

The Liberal Position

Newsletter of the INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP

No.1 - October 2001



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(For Private Circulation only)

Dear Friend

We are happy to present you the first issue of The Liberal Position, the newsletter of the Indian Liberal Group.

Also enclosed with this Newsletter is a reprint of the last book written by the ILG's founder, Mr. Minoo Masani. Entitled "We Indians" and written for the young, the book can be said to be a kind of an epilogue. The prologue being a book he wrote in 1944 entitled "Our India", also for the young. The reprint was made possible thanks to a donation from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. This copy comes to you with our compliments. Extra copies are available to members of the ILG at 20% discount plus postage. The printed price is Rs.50.00

It is my hope that this newsletter, with your active participation will be a lively affair and contribute to strengthening the fraternal bonds between members.

With fraternal greetings

S. V. Raju
President

Until recently we thought we had two types of members - those who owned a computer and those who did not! Today we are a little wiser. There are really three types viz., those who have a computer and access the internet; those who do not have a computer; and those who have a computer but don't access the internet, for whatever reason. *The Liberal Position* is addressed to members in all three categories. This newsletter is therefore an attempt to cross this digital divide!

The purpose of *The Liberal Position* is to keep you informed of our activities, share with you our problems, discuss new initiatives and generally function as a medium to interact with one another. Also, beginning with the next issue we shall be delighted to carry your suggestions on organisation - structure and method of working - which will improve the functioning of the ILG. Also, your views and comments on current issues from a Liberal perspective.

Since *The Liberal Position* can also be read on our website www.liberalsindia.com, you can post your responses on the website as well.

Let us begin this inaugural issue by reminding ourselves of the values that brought us together and why we decided to reorganise the Indian Liberal Group.

1. We said that our primary purpose was to foster the values of freedom, responsibility, tolerance, social justice and equality of opportunity, and.

2. our primary objective was to defend the fundamental liberal belief in the right of individuals to personal liberty, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; the right of free association; the right to private property, the free choice of occupation; the right to information so as to exercise one's rights meaningfully.

The first were the shared values that brought us together and the second is action-oriented: Our determination to defend the rights that spring out of these shared values. The first would remain pious wishes without the second. Hence the decision to **reorganise** the ILG and to make it an instrument capable of defending and promoting these values

In pursuance of this resolve we did two things. We gave ourselves a set of *Basic Principles* as our Guidelines for Action and a Constitution which defined the structure of our organisation.

Why did we decide to reorganise the Indian Liberal Group? We decided to do so for the simple reason that in current discussions and debates on public policy, Liberalism's point of view was going by default. The ILG which was founded in 1964 was essentially a debating group. This was understandable, for, at that time, there was a political party that espoused Liberal policies and the ILG's discussions helped this party in its policy formulations. The situation is now different. Barring a small unit of that party in Mumbai, the Party elsewhere has disappeared. Such a situation demands that the ILG move out of seminar rooms and be both a debating group and an 'activist'. Seminars, discussions, workshops and the like are important; but these by themselves will be of little use if what is discussed and agreed upon at such seminars, discussions and workshops is not translated into action. At the same time, let us be clear that even while not excluding politics from our purview, we are not a political party seeking votes.

If we look around us today, we find things going wrong almost everywhere. The process of liberalisation which should have opened up the economy and freed us from needless controls has really not taken off from where it began in 1991. What we see today are overt acts in the name of market reforms and covert acts to stymie them. The reasons are not far to seek. Those who hold authority, be it the permanent or the elected executive, are very reluctant to let go of economic power. And eating away into the vitals of our society is corruption on such a frightening scale that civilized life is itself threatened. This decay in public morality is far more dangerous than all terrorist outfits put together! If civil society (and we in the ILG are a part of that civil society) does not mount a massive offensive on a wide range of fronts (all within the four corners of the law) then we, as a people, are surely heading towards doom.

