



Sandeep Dikshit, the two-time MP from East Delhi, opined that there was a need to convert organisations into institutions to raise serious issues concerning the society that have not been touched by the Government or the political parties. He was speaking at a national symposium on 'Rise of Civil Society: Participative Democracy or Anarchist Dictatorship' in the Capital organised by Center for Reforms, Development and Justice (CRD&J).

Recounting his early days spent working in the interiors of Madhya Pradesh, Dikshit said the civil society groups of present time were more like the voluntary organizations espousing the cause of the tribals but without proper vision.

Voicing similar opinion Rajya Sabha MP and Editor, The Pioneer, Chandan Mitra said the civil society represented the commonality of views and opinions that have not been touched upon by the political parties. Mitra said there was possibility of the civil society group evolving into a political party as questions would be raised as to whom they represented. "In India, civil society is in its infancy stage. In future, its role will not just be confined to Lokpal but also have great influence in policy making. An organised civil society will emerge and it is possible that it would evolve in a political party," Mitra said addressing a full audience at the IIPA auditorium. The second time Parliamentarian cautioned that any conflict between the civil society and the political leadership was not good for the society as a whole. "There can be differences between members of the civil society but they should collectively be an advisory to the Government. They should raise the issues that have not been addressed by the Government, political parties or the judiciary. However, they can not be the substitute for representative democracy," Mitra said.

Reminding the audience that there are still good and honest people in politics, judiciary and other spheres too, Editor of Nai Dunia Alok Mehta said "there should be faith that there are still good and honest people in politics, judiciary and media...you cannot say that all systems have become totally corrupt and there is no honesty left in these systems," "The civil society activists have made a claim that nobody has been jailed for corruption since independence. I can tell you that at least 35,000 people in Madhya Pradesh have been jailed for corruption," he said adding that everyone must work together to clean up our own surroundings and to have faith in the functionality and goodness of our systems. "Corruption is not a malaise of India alone, there are several instances of graft in the US and UK as well," he added.

## **Meet expresses concern on challenges before civil society .**

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 31 August 2010 00:00

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However, Professor (Retd) of Political Science in Delhi University, Subrata Mukherjee made scathing remarks and advised the civil society groups to act within the framework of law. Unlike other speakers, Mukherjee was harsh on the civil society activists led by Anna Hazare saying their interference in the draft Lokpal Bill was the most unfortunate thing as law making was the sole prerogative of the elected representatives. "India can not be made to look like 'banana republic'. There has to be the acceptance of the rule of law and a well-ordered society," he said adding innumerable demands from the society have turned Indian democracy into a 'noisy democracy' and it could further turn out to be a 'false democracy'. Mukherjee was also critical of the referendum conducted by the civil society activists in Chandni Chowk on the Government's draft of the Lokpal Bill saying such process found no place in Indian Constitution.