



Forum for Good Governance

Regd.No.653/2009

Hyderabad
28th May, 2024

PRESS NOTE

None of the above (NOTA) is a ballot option designed to allow the voter to indicate disapproval of all the candidates in a voting system. It is a democratic means to express the voter's resentment rather than boycotting the polls outright. NOTA was introduced in 2013 following the Supreme Court direction. Introduction of NOTA in electoral system was to force the political parties to give tickets to candidates with a clean background and to improve poll percentage.

Votes polled by NOTA during various Assembly and Parliament elections since 2013 was ranging from 1.5 to 2 % of total votes polled. In the present system there is no provision for repoll if NOTA gets highest votes. In Gujarat (Surat Parliament Constituency) main opposition candidates' nomination was rejected followed by withdrawal of other independent candidates facilitating unanimous election. In these circumstances it was felt that if NOTA is treated as fictional candidate unanimous elections could have been prevented. In this connection a case was filed in Supreme Court to treat NOTA as fictional electoral candidate. The Court has issued notices to Election Commission of India and Government of India.

In Telangana elections to local bodies are due and likely to commence in next 2 to 3 months. In Gram Panchayat elections held in 2019 in many villages the Village Development Committees auctioned the Sarpanch posts and the highest bidder was made elected unopposed as there were no other contestants. This obnoxious practice facilitates the rich to participate in auction and get elected unopposed. Further the people especially the weaker sections will be denied to participate in elections and vote which is a constitutional guaranty. In 2019 in Telangana State close to 16% of sarpanches were elected unopposed and most of them participating in auction.

Considering of various Supreme Court orders many State Election Commissions gave teeth to NOTA. In Haryana NOTA is treated as a fictional electoral candidate, that is to say, there will be no unanimous elections and polling has to be conducted. In this way poor will have a say in election results. In case NOTA got highest votes than other contesting candidates' re-election will be conducted and all the candidates contested earlier will be debarred from participating in repoll.

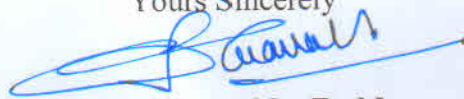
In this regard Forum for Good Governance conducted a press meet. Sri V. Nagireddy I.A.S. (R) and Former State Election Commissioner, Telangana participating in discussions appreciated the efforts of Forum for Good Governance to empower NOTA. He opined that since many State Election Commissions have issued orders to empower NOTA. Telangana State Election Commission should also issue similar order.

Sri M. Padmanabha Reddy President Forum for Good Governance stated that to avoid auction of Sarpanch posts in ensuing elections, NOTA should be treated as fictional electoral candidate. There is a urgent need to make elections pure, free, fair and transparent and for this purpose utility of NOTA to be improved. He appealed to State Election Commission of Telangana to issue suitable orders on the lines of orders issued by Haryana State Election Commission.

Sri Soma Srinivas Reddy Secretary Forum for Good Governance while welcoming the participants briefly described the objectives of the press meet and stated that there is a need to give teeth to NOTA so that manipulations in electoral process are checked.

Sri B. Manmadha Reddy, former Public Service Commission member, Sri S. Gopal Reddy former D.G.P., Sri P. Bhaskar Reddy, Sri Bandaru Ram Mohan Rao of Loksatta, Smt. N. Sridevi, Sri V.V. Rao of election watch and others spoke.

Yours Sincerely



M. Padmanabha Reddy
President
Forum for Good Governance

'స్థానిక' ఎన్నికల్లో నోటాకూ చోటివ్వాలి

బైరతాబాద్, స్యూస్ టుడే: ఎన్నికల బరిలో ఉన్న అభ్యర్థులకిచ్చే ప్రాధాన్యాన్ని నోటాకూ కల్పించాల్సిన ఆవసరముందని పలువురు వక్తలు స్పష్టంచేశారు. పోరం పర్ గుడ్ గవర్నెన్స్ అభ్యర్థంలో



మాట్లాడుతున్న వి.నాగిరెడ్డి చిత్రంలో భాస్కర్ రెడ్డి, సామ శ్రీనివాస్, పద్మనాభరెడ్డి, ఎస్.గోపాల్ రెడ్డి