India's Liberals must make themselves both heard and seen to be active in the public realm. The Liberal Voice is the Voice of Reason – a voice that is sorely needed in these troubled times. It is the ILG's task to ensure that the Liberal position is seen and accepted as a credible alternative to an altogether unsatisfactory status quo

Our Website

Our website www.liberalsindia.com came up in March this year. Detailed 'instructions' have been sent to all our members on how to get the best out of the website. It will only be as good as our members want it to be. As of now the very few members are accessing the website and using it as a channel of communication between members. We urge members who have computers with internet connection to visit the site and see for themselves. Even if one does not own a computer, it is possible, for those who are really interested, to do so at any of the numerous 'cybercafes' that are springing up all over the country including small towns. Spending, say just 30 minutes (might cost Rs.15 to 20) at a cybercafe would be rewarding. We are sure that over a period of time accessing the website will become a matter of habit!

Meanwhile we, at the National Headquarters have sought to engage our members in a discussion on the website, on a number of current events. We are listing some of them to give you a flavour of the subjects discussed:

● Tribal Welfare ● British General Elections ● Violence in Manipur ● Threatened Municipal Strike in Mumbai ● The Musharraf visit ● Government's Profligacy ● The Politics of Vendetta on Jayalalitha ● Recession in the Economy ● The Railway Surcharge ● The Terror of the Mob – The destruction of the Singhania Hospital in Thane Maharashtra by a Shiv Sena mob ● The UTI Fiasco ● The Globalization of Terrorism ● The War Against Terror.

If you wish to read details of the discussions on this site, you can either visit the site using your 'user' name and 'password' which have already been communicated to you.

The website has a two-fold purpose: Informing members and the general public about the ILG.

The second, and equally important purpose, is to engage members in a dialogue, about liberal policies and programmes round the world, network with groups and organisations promoting and pursuing objectives which we feel are consonant with liberal values, and in particular, inculcate such values and perspectives in the young.

Our website is now a little over six months old. As already stated not many are accessing it. Obviously there is much room for improvement. We therefore address these questions to all those who own or have access to computers and the internet:

1. Why do you think a majority of our members are not accessing the website.
2. Should we continue with the website with all the costs involved in its running and maintenance?
3. If yes, then what would you suggest we do, to get our members to use it more often
4. A suggestion has been made by more than one member that the links - 'messages' and 'discussion' should be opened to the general public. The original purpose in keeping it restricted to members was to enable members to freely discuss issues involving Liberal policy and organisational problems. But because of the poor usage of this facility, perhaps there is merit in this suggestion that we open these ~~links~~ to the general public. Should we do so and restrict only the links – email, messages, discussion and 'Directory' to members of the ILG?

Organisational Issues

In May this year we circulated to our members a status report on the work of the ILG for the period May 2000 to April 2001. Among other things we wrote:

"The work of expanding the ILG organisation is crawling at an excruciatingly slow pace. The enthusiasm we saw at the various workshops for activating the ILG, and which spurred us in our efforts to push ahead seems to have evaporated. I wonder if we made a mistake in wanting to revive the ILG?"

This provoked many members to reply. Some telephoned to reassure us that the ILG was indeed necessary and that the problems we had highlighted in our letter were initial 'teething problems'.

Without giving names, we list some of these responses:

1. "We are all aware even when India so desperately needs ILG, winning people is a task. Most people in positions have vested interests. But that is why the ILG is all the more necessary."
2. "There are several reasons why we are not going fast. Most of us are drawn recently into this. To get across to people we need a force of attraction much beyond our principles, position and statements. It is management. A focus on results. Therefore unless we take up four or five projects and get results in the national or state scenes, people will not commit themselves to join us.

