

Parliamentary Election -2009 in the eyes of AREDS

For ages, Indian women have been constrained and confined within the boundary of family in the name of convention, custom and chastity. Tamil Nadu is no an exception to this. Nevertheless, many changes have taken place in the life style of women and notably women have occupied a number of positions – which were privileges to men exclusively once - in the field of education, economy, medicine, research, administration and politics. These changes are apparent, noticeable and palpable among the urban women. Thanks to the economic interventions and advocacy and lobbying of non-governmental organisations.

The status of grassroots women remains almost the same as it was before Indian Independence. However, with the passage of time, grassroots women have had a breakthrough and have secured governing positions in the local bodies. Whatever position they hold and whoever they may be, womankind does not have say in the decision making process and as a result, we witness violence against women, trafficking, dowry killings, sexual abuse and the like, even today.

Anyway, it will not last forever and a new, pro-people political force has come in the arena of politics in Tamil Nadu, with the objectives to uplift the downtrodden masses, liberate the oppressed womankind, enhance the social development and bring in equality among the citizens. *Virtually, it has motivated the women of Tamil Nadu, who were afraid of articulating their problems before thirty years, to disentangle themselves from all forms of restrictions and address the issues of women at the national level.* That is **‘Women’s Front’**.

Evolution of Women’s Front:

AREDS - a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation, was founded in 1980. For 27 years now, AREDS has been working for the development of Dalits, women, children and the rural poor in Karur district in Tamil Nadu, India. AREDS strongly believes that education is the prerequisite for any social transformation and will help the masses act irrespective of colour, caste and creed. Hence, it started its service with non-formal education in Renganathapuram, the very first place where AREDS set foot on, by involving the youth of the village. It believes and practices the following principle:

Go to the People,

Live among them,

Learn from them,

Love them,

Start with what they know, build with what they have; but of the best leaders,

When their task is accomplished, their work is done, the people all remark.

“We have done it ourselves”

From the time of its inception, AREDS has been fighting for the rights of women. AREDS began by organizing women groups called *Sangams* and once the women were

offered a space where they could share and vent without obstacles they soon learnt that they were not alone and that there was strength to be found in numbers. It even goes to the extent that perpetrators are litigated and prosecuted. It believes in collective action of women for their betterment, both economically and socially.

SWATE:

As the numbers grew and the need for a separate body to be identified as women initiated structure grew ever stronger AREDS initiated the Society of Women in Action for Total Empowerment (SWATE) in 1991. SWATE is a conglomeration of different sections of women kind at the grassroots level. Today, it is a democratic body of rural women functions independently under the supervision of the women members. SWATE runs a bank and a savings and credit program in order to help the women involve in income generation activities for their economic development. When the government schemes cease, the women members can avail loans from their own institution – SWATE.

All women Self Help Groups (SHG) have been affiliated to SWATE for their sustainability. The members have been involved in various income generation activities – goat rearing, rearing milk animals, petty shops, preparing condiment powder, candle making, incense sticks production, vegetable vending...etc. One SHG that comprises Dalit women is operating a canteen in the farmers' market of Karur municipality.

Movement Against Poverty and Violence (MAPOVI):

As the time passed, SWATE realised the importance of fighting for the rights of women, who have been subjected to subjugation, sexual abuse and malnutrition. Since poverty and violence are interlinked inextricably, SWATE has initiated a state level movement – MAPOVI - of women to fight against violence on women, sexual abuse and trafficking and, on various social issues like dowry harassment, subjugation, child marriage and female infanticide.

Status of women in India:

The greatest tragedy that happens in India, even after the lapse of 62 years since Indian independence, is the social exclusion of women and children belong to the marginalised section of the society and the Dalit community. The persistence of hunger and poverty in India is in large measure due to subjugation, marginalization and disempowerment of women and the Dalits. As women, one-half of the country's populations have been excluded socially, politically, economically and culturally, the national development remains incomplete, uneven, unhealthy and disproportionate.

