

REPORT ON

ONE DAY WORKSHOP

**“GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY AND VOTER’S AWARENESS IN ARUNACHAL
PRADESH; MAKING INDIA A SHINING DEMOCRACY”.**

JOINTLY ORGANIZED BY

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, RGU AND STATE ELECTION
COMMISSION, ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

30TH SEPTEMBER 2019

Venue: Main Auditorium, RGU.

Time: 10:00 AM onwards.

Report prepared by

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(Dr David Gao)
Coordinator
16/10/19


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16/10/19

The one-day workshop on “Grassroot Democracy: Voters Awareness in Arunachal Pradesh, Making India a Shining Democracy” was organized on 30th September 2019 at Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh which was jointly organized by Department of Political Science, RGU and State Election Commission, Arunachal Pradesh. Due to some unavoidable circumstances the honorable Governor, Arunachal Pradesh could not join the Programme as Chief Guest as he had to leave the campus just after 15 minutes of his arrival. Shri Bamang Felix, Minister Home and Inter State Border Affairs, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Arunachal Pradesh attended the programme as the Chief Guest. The programme was attended by people from all walks of life like some Non-Governmental Organizations, Panchayati Raj Institution and municipal council members, members of Community Based Organizations, faculty members from various departments, Scholars, Students and administrative officials and staffs etc.

The Programme began at 10:00 AM with the singing of National Anthem which was followed by lighting of lamps by the respected Chief Guest and other dignitaries, followed by felicitation with memento presentation to the dignitaries. Programme Coordinator, **Dr. David Gao**, Assistant Professor, RGU extended the welcome speech on behalf of the organizing committee.

Highlighting the objective of the programme **Prof. P.K. Panigrahi**, Head of the Department, Political Science, RGU briefed the house that the workshop was a proposal from the State Election Commission, Arunachal Pradesh and the concerned department had readily accepted to conduct it. He also added that that the workshop was organized with an intend to infuse awareness amongst the people specially the students about free and fair election for the success of democracy. Before 1992 the decentralization process was a model based on top down approach but subsequently, having realized the significance of grassroot democracy the Government of India post 1992 moved towards a bottom up approach.

Stating about the Grassroot Democracy **Shri Hage Kojeen**, Hon’ble Commissioner, State Election Commission, Government of Arunachal Pradesh started his speech by referring to Gandhiji and Nehru’s view on the local self-Government. He also highlighted some of the important provisions of local self-government provided in the Constitution of India and evolution of local self-government in the State. Efforts were also put in by him to clear some misconceptions of the public regarding the functions and functionaries of the state election commission. State Election Commission was set up in 2002 in the state and since then only three elections were held so far for the Panchayati Raj Institution. The State Election Commission aims to sensitize people about voting awareness so that they can understand the importance of electoral process and ethics.

Prof. Saket Kushwaha, Honorable Vice-Chancellor, RGU, also enlightened the students by saying that *fear should not be the basis of election* and urge the RGU students and every individual to take up the responsibility of being the torchbearer in their respective places. He also appealed everyone to be honest and be accountable to their works and be sensible while voting. He spoke out his heart on how system could be for betterment.

Shri Bamang Felix, Hon’ble Minister, Home and Inter State Boarder Affairs, Rural Development, Panchayat Raj and Parliamentary Affairs, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh while

addressing the gathering appeal all not to indulge themselves in *give and take policy* during elections. He further noted that the greater challenges before the concern authorities is to educate people about the rules and regulations that are already in existence, He also stated that everybody today is running for their rights but instead if everybody starts thinking about their responsibilities than a progressive Arunachal is not very far away. Very candidly he also urges the Rajiv Gandhi University to spread the awareness amongst the voters and be an active leader in eradicating the menace of money culture in politics.

The vote of thanks for the inaugural session was extended by **Shri Nyali Ete**, Secretary, State Election Commission, Arunachal Pradesh. He expressed his gratitude to the university fraternity and the Department of Political Science for collaborating in the first ever workshop being conducted by State Election Commission, Arunachal Pradesh. The inaugural session was concluded by singing of National Anthem.

PROCEEDINGS

1st Technical Session

Chaired by Prof. P.K. Panigrahi, Head, Department of Political Science, RGU.

Panelist 1: Prof. Nani Bath, Department of Political Science, RGU: He narrated about the history of local self-Government, an evolution of Panchayati Raj Institution and Municipality in Arunachal Pradesh. He also highlighted how the Daying Ering Committee set up in 1964 has played a significant role in dissemination of democratic ideals in the local self-government in Arunachal Pradesh. He also raises the concern of how the Government of Arunachal Pradesh is unable to conduct Panchayat election in the stipulated time period and thus depriving the people of the state their voting rights thereby affecting the grassroot democracy.

