



सत्यमेव जयते

Address of the Hon'ble Governor of Andhra Pradesh
Sri Biswa Bhusan Harichandan,
at the National Voters Day Celebrations
on 25th January 2021 at Raj Bhavan, Vijayawada

Sri K. Vijayanand, Chief Electoral Officer, Sri Mukesh Kumar Meena, Secretary to Governor and other dignitaries. A Very Good morning to you all.

It gives me immense pleasure to inaugurate the National Voters' Day Celebrations in the State. The National Voters' Day is also popularly known to as "Celebration of Democracy".

This year, the 11th National Voters' Day is being celebrated all over the country with theme of "Making our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed."

As you all are aware, the 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.

The celebration of the National Voters' Day, reminds us of the power as a voter, which has been granted by the 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 people. The power to exercise our franchise to cast our vote makes us sentinels of the noble democratic tradition.

As the largest and most vibrant democracy, India is considered by many nations as a beacon to the world in reinforcing faith in the power of the Ballot. There are many Nations around us, with lesser population and less diversity compared to us, but none of them have been able to demonstrate and sustain the power of the vote with greater dedication and trust than our country.

Exercising the 'Right to Vote' is the most appropriate way to show our trust and confidence in the democratic process. 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 our democracy. Being responsible citizens of the country, we should be aware of our Rights as well as Duties prescribed by the Constitution.

One of the Fundamental 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. Every citizen of the country, including the youth should feel proud of performing their respective constitutional duties as this will ensure their meaningful participation 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 democratic power.

To ensure participation of the youth in the electoral registration and electoral process, the Election Commission of India has been implementing various measures under the Systematic Voter Education & Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme across the country. Students in Universities and Colleges are appointed as Campus Ambassadors to motivate and help students and their family members to enroll themselves as voters, if they are not already registered in the electoral roll, making voters aware of the process of correction of address in case of change of residence etc.

Under the SVEEP programme various activities such as conducting Youth Festivals, Awareness Campaigns in Rural and Tribal areas, conducting Workshops, Drawing Competitions, organizing Special Camps during mass gatherings etc. are taken up to create awareness among all citizens to ensure that no eligible voter is left out.

Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) have been set up in educational institutions and the communities not covered under the formal education system to interact with future voters and new voters through extra-curricular interventions. ELCs will be the seat of learning through the means of 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, end-to-end electoral process and related matters by engaging them through well designed informative resources and hands-on experience and capacity building.

Our new and young voters should come forward and actively participate in the celebration of our democracy. Incorporating information on voting rights as part of school and college curriculum would create awareness. Actual participation and exercise of right to vote would empower and enable our youth to contribute for the welfare of the society.

I am glad to note that the final Electoral Roll of Andhra Pradesh was published on 15th January, 2021.

The right to vote is an invaluable right of citizens in a democracy. Electoral franchise not only strengthens participatory democracy but creates an environment to address common man's concerns in the legislature and make necessary laws to resolve them.

In a democracy, voters are not subject to any pressure or fear and they are free to choose the candidate of their choice.

My advise to youth is that once you become eligible to vote, you should get yourself enrolled as an voter. If already enrolled, verify the Voters List and ensure your name is listed. If your name is not found,

submit necessary forms and get your name included in the list. Also motivate your friends to enroll as voters.

Election is an important process of democracy and every voter has a responsibility and duty to cast his vote on the Election Day. By exercising the right to vote, citizens are participating in the democratic process to elect the leaders of their choice to represent their interests and aspirations in the legislative bodies.

Jai Hind