About 60% of the Indian population is living below poverty line. This reveals that a major section of the people gets one square meal only per day. Three quarter of a family income in Tamil Nadu is incurred on food materials and such is the price hike. Gone are the days when women were restricted from going out for job to earn money. In order to shoulder the familial responsibilities, women and adolescent girls - even children – go for work to earn money somehow.

However, women and girl children have been discriminated and their health, education and social status have been ignored or neglected in majority of the families, particularly in rural India. Besides working, women have to take care of cooking, fetching water, household works, washing, baby sitting, assisting the elders in the family. Thus, women and girl children have been neglected in many ways.

Cause and Effect:

Thirteen elections have been held for the Tamil Nadu assembly, after Indian independence. Despite, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening hours by hours. Besides being exploited economically, women are being subjected to domestic violence, sexual abuse and gender discrimination. Therefore, the present political system is the root cause of all the problems that exist in the country. Hence, there is a need for an alternative political force that could replace the existing corrupt political system.

SWATE's Political Lenience:

SWATE has a very good organisational base in the rural Karur district – both in the numbers of members and in the spirit to fight for women's rights. It conducted a number of political debates as on the quality of right electoral candidates, their roles and responsibilities, pro people attitude and the like. The political parties being aware of the strength of SWATE in the rural base, sought the support of SWATE. SWATE supported the candidate conditionally – if they promise to fulfill the democratic demands of SWATE. SWATE, witnessing the political candidates, who won with the support of its movement, went astray, decided to contest election by nominating its own women leaders. Hence, SWATE contested the last assembly election in two constituencies in Tamil Nadu. The candidates did not win, but contesting election made the people aware of SWATE movement in a wider level and created a strong political lenience.

That is why, the eminent thinkers of the state, feminists, social activists, environmentalists, secular people and democrats united together and formed Women's Front in Tamil Nadu in 2005. Since then, it has been fighting for justice to the downtrodden masses throughout the state – at micro level and at the macro level, it has been planning to emerge as a an alternative political force that could replace the male dominated, corrupt political system. Further, it has decided to contest in two of the parliamentary constituencies in the forth-coming parliamentary elections.

Women's Front as an alternative political force in Tamil Nadu:

Voicing for human rights, fighting for justice to affected individuals and organizing democratic movements, at the best, can bound the savagery to a little extend. Democratic movements, sometimes, may be capable of punishing the perpetrators and the anti social elements. However, they are incapable purging the society by eliminating the vile – just for the fighters do not deserve a place in the decision making process. Therefore, an alternative political force with a strong ideological base and simmering spirit to over

through the existing retrogressive political system is the need of the hour. The righteous people should enter in to politics and occupy positions in the decision-making process.

Big movements against unregulated developmental activities of government that deny the right to life of millions of people across the nation have not yielded positive results. The fighters air their genuine voices to the philistines who ignore their voices. How long should it go? Therefore, genuine democratic movements should join their hand together and emerge as mighty political movements at state levels and national level.

Women's Front is taking hectic attempts to create a political alliance with like-minded political parties through democratic movements. It strongly believes that only the protracted movements can serve as a binding force among the allied movements, parties and agents that ensure transparency.

Need for entering in to mainstream politics:

When we go through history, we can witness myriad numbers of spontaneous movements of people against suppression, oppression, exploitation, serfdom and the like. However, all these movements went unnoticed or ended in fiasco – just for one reason that they were alienated from politics. There were many spontaneous movements of people against British imperialism in India but, the movement led by Gandhi only was the recipient of the freedom afford by the British government – for it was a political movement.

There were two main trends in the arena of freedom struggle in India, one was the uncompromising trend and the other one was the compromising trend led by Gandhi, backed by elitists and religious groups. There were many movements built on uncompromising trend to drive out the British imperialism, across the nation. As they did not assume political character, they remained sporadic, spontaneous and disappeared with the passage of time. Such is the power of politics.