2nd Panelist: Shri Kaling Dai, Former ZPC, Pasighat: He expressed his opinion on the grassroots realities and challenges and put forward his opinion for the need of minimum educational qualification for the contesting candidates. He also talked about the lack of fund in the Panchayat offices and also suggested for a genuine and tax imposition throughout the state. There should not be a single guideline for the implementation of the various development schemes due to the varying socio-economic scenario in different states. He also reassured that teaching faculty is the only service that works for the development of human resource. So, it is the teaching faculty that can bring about a positive impact at the grassroot level.

2ND TECHNICAL SESSION

Proceedings:

Chaired by Professor Nani Bath, Department of Political Science, RGU

1st Panelist: Shri Nyali Ete, Secretary, State Election Commission, Arunachal Pradesh: He highlighted the Model Code of Conduct issued by the Election Commission of India and role of State Election Commission, at the same time urged the gathering to

disseminate the information learnt today among others and it's plans to conduct awareness workshop at the district levels in the days to come. He also handed out leaflets on Model code of conduct for the guidance of the Political parties and the candidates for Panchayats and Municipal elections.

2nd Panelist: Advocate Ajin Apang, Senior advocate and standing counsel, State Election Commission, Arunachal Pradesh: He spoke on electoral offences and corrupt practices; understanding legal provisions under Representation of people's Act, State Act/Rules etc. He also cited that so far as Arunachal Pradesh is concerned the laws exist in the books only and it is not implemented in true sense. Showing his concern on the election offences committed in the state he urged that one should have the courage to complain in case of electoral malpractices otherwise the Model code of conduct is just on paper.

3rd Panelist: Shri Taba Ajum, State Executive Council Member, Arunachal Pradesh union of working Journalist (APUW): He highlighted on the role of media in understanding Grassroot Democracy through Panchayati Raj and Municipality. He asserted that most of the panchayat officers do not have proper administrative staffs and thereby it stands as a barrier in empowering the common people. There should be proper training and orientation Programme for the panchayat and municipal leaders to make them aware of their functions and functionalities. He appeals the youths to take active participation in the grassroot level politics. Citing the example of Kerala and Karnataka he urged that there should be declaration of assets of the candidates even in the Panchayat and Municipal elections. He talked about the gender equality and inclusivity and the need to give opportunity for the people with special needs to participate within the realm of grassroot governance.

4th Panelist: Mrs Higio Aruni, Chief Councilor, Itanagar Municipal Council: While highlighting some of the grassroot realities and challenges of Municipality she claims that solid waste management is one of the biggest challenges faced by the Itanagar Municipal Council presently and there is only one plan for dumping garbage so far. No burial ground and lack of slaughterhouse in the capital city due to certain obstacles like funding, availability of land, etc. The present revenue sources are not enough for administering the Municipal Councils. She also highlighted the need for trained and qualified manpower and the way forward to an efficient Municipal Council is through budgetary support, collection of property taxes, proper delegation of powers and creation of separate Municipal cadre.

The workshop ended with the word of thanks by Dr. Samantha Sahu, Programme Co-ordinator.

OBSERVATIONS:

The workshop was well received by the audience with the sharing of the panelists. It not only made the people aware of elections but also their responsibilities towards grassroot Democracy. The learned panelists also genuinely share their ideas on the given topics which motivated the audience at large. However, such programme or workshop will have to make its persistent effort to spread the grassroot democracy more effectively. Following are some important recommendations as an outcome of this one-day workshop programme.

1. More such awareness programme will have to be conducted at the grassroots level to make the people aware of their democratic rights and responsibilities. As per the present trend the local bodies are not much aware of their responsibilities despite being elected. Contesting elections of local bodies is not viewed as a democratic responsibility but a political fortune.
2. Greater autonomy will have to be provided through decentralisation to the local bodies like Panchayat and the Municipality in terms of role and functions. The present set up have made the role and function very limited. Despite Acts and Rules in place the execution part is not emphasized by the government.
3. Financial autonomy should also be granted to the local bodies as provided under the relevant Act. Lack of financial autonomy is largely affecting the effective functioning of the local bodies. Financial shares also should be given to the local bodies out of the state consolidated funds.
4. One single guideline for governmental schemes like MGNREGA is not suitable throughout the country. For example; Arunachal Pradesh has a different socio-economic scenario, so based on this, different state should have their own respective guidelines rather than a common guideline.
5. To streamline the electioneering procedures provisions should be brought in so that while filing nomination paper for the local self-government election the candidates should declare their assets in line with that of the assembly or general election.
6. Based on the model code of conduct put forward by the Election Commission of India Arunachal Pradesh should have its own local model code of conduct looking at the need of the state in order to curb the prevailing malpractices, and to ensure free and fair elections.
7. Healthy society begins from grassroots level so basically all the developmental initiatives have to be taken up by involving the Panchayati offices and officials. There have been instances where functional tussle were witnessed with regards to implementation of government schemes and programmes.
8. There should also be certain basic educational qualification for the candidates contesting in the local body elections. It has been observed that illiterate or uneducated representatives are at times incompetent to address the various issues.
9. Media being a strong agent for spreading awareness among the people should play more proactive role. The government should include certain policies to spread grassroots democracy through the media.