"We need a strong centre. Personally, I would love to see and also love to contribute at least

one strong position on an economic matter coming out at least once a month - at least one response or reaction to an event once a week out of Mumbai. Whether it gets into the press or not is not the issue. It should come out of Headquarters and get across... "

3. "One of the things definitely needed today is a concerted effort to make the organisation more broad-based and pro-active, and most important, visible to the eyes of the public. Invite people who have made themselves known for their clean thoughts and actions to become members of the ILG eg. Shri **Khairnar**, Chandrashekar the former Thana Collector, and Medha Patkar **Institute** a national award to honour those who have stood up for the right against all odds. Initiate public interest litigations; hold debates on issues that threaten democratic institutions and traditions; hold debates at public fora in different cities of India where ILG enjoys a broad base. Submit articles to the newspapers on these topics, and follow them up to see they are published. These activities will not only increase the visibility of ILG but subsequently also give rise to increased membership and possibly funding support. Activate discussions on these topics **online** on the ILG **website**. Toss a new topic for discussion every month, invite members to respond, collate the salient points of each discussion at the end of the month, polish it up and get it published as ILG's view point on the topic to national dailies. Institute a national essay competition **along** similar lines. You will be surprised by how many right thinking individuals exist in Indian society even today. What they do need is a forum, a base, a place **where** they can give an outlet to their thoughts and comments. Provide them with such a forum which is the ILG!
4. "We need some high profile people as members. Raju has an aversion to this. I totally agree with his point of view that we should focus on building the organisation on the basis of its ideals and values and not people who are members. But we have to remember that we are functioning in a world where marketing oneself is extremely important. Our work on building the organisation on the basis of the work that we do has to go hand-in-hand with the promotional work.
5. Let us each identify at least two people who are known to be important and get them to become members of the ILG. Even if a core group of, let us say, only fifteen identify two such important people to be members and succeed we have a powerful group of thirty well known people to speak on our behalf."

Do you have any views on these or new insights which you would like to share with us? Please write to us - email or snailmail (which is now the favoured expression to denote mail sent through the good old postal service!)

Amendments to the ILG Constitution

Meanwhile, without in any way belittling these criticisms and comments, there is one other reason that we, at the national headquarters, felt needed to be said. And that is our organisational structure. When some of us decided to revive the Indian Liberal Group, we felt that one of the reasons why the ILG had become inactive was due to the fact that it did not have a structure. It was more a platform for debate and discussion than an organisation that could, when needed take on an activist role.

Since our purpose in reviving the ILG was to also give it an activist role, we gave it a structure - in the form of the Constitution of the ILG. This structure, in retrospect, does not seem to be working. One reason perhaps is because it involves financial outlays like renting premises, employing someone to man the office and the need for other related paraphernalia.

The State Committees have not got off to a start. Most of them hardly ever meet. Only one District Committee as prescribed in the Constitution was set up but even **this** has met only once. Even the National Executive has met just twice since March 2000.

These point out to the fact that, perhaps, our structure is unrealistic and needs to be modified. It is better that we make modifications now when the ILG is, in a manner of speaking, in its infancy, than later when making changes might become more difficult.

Attached to this Newsletter are the following:

- i. Draft Amendments to the Constitution.
- ii. A self-addressed and stamped Inland Letter

The purpose in enclosing a self-addressed stamped Inland Letter is to enable you to respond quickly.

You need to reply not only to (i) above but also to other queries made earlier in this newsletter.

First National Convention

The First National Convention of the Indian Liberal Group will be held in Hyderabad on Saturday and Sunday February 16 and 17, 2002. We are giving this information well in advance so that you can block these two days in your diary.

Directory of Members

A hardcopy of the Directory of Members has been sent to all members with membership numbers 001 to 289. To those whose membership numbers begin from 290 the Directory will be mailed after their membership forms have been processed. For your information we have, at the time of writing, 342 members on our rolls – 71 Life Members, 205 Annual Members and 66 Student Members.

While on the subject of the Directory of members we wish to add one more item of information in the directory viz. your profession or vocation. In your membership form we had requested you to enclose your biographical particulars but had made it optional. As a result many have not sent us their biographical particulars.

Could you, in the Inland Letter enclosed with this newsletter write not more than two lines on your professional background. For example if you are a lawyer then state whether you are practising in the civil or criminal side or any other and in which court. If you are student, then the course and year of study eg. 2nd year B.Com. or 1st year Mechanical Engineering and so on.