Though politics is a superstructure of certain economic base, politics supercedes economy and create a new economic base with progressive politics, culture, education and science as the superstructures. Whether people want it or not, politics affects their life from all directions and in all dimensions.

Therefore, ever mounting price rise, growing unemployment, cultural degeneration, illiteracy, communal riots and the like are the impact of the political system that rules the nation. Nothing is apolitical in this world. Therefore, any genuine democratic movement will tend to assume a political character in course of time. Otherwise, it will be hypocritical.

Women's Front in action:

Eviction, Repercussions and Responses:

The government has been evicting people who live and own property/agricultural land along the national highways in Tamil Nadu in order extend and expand the road to

facilitate speedy movement of motor vehicles. As a result, people have been forced to displace – leaving their habitats, livelihood resources and breaking their relationships, emotions and human bonds abruptly. Forced eviction makes the families suffer many hardships – lose of employment, livelihood resources and education. Words are poor to express the plight of the families - the women, adolescent girls and the school-going children in particular – which are subjected to eviction.

Many of the target villages of AREDS are located on the Karur-Trichy highway and are now under the eviction process. The families, which are to be evicted, are too poor to procure sites and build houses at an alternative place. This is also adversely impacting school going children since the eviction takes place in the middle of their academic year; changing schools is easier said than done and the number of dropout will rise in the district.

Therefore, Women's Front has been taking steps to pressurise the government to address the issues and find alternative solutions. On 06.08.2008, a protest demonstration was organised in front of the Karur District Collectorate, demanding acquisition of land for expanding the highway after providing adequate alternative sites with patta and funds for constructing houses to the people, who are going to be evicted in Karur district.

Women's Front activists arrested for fighting against forced eviction...

Kancheepuram is one of the districts in Tamil Nadu. There is a lake in Porur of this district. About 30,000 people resided around this lake, depending on the area for their livelihood resources. The state government had issued family cards and voters' identity cards, and installed telephone, waterline and electricity connections to 12,000 families among these people. For the basic education of the children of these families, there were 5 English medium schools in the same area.

On 23.11.2006, without having issued any prior notice or warning, the taluk officer and the police officers with a retinue of thousands of policemen visited the place and ordered them to evict the place immediately. The residents, being indignant, resorted to road blockade, protesting against the atrocious act of the government. They demanded their right to reside at the same place. In return, the police lathi charged and dispersed them.

After that, the officials leveled down the houses with bulldozers. The people took out whichever valuable articles and assets they could save and quitted the place. As the demolishing works were carried out - ignoring the presence of people inside the houses - many of the residents got wounded, a child drowned in water and two others died of heart attack.

Due to pressure from the people, the government allocated alternative site for the evicted families at Koodapakkam – a place located far away from the pervious one – on 27.11.2006. However, one fourth of the families only were issued tokens that permitted people to acquire sites.

For two long years, the people have been suffering and facing a lot of problem at Koodapakkam – the newly allocated area. Women and the adolescent girls, besides suffer depression and physical ailments, fall victim to sexual violence. Though the government officials are well aware of it, they are indifferent towards it. As the schools are remotely located, the children find it difficult for going to school and as a result they dropout. The adults could not get employment opportunity in the new locality. Further, they are too poor to meet out the travel expenses to go to remote places for finding out their livelihood.

UDHR, ICESCR and CEDAW promulgate right to reside. On the contrary, right to reside is denied to the people, they are subjected to forced eviction, and people become repatriates in their own motherland – India.

In order to retrieve the rights of these victims of eviction, Women's Front organised a demonstration with thousands of the victims of eviction in front of Thiruvallur district collectorate, on 16.02.2009, demanding livelihood resources, schooling facility, water supply, power supply and alternative sites for all the evicted families – in order to ensure a minimum dignified life to the affected people. The police arrested Ms. Christina, the general secretary of Women's Front along with the cadres and the people but released them in the evening.

Women's Front activists arrested for fighting against the genocide in Sri Lanka...

