

Outcome

Selected papers will be published by a reputed national/international publisher in a book form in English and regional language.

Venue (For Offline Mode)

PPRI, Kaimanam, Pappanamcode, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala- 695018



Organising Team

For any query on the national seminar, please contact the following:

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About PPRI

Public Policy Research Institute is an autonomous social science research Centre funded by Government of Kerala. The Institute is engaged in production and dissemination of knowledge in the field of public policy. The mission of PPRI is to facilitate policy formulations at the national and sub-national levels, which are sought to be achieved by undertaking research, consultancy, training, documentation, publication and advocacy. The Institute carries out research projects and conducts studies for governmental and non-governmental organisations. The Institute is governed by its Governing Board comprising renowned academicians, bureaucrats and policy advocates drawn from different disciplines. The PPRI is housed at Pappanamcode, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

National Seminar

Electoral Bonds and Cronyism in India: Implications for Democracy

30th March 2024

(9.30 am to 6 pm)

Organized By

Public Policy Research Institute
Thiruvananthapuram
(www.ppri.org.in)

Background

The Electoral Bond (EB) scheme was announced in the union budget, 2017-18 to facilitate corporates, and individuals to give donations to political parties in India. The EB scheme of financing political parties was introduced to ensure the anonymity of donors to protect them from victimisation. EBs are a variant of promissory notes that can be purchased from notified branches of State Bank of India (SBI) and donated to any political party of the donor's choice. The details about the donor and receiver remain anonymous to the public. The SBI maintains records of the donor and the recipient. When the system was implemented in 2018, the EBs were expected to print the date of purchase and denominations on the EB and no other details, which would facilitate the identification of the donor and the recipient. The recipient of the EB has to redeem in the SBI bank account opened specially for EB encashment within fifteen days of its purchase. However, on investigation, it has been revealed that the EBs have concealed serial numbers by which a third party could easily identify donors and recipients. As early as 2018, scepticism was expressed from different corners concerning the legality and constitutional validity of EBs over the prevailing standard practice of giving donations to political parties in India.

The matter was brought to the notice of the Supreme Court of India which had refused to grant a stay on the issuance of EBs in 2020. However, the feature of anonymity was observed to be in contravention of the fundamental rights of voters enshrined in the constitution of India. Moreover, it is the fundamental right of a voter to have information about the source(s) of funds to political parties in the country. It has been widely acknowledged that corporates often donate only on the expectation of a fair and good return. It is worth pursuing in this context- what are the social, political, environmental and economic costs (direct and concealed) of EBs and political financing under the 2018 scheme?

Theme

Against the backdrop, the ONE DAY National Seminar discusses the following theme:
THEME

1. Do EBs reaffirm cronyism and if so, what are its ramifications and challenges posed to India's democracy?
2. Why do corporates liberally donate to political parties?
3. How does cronyism (crony capitalism) work to the advantage of the donor?
4. Why do corporate donors prefer state-specific regional parties than pan-Indian parties?
5. Why and how do donors prefer to finance a particular political party over others at the national and state level?
6. How do governments extend protection to donors and why do a certain type of donors

change their preference of giving donations?

7. Why do corporates in India and abroad donate to different political parties and what determines the size of the kitty?

- Papers for the seminar need not necessarily be confined to the specified questions/themes of the national seminar.
- The completed papers can be sent to: ppriseminar@gmail.com

Programme Details

The seminar is scheduled in hybrid mode from 9.30 am to 6.00 pm.

Important Dates

Registration - March 25th-28th:
[Registration details are available at PPRI website]

Last date for paper submission - March 28th

Target Group

1. Academicians, Policy makers and advocacy groups;
2. Research Scholars, Social Scientists, Finance and Law experts;
3. Interested activists and Government officials.