

The LSI Response to the recent vicious campaign

The recent elections are over, and a new team has been elected with a majority vote, which speaks amply of what the linguistics fraternity in India wants. The winning team asked for support on a positive note with a promise to carry forward the initiative undertaken by the outgoing team. In contrast, some people have indulged in negative campaigns with attacks and allegations.

A few people have been making veiled comments/ allegations- all vague and ambiguous and few have come out supporting such comments, casting doubts over the LSI constitution, elections, and the outgoing LSI team, putting all democratic procedures and statesmanship aside.

Past Elections through postal ballots:

This is despite a majority having maintained a dignified silence all throughout.

No questions were raised in the past as the elections were conducted in Pune and by those sitting in the Pune LSI office and actively present throughout the process- making it highly partisan (?). Were there any accounts of how many ballots were posted, how many people have received them, how many of them have been posted, and how many were received? There was a much lower participation in voting in the past. The list of LSI members maintained by the LSI office in Pune alone speaks volumes of the affairs at the Pune office.

Online voting system to reach out to many:

We wouldn't have known about the so many wrinkles in the system hadn't the modern online voting system exposed them through its multi-step system of verification and validation, which required checking, matching, and verifying the details of the voting members.

There has been a demand for switching to online elections to ensure greater participation, greater transparency, and efficiency. After due search and deliberations, it was decided to seek the services from *eBhasha Setu*, a reputed organization in IITH. Uma M Rao, a Computational Linguist associated with the IIT as a consultant, finally reached out to the organization ... that provides services to IITH and other Government organizations. The proposal was duly placed before the EC and approved.

Xenophobic comments:

Regarding the constitution being diluted (exact wordings: wrinkles, slighted, short shrift, disregard for the concerns of the senior members, inadequacies in the voting system, unethical practices, wonder what we are going to pass on to the future generations.....):

Unavailability of LSI documents:

One wonders whether these people can tell us what has been changed in the constitution over which they have objections. Or how familiar they are with the various LSI documents. None of these have ever been in the public domain. The only change that these people are uncomfortable about- implied by their allegations- is that No office bearer can hold the office for more than one term contiguously- This has derailed the hopes of some people who have managed to be on it for years and controlling and changing practices at their own will without any mandate from the EC. [May we ask when the secretary's position was reserved for the

Pune constituency? We couldn't find any records neither in the constitution nor in any amendments.]

LSI is a National body, not a regional one:

One wonders whether a major contention behind this negative propaganda is to reduce LSI, which is a national body, to a local body to reserve some of the key positions and as many positions as possible for those from PUNE, thereby reducing it to a regional body. Is this what anyone would want? The excuse given is that the LSI office is located in Pune and can be managed only by those stationed there. There is nothing sacrosanct about it, nor is all well with the LSI office in any sense- records are not kept, journals are not reaching people, and yet LSI has been paying for the postal expenses year after year. People seeking membership in LSI and making online payments are failed by those occupying the Pune office. There is delay everywhere.... We often had to personally intervene to respond to the grievances.

LSI adjust to recent developments:

Not all is well with various organs of the LSI, and the way it has been mismanaged for years. Times have changed, and so must LSI move in a positive direction, making it truly a national body, more democratic, encouraging greater participation, and bringing in greater transparency, which will bring greater efficiency and accountability.

Never before have you seen so much information being made available about the LSI. All minutes of the EC and AGM/ GBM for the past couple of years are now in the public domain, including a copy of the constitution over which a lot of hue and cry has been raised. **The minor amendments were passed over a year ago after lengthy and due deliberations.** A copy of the LSI constitution has been in the public domain since then. There was enough time to make observations, but we haven't received any.

The writing on the wall is very clear. A great majority of the Linguistics fraternity wants change. They have been airing their grievances with restraint and dignity but never has such impropriety has been committed as we see now. If we have maintained a dignified silence, it does not imply that we have indulged in fraud and wrongdoing as has been claimed (someone said, 'congratulations on the easy cheating process'- to which we can only say- do not pollute young minds). A great majority of the people have exercised restraint, which speaks for itself. The dignified members indulging in negativity and irresponsible allegations without a shred of evidence and those supporting without doing their own homework have brought disrepute to the entire linguistics fraternity. It is they who owe an explanation and an unconditional apology to the rest of the Linguistics fraternity. To place the matters on record, some of the sitting members airing their views in public have mutually contradicted each other. Nevertheless, the comments made by the sitting members are unwelcome and amount to the impropriety of the office.

The verdict is out and should be respected, whether some people like it or not.

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