On the pretext of combating against LTTE, the Sri Lankan government has been attacking and bombing on the localities where innocent Tamils are living. The government blasts out schools and hospitals and kills thousands of innocent Tamils. There is a surge against this ethnic violence not only in Tamil Nadu but also in other nations, where Tamils are living. All Tamils and peace loving people shout in one voice for ceasefire and peace talks.

In order to register its voice against this heinous crime of the Sri Lankan government and pressurize the Indian government to intervene in the war to check the genocide, Women's Front resorted to road blockade in front of Tamil Nadu state assembly on 29.01.2009, when the assembly was on session. The police arrested the activists of Women's Front but released them in the evening.

Human Chain against genocide:

Sri Lankan Tamils Protection Movement has emerged in Tamil Nadu in course of protest movements against the killings of Tamils by the government in Sri Lanka. It is a platform, in which different political parties and apolitical organisations represent and fight for protecting the Tamils in Sri Lanka. At the call of Sri Lankan Tamils Protection Movement, activists from different political parties joined their hands as links in human chain organised against Sri Lankan genocide on the 17th of February 2009 throughout the state. The members of Women's Front took active participation in the human chain

organised in Karur district on the day and registered their voice to stop the killings of Tamils.

Demanding Lands and Title Deeds on Women's Names:

Article 25 (1) of International Human Rights Convention assures of a minimum dignified life to every human being; Article 11 (1) of ECO SAC convention assures of right to reside. Indian government evolved Rehabilitation and Reimbursement Policy-2004 and it assures allocation of 150 square metres of land in rural area and 75 square metres in urban area to a family affected by any of the developmental programmes of the government. Tamil Nadu government also has assured of building houses to the homeless rural poor in the state. However, many of the rural poor are homeless still. Women and the adolescent girls, who are vulnerable sections of the society, face violence and sexual abuse by the antisocial elements.

So, Women's Front organised demonstrations in all district head quarters, voicing for allocation of land and building houses for the homeless rural poor women and, registering the title deed of the houses on the names of women members in the beneficiary families. At the end of the demonstration, the district secretaries of Women's Front along with the activists submitted demand petitions to the district collectors.

Significance of International Women's Day 2009:

SWATE has been taking steps to protect women from violence with multi pronged strategies in Karur district for the past 19 years and observing International Women's Day that paved way for women's emancipation internationally. Presently, believing that representation of women's movement and their contribution in politics only will bring in a social change in the state joins hands with Women's Front, which is an alternative political force in the state to the corrupt male chauvinistic political system.

Demanding land for women

As usual, Society of Women in Action for Total Empowerment (SWATE) observed International Women's Day this year also but with significance. Women's Day, this year, came on the eve of 15th parliamentary election and at the time Sinhalese government has unleashed against Sri Lankan Tamils. Further, liquor lays its icy hands on the lives of youth and adults and, expands the horizon of poverty. As a result, domestic violence is increasing in the rural Tamil Nadu. SWATE perceives it as a ruthless attack on the dignity of women kind.

Consequently, SWATE was impelled to observe the International Women's Day on the following objectives:

- To voice for ceasefire in Sri Lanka and to check the genocide unleashed against the fellow Tamils

- To make the people conscious enough to identify the electoral candidates who indulge in collecting votes by hook or crook
- To take effective steps to check the ongoing illegal and unregulated sand mining in Cauvery
- To demand total prohibition, in order to safeguard women and children from clutches of violence and poverty

A rally was arranged on the 9th of February 2009 and about 5,000 women rallied round Karur. It has left a fear complex in the minds of main political parties in Karur- that too at the time of election - for they witnessed a mammoth gathering of women who oppose liquor, illegal sand mining, corrupt political practices and the like.

It is high time:

Election is the right time for a right political movement to register its ideology and tactics it follows to bring in a social change because people will be keenly watching the manifestoes of the political parties that vie for political power. Women's Front contested at the time, when all the political parties had been exhausted with giving out false promises and paying out money and kind for securing votes from the public; Women's Front contested at the time, when the political parties had nothing to contribute to the society ideologically and practically. Women's Front contests at the time, when people had started rethinking of exercising their right to franchise. Women's Front contested at the time of people started seeking for a genuine political force with honest leaders.