Activities

In association with the Project for Economic Education, we organised a number of programmes between January and the first week of October 2001. These were:

January 9 to 12	LSP Centre Devlali, Maharashtra	Workshop to Train the Trainers.,
February 10	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Symposium on 'A Decade of Reforms: A Critical Review (In association with MOP Vaishnav College and the ILG Chennai Chapter)
May 5	Pune, Maharashtra	Meeting to introduce the Indian Liberal Group (In association with Pragati Abhiyan)
May 26	Nasik, Maharashtra	Meeting to introduce the Indian Liberal Group (In association with Pragati Abhiyan)
July 28 & 29	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Symposium on Foundation in Liberal Values (In association with the MOP Vaishnav College and the ILG Tamil Nadu Chapter)
July 30	Tirupati Andhra Pradesh	Meeting to introduce the Indian Liberal Group. Also a presentation on Liberalism to

		a meeting of faculty and students of the Department of Economics Venkateswara University
August 6 & 7	Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh	Seminar on 'Current Situation in the Context of Liberalisation' (In association with the the ILG, Andhra Pradesh Chapter)
August 11	Kottayam. Kerala	Seminar on the occasion of the Inauguration of the ILG, Kerala Chapter
August 12	Kottayam, Kerala	Symposium - Women Leaders Meet (In association with the ILG, Kerala Chapter)
August 26	Nagpur, Maharashtra	Seminar introducing the ILG to Vidarbha
September 8	Mumbai, Maharashtra	Meeting of members of the ILG in Mumbai
September 14-16	LSP Centre Devlali, Maharashtra	Seminar: Contemporary World: Issues and Problems – A Liberal Perspective (In association with the Indian Secular Society).
October 6 & 7	LSP Centre Devlali, Maharashtra	Seminar: 'For a Liberal Economic Policy'

You are Invited

This newsletter and the **website** www.liberalsindia.com are meant for you. Use it. If you do not have access to a computer then send, as already requested earlier in this newsletter send in your contribution. How useful and vibrant this newsletter becomes depends entirely on you!

DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP
Suggested by S. V. Raju, President, ILG,

Notes:

Articles 1 (Name), 2 (Objectives) and 3 (Headquarters) remain unchanged. We therefore begin with Article 4.

You have till November 10, 2001 to reply with your comments, suggestions and amendments. After November 15 we shall collate the responses and put up the draft with your responses to the National Executive for its consideration. The National Executive will **finalise** its recommendations on or before December 31, 2001. The **draft** amendments as recommended by the National Executive will be put on the agenda of the First National Convention of the Indian **Liberal** Group for its approval. The tentative dates of the Convention: February 16 and 17, 2002.

Meanwhile

as there are no functioning district committees, we shall go ahead and encourage the formation of Local Chapters on an experimental basis. Their experience, even if it be of just two months, will be valuable when the National Convention meets to decide on the amendments to the Constitution.

The following are the draft amendments:

Article 4 - Organisation

4. Organisation

The following will constitute the elective bodies of the ILG:

- The National Council
- The National Executive
- State Councils
- State Committees
- District Committees

Amendment:

Delete The National Council and State Councils.

Substitute States Committee by State Chapters and District Committees by Local Chapters

The amended Article will read as follows:

4. Organisation

The following will constitute the elective bodies of the ILG:

- The National Executive
- State Chapters
- Local Chapters

Explanation: The number of organisational tiers needs to be reduced if the structure is to be both simple and flexible where decision making and immediate response to events are to be achieved..

Article 5 - Membership

5. Membership

Membership shall be open to individuals and like-minded organisations who are in agreement with the objectives and principles of the ILG as stated in Article 2.

Amendment:

Delete: 'and like-minded organisations'

The amended Article will read as follows:

5. Membership

Membership shall be open to individuals who are in agreement with the objectives and principles of the ILG as stated in Article 2.