Report prepared by

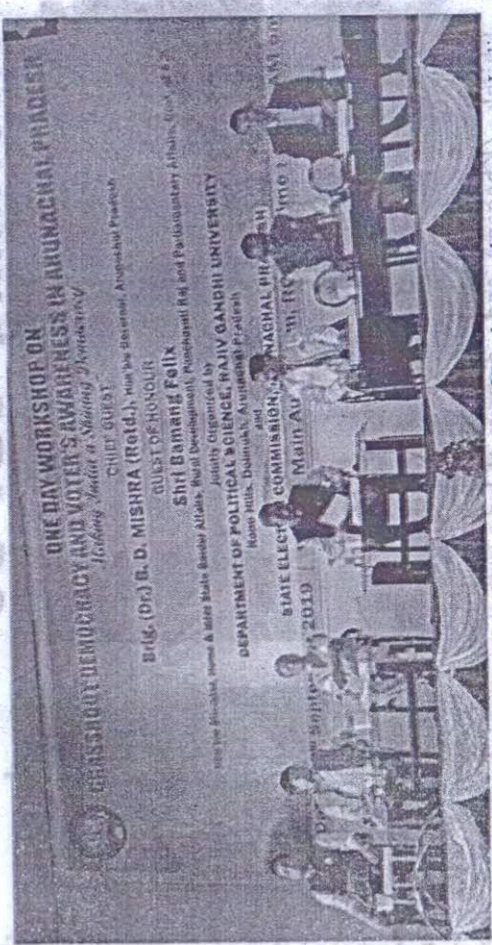
Miss Moti Taki
Miss Lucia Panggeng
Miss Pani Renyu

(Dr David Gao)
Programme coordinator

01st October 2019

LOCAL / WORLD

Fight against money...



(From P-3) Achom Darshan Singh, department of Zoology and contemporary Indian society: Issues and Challenges with special reference to North East India by Dr Anga Padu and Narendra Singh of the department of education, RGU.

The vice chancellor of RGU Prof Saket Kushwaha in his address emphasised on self discipline and transparency.

State election commissioner Hage Kojeen spoke about the vitality of grassroot democracy in Arunachal and the positive changes it can bring. He also spoke on the role of state election commission and the journey how it evolved in Arunachal

During the technical session several speakers spoke on various topics assigned to them. The first technical session was chaired by Prof PK Panigrahi, head of department, police science, RGU. Prof Nani Bath spoke on the topic local self government and evolution of Panchayati Raj and Municipality in the state.

Prof Bath charged state government of breaching constitution of India by not conducting the local body election and expressed serious concern over delay.

Former Zilla Parishad Chairperson (ZPC) of East Siang district Kaling Dai spoke about grass root realities and challenges facing the Panchayati Raj while Ajin Apang, standing counsel, state election commission spoke on the topic electoral offenses and corrupt practises, understanding legal provisions under RP act, state act/rules, etc. Secretary state election commission, Nyali Ete highlighted about model of conduct and role of state election commission.

Former Itanagar Municipal Council (IMC) chief Higio Aruni highlighted the issues concerning IMC and termed solid waste management as a big challenge for Itanagar municipal.

Arunachal Time's Journalist Taba Ajum spoke on the subject role of media in understanding grass root democracy through Panchayati Raj and Municipality.

The workshop was coordinated by David Gao and Samanth Satu of the department of political science, RGU.

Fight against money culture: Felix

Workshop on grass root democracy and voter's awareness in Arunachal Pradesh

Staff Reporter

RONO HILL, Sep 30: Home Minister Bamang Felix on Monday urged the Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU) to play an important role in the fight against money culture in the state.

He said this while attending a one day workshop jointly organized by the department of political science and state election commission (SEC). The topic of workshop was grass root democracy and

Today majority of MLAs who won assembly election are in debt due to heavy expenditure incurred during election. If this money culture continues, the state will never get developed. RGU can play pivotal role by educating masses about ill

effects of money culture," said home minister.

Later, he released two books- research trends on fish and fisheries in mountain waters of eastern Himalayan region by Prof DN Das, Santhos Kumar Abujian and (Contd. on P-3)

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