Indiscriminately, all the political parties in Tamil Nadu, compromise on the issues like Special Economic Zone, indiscriminate eviction drive for laying four way highway, illegal sand mining, opening of liquor shops etc. – which devastate the life of millions of rural Tamil Nadu. Women's Front, besides protesting them, has been organizing democratic movements against them – in order to pressurize the government to ban all such anti-people developmental activities and trade.

With determination to voice the wants and needs of the downtrodden masses of Karur and Dindigul districts and the state as such in the parliament, Women's Front contested the forth-coming election for Indian parliament in two constituencies – Karur and Dindigul in Tamil Nadu.

Scenes of nomination:

On behalf of Women's Front, time and date – 22.04.2009/11.00 am - for nomination was registered with the election commission/district collectorate. On the very same day, the candidate of the ruling party in Tamil Nadu, who is the present MP and has been exploiting the sand resources in Cauvery and Amaravathi rivers in Karur district, also filed his nomination. The police officials being aware of his political, muscle and money power allowed him to file his nomination earlier and allowed other candidates nominees, who are politically popular and, made Women's Front candidate wait for quite a long time.

The painful factor was that the officials were being intolerant of the emerging political movement headed by women. Therefore, even for nomination, Women's Front activists had to fight for retrieving their rights. Long live democracy!

Election Campaign:

With the start of election process, Women's Front has nominated Ms. Danya for Karur parliamentary constituency and Ms. Dhansri for Dindigul constituency and has been canvassing votes. Activists' Meetings are being organised in each block of each constituency.

Election Scenario in Tamil Nadu:

Money for votes:

Indiscriminately, all political parties and their allied parties paid out money for alluring votes. DMK politicians are the kingpins in paying out money for their party is the ruling party in Tamil Nadu. Other political parties too paid out money within their limitations. Both DMK and AIADMK paid money to people in Karur constituency as both the parties were in the arena.

Families received money paid by all parties without any reservation. People being surrounded with problems and economic crises, are badly in need of money. Capitalising this weakness of the people, all these parties degrade the ethics of people with money. It has gone to the extent that at many parts of the state, people demanded more money for exercising their right to franchise.

There were protests against paying out money for votes by the opponent parties at some places in the state followed by bloody clashes, road blockade, and detention.

Free booze and *briyani*:

Right from nomination till polling, these political parties are showing off their affluence and cadre strength. The candidates go for nomination with a long retinue of cars, vans and trucks compactly packed with party cadres. The same team or gang of cadres would ramify and campaign door-to-door. In order to keep the cadres with them, these parties fed their cadres with *briyani* and liquor on all days of campaign. Youth being unemployed and skeptic, are more vulnerable and they easily fall prey to the unethical practices of these parties.

As a result, there was a remarkable sale of liquors in TASMAL, the government-run liquor shops – particularly in Karur district. More so, the hotels in the towns and cities were unusually overcrowded with party cadres each day during the entire campaign period. It really caused many inconveniences to the mobile population in Karur town and of course, to the small parties in accessing food.

Muscle power:

Gone are the days when ideological tolerance was the traits of politicians. Today, if there is an ideological difference, the ideologues will be either terminated or assaulted, as a measure of putting an end to the growing opposition. Clash among the rival parties were ubiquitous during campaign in the state. The leaders of the parties only instigate and insinuate such clashes and, let their cadres go riotous. This behaviour of the politicians and cadres sow the seeds of fear in the minds of common people and block them from thinking otherwise or progressively.

Obnoxious comments:

As these political parties have ideologically, culturally, ethically and morally nothing to propagate, their leaders tend to pass obnoxious and controversial comments on each other. Almost, every political party has its own TV channel to propagate their political stand, ideology and business advertisements. They being jealous of each other's wealth accumulation and positions, unscrupulously resort to foulmouthed criticism. The election commission impelled by the ill-mannered portrayal of these channels on the opponent party leaders drove the election commission to stop objectionable telecasting in the name of election campaign.

