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# 'Voting is a sacred duty; it cannot be made compulsory'

To weed out corruption, political parties must be regulated, says former CEC

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BANGALORE

Concerns were raised over political parties stalling poll reforms in a seminar on 'Electoral Reforms' on Monday organised by the state unit of 'Youth Against Corruption' at Jnana Jyothi Auditorium at Central College.

In his key note address, former chief election commissioner, TS Krishnamurthy explained how political parties have proved to be a stumbling block as far as poll reforms are concerned. "When I was holding the chair, I sent a proposal to the prime minister on poll re-

forms and criminalisation of politics. God knows what happened to the proposal. Later, political parties relegated poll reforms to a corner. The reason given was lack of political consensus. Is every law enacted on the basis of political consensus?" he questioned.

Krishnamurthy said there is an obnoxious connection between politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen. "To change the system, political parties need to be regulated. Hence, a separate legislation for political parties like 'Company Law' is required," he said.

Election Commission does not have the power to disqual-



Justice BK Somasekhara, former CEC TS Krishnamurthy and Pro Vice-Chancellor of Jain University, Sandeep Shastri, interact with students during the seminar on Electoral Reforms on Monday —Mohan Kumar BN

ify a party or a candidate from contesting elections. "At least, EC should be given powers to regulate political parties' expenditures," he observed.

Dr Sandeep Shastri, Pro Vice-

## 6 VIEWS AND VOICES

**Politics is commercialised and criminalised... Laws will keep those with criminal backgrounds from entering politics.**

—MK Suvrath Kumar, co-convenor, YAC, Karnataka

**Nearly 60% of Bangaloreans do not vote, and 80% of them are the educated middle-class. In a country like Australia, it is mandatory to vote during elections.**

— Dinesh Gundu Rao, Congress leader

**Today, there are more of political activists than politicians. Leadership in the country must be value-based. The reason criminals enter politics makes good business sense.**

—BN Vijaykumar, BJP leader

decades of experience as a teacher, I have learnt one lesson: the more you force, the more people disobey," he noted.

In his inaugural speech, Justice B K Somasekhara said laws relating to EC are made by vested interests.

"If anything goes wrong, the blame will go to bureaucrats while there is no stringent law to punish a candidate of a political party who violates rules during elections," he said.

Justice Somasekhara said EC should act like a police station where cases are admitted and investigated on the lines of Lokayukta.

"There must be an exhaustive law to deal with electoral offences. If the law is bad, then the judgement will also be bad," he added.

Chancellor of Jain University, opined that, until the source of money flow is cut, corruption

cannot be weeded out. "Voting is a sacred duty; hence it cannot be made compulsory. In my