

# Expert Consultation on Electoral Reforms Report

## 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Seminar on Expert Consultation on Electoral Reforms held on 10.9.2008 at the Preview Theatre, School of Media Studies, Loyola College, at 11-00 AM was conducted by People Studies jointly with Media Arts Department. About 100 students of media and Research Scholars were present. The Special Guests who shared their views and experiences were the former Chief Election Commissioner of India, Mr. J.M. Lyngdoh, Chief Electoral Officer of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Naresh Gupta, the Journalist and Political Analyst, Mr. Gnani, Rector of Loyola Jesuit community, Fr. Amal, S.J., and Principal of Loyola College Fr. Albert Muthumalai, S.J.

Ms. Tara and Ms. Prarthana the compeers introduced the special guests and honoured them. Fr. Albert Muthumalai, S.J. welcomed the gathering. Fr. K. Amal, S.J. spoke on the *Context and Focus of the Consultation*. Students Mr. Arokiaraj and Mr. A. Ritchie Vincent presented the different *Electoral Systems in the World*.

Mr. J. Joseph and Mr. P. Roshan presented the *Electoral Reforms Initiated by Election Commission of India* and Ms. C. Shelley and team members presented on *Electoral Reforms Proposed by Intelligentsia*. Ms. Steffi and Ms. Teena presented a report prepared by Dr. S. Rajanayagam on the past surveys done by the People Studies and *Electoral Reforms Proposed by the Public*.

Mr. Naresh Gupta, Chief Electoral Officer and Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Tamil Nadu spoke on *Electoral System in India – Present Scenario*. He presented a survey of the electoral system in India. Many reforms that were possible in the western democracies were difficult in India and illiteracy hampered the implementation of more efficient systems. The Commission was looking at micro-management of problems and was evolving means of correcting the system. The chance of giving the people not to vote for any candidate through a “none of the above” would be a good step towards reforming the system.

Former Chief Election Commissioner of India, Mr. J.M. Lyngdoh spoke on *Electoral System in India – Future Directions*. He informed that democratic legitimacy primarily depends on the electoral system providing a level playing field. But the current system in India is full of problems owing to criminalization, blatant use of money power and defects in the electoral laws.

Mr. Gnani, Journalist & Political Analyst spoke on *Electoral System in India – A Critique* and interacted with the Students relating to Electoral System for Young India. Vote of Thanks was delivered by Prof. A. Amalraj, In-charge of *Oodaha Kalaihal*.