Obscene election campaign:

Both DMK and AIADMK undertook campaign with tableau vivant. Instead of promulgating the Tamil culture, Tamil folk dances and the like, they hired adolescent girls, young women and youth for dancing to the tune of cinema songs – as a measure of canvassing. Vulgar movements and gestures of the dancers annoyed the parents and the elders but attracted youth and adolescents and, eventually spoiled their minds.

Violation of Election Commission norms:

Price rise, unemployment and bus fare hike are ever mounting in the capitalist society and it is no an exception here. However, no party failed to oppose the bus fare hike when it played the role of opposition party. The same party never failed to increase the bus fare when it comes to power. In the last three years of DMK regime, the bus fare is soaring and it has generated a strong resentment among the common masses. So, DMK-led government suddenly minimized the bus fare just in fear of losing seats in the election. In the following few days, the passengers and the commuters were happy to pay the minimized bus fare.

Consequently, there was a hue and cry from the opposition front. They yelled at it “it is violation of election commission norms.” They all shouted in one voice to revoke the bus fare reduction. Consequently, the election commission probed in to and forced the government to withdraw bus fare cut. Soon, the bus fare cut was withdrawn. In the following days, the passengers were annoyed over paying of the old bus fare.

Irony in bus fare reduction and opposition:

If there is a way for curtailing the bus fare after budget session of the state assembly, there is surely a possibility for withdrawing the bus fare hike imposed by the government. However, the ruling party and its government failed to do so. The opposition parties perceived or pretended to perceive the reduction in bus fare more as a violation of election norm. They did not at all demand permanent reduction in bus fare. In both the cases, the welfare of the people is ignored and only the vested interests of these parties are reflected.

Women's Front in the midst of election campaign...

Demanding the central and the state government to stop the genocide war unbound on Tamils by the Sri Lankan government, about 20 activists of 'Women against Elam Tamil Genocide' observed fast-unto-death protest at Chennai. It was headed by Prof. Saraswathi – the President of Women's Front. Nearly 100 women, extending their support to the hunger strike, underwent a relay fast. Reputed Tamil film personnel also supported the hunger strike.

As the hunger strike entered in to the seventh day, Ms. Jayammal, one of the activists, was taken to the government hospital after persuasion, as she refused to accept medical treatment. They were determined not to withdraw the hunger strike unless there was a ceasefire in Sri Lanka. The callous government of the state arrested the activists on the 23rd of April 2009 and gave them forced medical treatment

Canvassing and fund mobilization strategy of Women's Front:

All the leading political parties tended to capture vote bank not with the virtues of their political character and welfare activities but with bribes. Even the election commission was well aware that the main political parties gave out money along with false promises. Actually, it is their investment so that they could harvest the fruits in the aftermath of election. On the contrary, Women's Front activists canvass and mobilizing funds from people by selling the stamp size flag of Women's Front.

Ms. Danya made a complaint to the Returning Officer on 13.06.2009, saying that the voters were bribed on the previous day, almost in all villages. But the indifference showed by the officer was very shocking. She simply asked "How came you know about it only now! Did not you know it earlier?" The very answer is the clear evidence for the close nexus between the unethical practices of candidates and the corrupt administrative system.

Expectation and the result:

Congress ruled the state for quite some time but DMK and AIADMK have been ruling for a long time alternatively, since 1967. Both these parties' Karur MPs had and have been overexploiting the sand resources in Cauvery and Amaravathi, the two rivers that

flow via Karur district, for the past 20 years. As a result, the ground water resources have been depleted, irrigation channels have become ineffective in supplying water and agricultural practices are increasingly dwindling. Agriculture is the primary livelihood for the people in Karur district.