Explanation: The category of Associate Members has been deleted because it is unrealistic – at least for the present. Why should any other voluntary organisation, which is better known and stronger than we are at present, want to become our Associate Member and pay a fee in the process. This provision can be *re-instated* when the ILG attains its full potential

Article 5 (a) - Categories & 5(b) - Subscription

(5)(a) Categories

There shall be four categories of members :

Life Member, Active Member, Ordinary Member and Associate Member.

- (5)(b)**
- | | |
|--|--|
| i) Life Member | a one-time fee of Rs.2,000/- (Membership fee Rs.1,000; Entrance fee Rs.1,000) payable at the time of enrolment |
| ii) Active Member | Entrance fee of Rs.200/- and an Annual fee of Rs.200/-. |
| iii) Active Student Member | Entrance fee of Rs.100 and an Annual fee of Rs.100 |
| iv) Ordinary Member | An Annual fee of Rs.10/-. |
| v) Associate Member
(for voluntary organisations) | Entrance fee Rs.1,000/- and Annual fee of Rs.1,000/- |
| vi) Notwithstanding the above all those who have been on the membership roll as on the day of the adoption of this Constitution shall be entitled to renew their membership without payment of an entrance fee. Life Members will be requested to pay the enhanced membership fee. | |

Amendment:

Delete 'Associate Member from Article 5(a) and article 5(b)(v)

Add 'Active Student Member' to 5(a) and new 5(b)(iii)

The Amended Article will read as follows:

5(a) Categories

There shall be four categories of members :

Life Member, Active Member, Active Student Member and Ordinary Member.

The Amended Article will read as follows:

- 5(b)**
- | | |
|---|--|
| i) Life Member | a one-time fee of Rs.2,000/- (Membership fee Rs.1000; Entrance fee Rs.1000) payable at the time of enrolment |
| ii) Active Member | Entrance fee of Rs.200/- and an Annual fee of Rs 200/-. |
| iii) Active Student Member | Entrance fee of Rs.100 and an Annual fee of Rs.100 |
| iv) Ordinary Member | An Annual fee of Rs.10/-. |
| v) Notwithstanding the above all those who have been on the membership roll as on the day of the adoption of this Constitution shall be entitled to renew their membership without payment of an entrance fee. Life Members will be requested to pay the enhanced membership fee. | |

Explanation: Arising from the deletion in article 5(a) of 'Associate Member' and addition of 'Active Student Member' also in Article 5(a). The addition of 'Active Student Member' was recommended by the National Executive at its meeting in Devlali on July 16, 2000.

Article 5(c) – Enrolment

5(c) Enrolment

- (i) Applications for Life Membership, Active Membership and Active Student Membership will be scrutinised and approved by the State Executive and will have to be proposed and seconded by a Founding Member initially and thereafter by a Life/Active Member/Active Student Member of the ILG.
- (ii) Life/Active Members/ Active Student Members have the right to enrol Ordinary Members.
- (iii) Only the National Executive on the recommendation of the State Executive concerned can approve applications for Association Membership. Such membership applications will have to be accompanied by a copy of the Constitution and Statement of Objectives of the voluntary organisation concerned.
- (iv) Applications for Associate Membership from political parties will not be entertained.

Amendment:

Substitute Article 5(b)(i) by the following new Article f(b)(i)

Delete Articles 5(b)(iii) and 5(b)(iv)

The Amended Article will read as follows:

5c) Enrolment

- (i) Applications for Life Membership, Active Membership and Active Student Membership should be proposed and seconded by a Founding Member initially and thereafter by a Life/Active Member/ Active Student Member of the ILG and scrutinised and approved by the Local Chapter. Where there is no Local Chapter, such applications can be scrutinised and approved by the State Chapter and / or by the National Executive.
- (ii) Life/Active Members/ Active Student Members have the right to enrol Ordinary Members.

Explanation: As amended, Local Chapters will have the authority to enrol members. The deletion of clause *iii* and clause *iv* follows the recommendation to remove the provision for Associate Members.

Article 5 (d) – Allocation of Membership fees

5(d) