

Money-centered politics to blame for Decline in standards: Dr. JP

Written by Administrator
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There is no point in bemoaning falling standards in Parliament when we allow politics to revolve round money and vote buying and facilitate election of criminals and the corrupt to its portals, said Lok Satta President Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan today.

Greeting people on the diamond jubilee of Parliament, Dr. JP said in a media statement that people should ponder over means of electing educated, erudite and humble representatives to legislatures. The first Parliament of 1952 contributed to healthy discussions because it included a large number of people who fought for freedom, nation building, and formation of constitutional bodies. How could people of integrity get elected to the legislature these days when two or three parties spend a total of about Rs.30 crore for a by-election to the Assembly, asked Dr. JP.

Dr. JP said that although the first generation national leaders were great, they did not pay enough attention to structural flaws in our elected system. For instance, they centralized power and as a result people had to depend on those in power or pay bribes for getting even a small thing done.

With no independent source of income and elections becoming costly, those elected to legislatures have turned politics into business and started making money through tenders and contracts, allotment of land and award of mining leases.

Dr. JP said that such a vicious circle could be broken only if the money-centered administrative and electoral systems are thoroughly overhauled.

He said there is no cause for despair. Despite falling standards in general, the debate on the 2012-13 Union Budget witnessed Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and BJP leader Yaswant Sinha elevating the discussion to a higher plane and criticizing each other with mutual respect.

Dr. JP said that the present first-past-the-post electoral system is resulting in unbridled purchase of votes and grant of party tickets to corrupt and criminal elements. A switch-over to a proportional system of representation, decentralization of power and introduction of citizens' charters would free politics from corruption.

Dr. JP said that there are people of integrity and competence in all spheres and regions. We should try to draw the best and the brightest of them into politics so that the nation stands to gain.