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Rs.34 cr was seized in State ahead of 2014 polls

4,133 cases were booked in the State, of which instances of liquor seizure numbered 2,194

Staff Reporter

HYDERABAD: More than 4,100 cases were booked in Telangana and 5,700 in Andhra Pradesh during the run-up to the 2014 general elections. These included offences like liquor, gold and cash being seized, apart from other violations of the election code.

The information, which was acquired through the Right to Information (RTI) Act, was provided by the Forum for Good Governance (FGG) here on Thursday. The data reveals that a total of 4,133 cases were registered in Telangana. This included 1,199 cases for poll code violation, 543 cases of cash seizure, 198 cases of gold and other items being seized and a whopping 2,194 cases of liquor being seized.

Similarly, out of the 5,733 cases registered in AP, poll code violations constituted 1,199 cases, cash seizure 1,373, cases of seizure of gold and other items 200, and 2,780 cases registered for the seizure of liquor. "The Representation of People's Act is very clear about the offences,

which have punishments including disqualification," said FGG secretary M. Padmanabha Reddy.

Cash seized

Though the number of cases booked for cash seizure in Telangana was just 543, compared to 1,371 in Andhra Pradesh, money seized in the former was Rs.34.38 crore, higher than the Rs.32 crore seized from AP. In Telangana, the most amount of cash seized was from Hyderabad district (Rs.16.73 crore), followed by Mahabubnagar (Rs.6.94 crore). In AP, the largest amount of cash seized was from West Godavari district (Rs.4.8 crore), followed by Anantapur district with Rs.4.1 crore.

"Most of the money seized is released once the elections are over by the Income Tax (IT) Department or the police, as there is no uniform procedure of handling the cash after seizure. The cops are supposed to dispose it off in the courts, but they give it to the IT Department," said Mr. Reddy, stating that IT officials simply collect due tax,

A DIFFERENT POLL GAME

	TELANGANA	ANDHRA PRADESH
Total cases	4,134	5,733
Liquor seized	2,194	2,780
Gold and other items seized	198	200
Cash seized (543 cases)	Rs.34.38 crore	Rs.32 crore (1,373 cases)
Code violations	2,194	1,380

if any, from the offenders and release the rest to him again.

Citing an example, RTI data provided about information of cash seized in the Goshamahal constituency by Begumbazar police clearly showed that amounts seized from various persons during the run-up to the elections was given to the IT department. IT officials then took advance tax (various taxes taken in advance for the next year from the offender) and then returned the remaining amount.

"RTI also shows 'action drop', which means that the case was not pursued by the police," said Mr. Reddy, while appealing to the DGPs of both States to review the cases.

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TIMES

No candidate prosecuted for poll crimes: Rights activists

5,733 Cases Filed In AP While Telangana Saw 4,134 cases

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad: During the general elections 2014, there were 9,867 cases booked against candidates, but not a single one has been disposed, claimed civil rights activists. About 5,733 cases were filed in Andhra Pradesh while Telangana recorded 4,134 cases, ranging from violation of the model of conduct, money seized during raids and distribution of gold, sarees and liquor, said a study conducted by Forum for Good Governance (FGG).

FGG secretary M Padmanabha Reddy said that even offering meals to a voter during elections amounts to violation of the law. Ironically, even six months after the elections, not a single case has been disposed. Till date,

there has been no case that has been dealt with. Though laws are in place, the initial euphoria has died out," said former high court judge Reddappa Reddy.

During the heat of elections, the chief electoral officer (CEO) Bhanwar Lal had said that special courts would be set up to deal with the cases swiftly. "Sadly, not a single court has been set up to deal with these cases," Reddy added.

There have also been cases where most of the money seized was sent to the income tax dept, which only dealt with collection of taxes and arrears from the money seized and subsequently released the money back to offenders. In Telangana, a total of Rs 34,38,50,997 was seized, whereas in AP

the amount stood at Rs 32,00,23,451.

"In most of these cases, there has been a monetary transaction that took place. However, there was no uniform method of pursuing the case once elections got over. According to law, the money is to be deposited with the court. However, the money has been handed over to the IT department, which has deducted a sum under the guise of advance tax and released the rest of the money back," said Dr Rao Chelikani, a civil society activist.

FGG has demanded that the DGPs of both states review the cases and take action for speedy disposal of those cases. "Even if one per cent of the people are disqualified for bribery it would go a long way in changing the face of elections," added Padmanabha Reddy.

