makes all of us the sentinels of the democratic tradition.

India, which is the largest and the most vibrant democracy, has been a model to the world in terms of faith in the Ballot. There are many Nations around us, with lesser population and less diversity compared to us, but, none of them have demonstrated and sustained the power of the vote with greater dedication and faith better than us.

The most appropriate way to show our faith and confidence in the democratic process is to exercise the 'Right to Vote'. In fact, the Right to Vote is the mother of all political rights under the Indian Constitution and

responsible citizens are the life-line of any democracy. Besides, it is often said that 'the highest office in our democracy is that of the citizen of India'. But, to be a responsible citizen, we should be aware of our rights as well as the Duties prescribed by our Constitution.

One of the Duties prescribed in the Constitution is about our civic responsibility to speak out freely in support of democratic principles of Freedom, Equality, Justice, Human Rights, Social Welfare, Environment, Political and Social Improvement, both domestically and internationally. Our people, especially our youth should feel proud of performing their constitutional duties as this will ensure their meaningful and significant contribution to the growth of the Nation and the Society. It is this sense of responsibility as citizens that would make our Nation strong, invincible and globally respected.

To rope in the youth in the electoral registration and electoral process, the Election Commission of India is taking various measures under the Systematic Voter Education & Electoral Participation (SVEEP) Programme throughout the country. Students in Universities and Colleges appointed as Campus Ambassadors to motivate and help the students and their family members who are not registered in the electoral roll, in order to get them registered or the persons shifting their residences, applying for correction of addresses etc. Under this SVEEP Programme various activities such as conducting Youth Festivals, Awareness Campaigns in Rural and Tribal areas, conducting Workshops, Drawing Competitions, organizing Special Camps at the time of Mass gatherings etc., are taken up to create awareness among the citizens in general and the students in particular.

Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) have been set up in educational institutions and the communities not covered under the formal education system to engage future voters and new voters through extra-curricular interventions. ELCs will be the seat of learning through hands on experience and shall serve as a vibrant hub of Electoral Literacy for developing and strengthening the culture of electoral participation among young and future voters. The ELCs will educate the targeted population about voter registration, entire electoral process and related matters by engaging them through well designed attractive resources in hands on experience and capacity building. As on date, the following Literacy Clubs are established in the State.

Our new and young voters should enthusiastically come forward and participate in the celebration of our democracy. Including the details of voting rights in the school and college syllabus will help create theoretical awareness, but, actual practice of these in the form of right to vote would empower and enable our youth to contribute for the betterment of the society.

I have been informed that the Special Summary Revision of Electoral Rolls, 2020 is in progress in the State and the draft electoral roll has been published on 23.12.2019 and the Final Electoral Rolls will be published on 14-02-2020.

The right to vote is an inalienable part of a citizen's rights in a democracy. An electoral franchise also strengthens participatory democracy, allowing a common man's concerns to be discussed in the legislature and then enacted into laws.

In a democracy, voters are not subject to pressure or fear. They can choose the candidate according to their own wish.

My sincere advise to the youth is, if you are eligible to vote go and get yourself enrolled as a voter. If you have already enrolled, verify whether your name is included in the Voters List. If not, submit necessary forms and get your name enrolled. Motivate your friends to enroll as voters. On the Election Day, go out of comforts of your home and cast your vote and take your friends along to cast their votes.

Election is an important process of democracy and you have a responsibility and duty to cast your vote on the Election Day and choose the candidate of your choice.

Jai Hind