

Media's Watchdog Role essential for free and fair Election

Speakers emphasized in a State level media workshop by Odisha Election Watch and ADR

Bhubaneswar (30-10-2018) : A free and fair election is essential in a democracy and it can not be achieved without the watchdog role of media , eminent journalists former bureaucrats and senior election officials said here in a state level workshop on the "Free, Fair Election & Fourth Estate" organised by Odisha Election Watch in collaboration with Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) & PECUC.

Giving keynote address Dr. Vipul Mudgal, Senior Journalist and Trustee of ADR emphasized on media's independent and watch dog role to create an environment for free and fair elections. Describing how paid news and fake news are being used to influence voters Dr, Mudgal said that media has to play a role to provide people the right information. Sometimes data are being manipulated to achieve the own goal. Fact is that digital reality can be manipulated both positively & negatively. Paid news, fake news & hate speech are enemy of democracy creating challenges for free and fair elections and need to be opposed by all sections.

Mr. Raghuram R. Iyer, OAS(s) Joint Chief Electoral Officer, Odisha discussed about the Election Commission's guide line for media, various information about the electoral procedures . He emphasised that all the eligible citizen must enroll themselves as a voter and vote without becoming prey to any lure. Voter enrolment date has been extended upto 15 November he mentioed.

Mr. Ranjan Kumar Mohanty, Coordinator, Odisha Election Watch gave welcome address and spoke about the campaign of OEW for electoral reforms and promoting ethical voting.

Srj. Baikuntha Nath Panigrahi, former director of Doordarshan and OEW core team member shared the purpose of the workshop. He gave emphasis on the role of media in making and breaking of a leader. Media should be ready to take the news to the common people and to inform and educate them about their right by utilizing all the available media. He ended his speech with the note that every person must vote and vote for right person.

Chairing the inaugural session Sri Sahadeva Sahoo former Chief Secretary of Odisha and Head of Odisha election Watch told that Journalists should take responsibility to educate people about their voting rights & choosing the right person.

A panel discussion was also held on "" Media Ethics & Accountability in Election". it was moderated by eminent journalist Srj. Ashok Pradhan . Senior renowned Journalist Mr. Samapd Mohapatra, Mr. Sandeep Sahu & Mr. Manoranjan Mishra discussed about issues, concerns, challenges and prospects.. The session Free and fair elections and grassroot experiences chaired by Eminent journalist Jatindra dash and Mr. Priyaranjan Sahoo, Senior journalist initiated discussion as key discussant and after that reporters participating the workshops discussed the grassroot situation and committed to work for strengthening democracy at grassroot. Amongst others Dr. Seba Mohapatra, K.K. Swain of OEW spoke.