

Talk on ‘Democracy and People’s Participation’



Dr. S.Y. Quraishi, the former Chief Election Commissioner of India, to talk on “Democracy and People’s Participation” all welcomed Dr Quraishi and set in the agendas for the talk.

Dr. Quraishi began by arguing that notwithstanding manifold problems, India as a nation has great attributes and aspects, which definitely includes our democracy. No matter how chaotic it may appear to be, running consistently the largest democracy in the world from the time of Independence is an achievement which the entire world recognizes. Electoral process, according to Dr. Quraishi, has been a major contributing factor to its success. Assessing how Indian society has evolved as a democracy from a time when only 16% people were literate and had a caste-based hierarchical society to the modern society it is today, Dr. Quraishi argued that the increase in people’s participation has to be strongly recognized.

Dr. Quraishi highlighted the measures which have been adopted by the Election Commission of India to keep a check on fraud, intimidation and violence at the time of voting. He also listed the numerous legal and constitutional provisions that have been put in place to ensure the



conduct of inclusive, free and fair elections. The campaign to increase voter awareness has been a great success, resulting in historic voter turn outs across different states of the country. He also mentioned numerous measures which have successfully ensured equal, and on occasions, greater participation of women in the electoral process. He did, however, highlight the issue of voter apathy, especially amongst the urban voters.

He concluded his talk by quoting global views on the Indian electoral processes. The world looks at India with awe and aspires to establish an electoral system as successful as ours, he said. A brief session of Q&A followed the talk.