Therefore, Women's Front campaigned focusing on the destruction of environment and natural resources due to illegal sand mining. People were enthused by the campaign and they were determined to vote to 'rail engine' – the election symbol allocated to Ms. Danya.

There are 1,012,171 voters in this constituency. Women's Front expected a minimum of 70, 000 votes polled in Karur constituency but Ms. Danya was polled only 1,023 votes. When the activists called on the supporters, who voted for, they promised and vowed in the name of their gods that they voted for rail engine. They are ready to endorse what they say to the government – to the court of law. Ultimately, one question persists in the minds of Women's Front activists and its supporters and, sympathizers – WHERE HAVE GONE THE VOTES POLLED.

Oddity in counting:

News from 'Thina Mani' – a Tamil daily – dated 18.05.2009 goes as follows: Election was on 13.05.2009. On 14.05.2009, the Public Relations Department officially declared in its message that 8, 19,350 votes were polled in Karur constituency. Counting was on 16.05.2009. At the end of counting, it was declared that 8, 22,696 were counted. Postal votes were 1,704. Postal votes plus polled votes together were 8, 21,054. The difference between the counted votes and the polled votes is 1,642. How came this difference in just four-day time remains an enigma. When enquired, the district collector did not respond to properly.

Women's Front staged a protest:

16.05.2009 was the vote-counting day. As the counting process was underway in Karur constituency, Ms. Christy Samy, the general secretary of Women's Front and Ms. Danya, the electoral candidate of Women's Front, noted that the votes polled to Danya were not recorded in certain booths, where there are ardent supporters for Women's Front. It was shocking to them that even the votes cast by the family members of Ms. Danya were not recorded. Immediately after, they claimed that malpractice and manipulation had taken place with the electronic ballot system.

As per the instruction, they gave a complaint to the Returning Officer. But, he was very much indifferent to the complaint. They, being indignant, staged a protest against the malpractice along with the counting agents of Women's Front. Police arrested 38 of them but released them in the evening.

PIL against the rigger ballot machine:

Presently, several High Courts across the nation are hearing public interest litigation against the rigger electronic voting machine. Therefore, the loser political parties must collect all possible evidences of rigging in the constituencies they suspect. They must also collect the affidavits of their party cadres affirming who they voted for, and file a PIL. It is the duty of the court to treat this as evidence and order an unbiased probe and detailed inquiry.

Tasks ahead of Women's Front:

Selfishness, family politics, nepotism, unprincipled political alliance and criminalization of politics together have thrown democracy in to the abyss of darkness. Notorious politicians and corrupt administration have joined their hands and entered in to conjugal relationship. It is the time, when government is failing to perform its ethical or bounden duty. Election has become a periodical ritual, wherein demonic political parties exhibit their money and muscle power. Democratic forces have become emaciated and weak.

All the leading political parties tend to capture vote bank not with the virtues of their political character and welfare activities but with bribes. Even the election commission is well aware that the main political parties give out money and freebies along with false promises. For them, it is an investment so that they could harvest the fruits in the aftermath of election. On the contrary, Women's Front stuck on with legalities and ethics for canvassing votes and mobilizing funds from people by selling the stamp size flag of Women's Front.

To retrieve democracy is not that easy in a populous nation like India. It needs gradual politicisation of people's movements at state level and integrating them in to a national level political force. However, there is a ray of hope, a shine of morning star – Women's Front. Contesting this election is only a breakthrough for Women's Front and it has to go a long way to rejuvenate democracy that is dying in the hands of today's politicians.

Conclusion:

The last parliamentary election was not a free and fair election – as usual. To uproot all social evils, a political surge among the grassroots women is essential because all social maladies are the outcome of the reactionary patriarchal political system. Unless women explore their power of governance, the present socio-politico-economic and cultural status will never change. Unless political representation in politics and their participation in decision making are ensured, national development will remain only in papers.

No doubt, Women's Front will spearhead the political upsurge and it is the duty of the well meaning people of the society to join in millions behind it and prove their solidarity, at the state level.