'పంచాయతీ ఎన్నికల్లో నోటా ఆమలు' అంశంపై మంగళవారం సోమాజిగూడలోని ప్రెస్ క్లబ్ లో చర్చ నిర్వహించారు. విశ్రాంత ఐపిఎస్ అధికారి, రాష్ట్ర మాజీ ఎన్నికల అధికారి వి.నాగిరెడ్డి మాట్లాడుతూ... "నోటాను కొన్ని రాష్ట్రాల్లో కచ్చిత అభ్యర్థిగా ప్రకటించడం మంచి పరిణామం. మన రాష్ట్రంలోనూ అన్ని పార్టీల అభిప్రాయం తీసుకుని ఎన్నికల అధికారులు నోటాకు ప్రాధాన్యం కల్పించాలి" అని సూచించారు. వేదిక అధ్యక్షుడు పద్మనాభరెడ్డి మాట్లాడుతూ... నోటాను కచ్చిత అభ్యర్థిగా ప్రకటించడం వల్ల పార్టీలు తీసుకొస్తున్న నేరచరితులను కట్టుడి చేయించుని అన్నారు. వేదిక కార్యదర్శి సోమా శ్రీనివాసరెడ్డి, పబ్లిక్ సర్వీస్ కమిషన్ మాజీ సభ్యులు బి.మన్మథరెడ్డి, విశ్రాంత డిజిపి ఎస్. గోపాల్ రెడ్డి, లోకసత్తా నేత బండారు రామ్మోహన్ రావు, ఎన్నికల నిమా వేదిక అధ్యక్షుడు వీవీరావు, వేదిక సంయుక్త కార్యదర్శి పి.భాస్కర్ రెడ్డి, కోశాధికారి ఎస్.శ్రీదేవి మాట్లాడారు.



Make NOTA fictitious nominee, check unanimous election: FGG

Implement This For Local Body Election: Forum

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad: Former All India Service (AIS) officers and Forum for Good Governance have asked Telangana State Election Commission (SEC) to declare NOTA "a fictitious candidate" in local body polls. They stated that Haryana is already implementing it, so no unanimous elections will be allowed. Usually, in villages, ruling party candidates force unanimous elections in local body polls by force and threat.

FGG president Padmanabha Reddy said "None of the above (NOTA) is a ballot option designed to allow the voter to indicate disapproval of all the candidates in a voting system. It is a democratic means to express the voter's resentment rather than boycotting the polls outright. NOTA was introduced in 2013 following the Supreme Court direction. Introduction of NOTA in electoral system was to force the political parties to give tickets to candidates with a clean background and to improve poll percentage."

Votes polled by NOTA during various assembly and parliament elections

FGG APPEAL TO STATE POLL PANEL

- NOTA is option to indicate disapproval of all candidates

- It's not boycotting of polls, said FGG

- NOTA introduced in 2013 following Supreme Court direction

- Introduction of NOTA meant to force parties to give tickets to candidates with clean background



- No provision of repoll if NOTA gets highest votes

- Votes polled by NOTA since 2013 ranged from 1.5 to 2% of total polling, said FGG

- In the present system, there is no provision for repoll if NOTA gets highest votes

- It was felt that if NOTA is treated as fictional candidate, unanimous elections can be prevented, FGG said

HARYANA EXAMPLE

- In Haryana, NOTA has been treated as fictional candidate

- There will be no unanimous elections & polling has to be conducted

- In this way, the poor can have a say in election results

since 2013 was ranging from 1.5% to 2% of the total votes polled. In the present system, there was no provision for repoll if NOTA gets highest votes.

In Gujarat (Surat parliamentary constituency), the main opposition candidate's nomination was rejected followed by withdrawal of other independent candidates, facilitating unanimous election. In these circumstances, it was felt that if NOTA was treated as a fictional candidate, unanimous elections could have been prevented. In this connection, a case was filed in Supreme Court to treat NOTA as fictional electoral candidate. The court has issued notices to Election Commission and the Union govt," he added.

In Telangana, elections

to local bodies are due and likely to commence in next two to three months. In the gram panchayat elections held in 2019, in many villages the village development committees auctioned the sarpanch posts and the highest bidder was elected unopposed as there were no other contestants.

"This obnoxious practice facilitates the rich to participate in auction and get elected unopposed. Further, the people, especially the weaker sections, will be denied an opportunity to participate in elections and vote, which is a constitutional guarantee. In 2019, 16% of sarpanches were elected unopposed in Telangana and most of them participated in auctions.

Considering various Su-

preme Court orders many SECs gave teeth to NOTA. In Haryana, NOTA has been treated as a fictional electoral candidate, that is to say, there would be no unanimous elections and polling has to be conducted. In this way, the poor would have a say in election results.

In case, NOTA gets highest votes than other contesting candidates, a re-election would be conducted and all the candidates contested earlier would be debarred from participating in the repoll said Reddy.

Former IAS officer and former state election commissioner V Nagrireddy said that since many SECs have issued orders to empower NOTA, Telangana SEC should also issue a similar order.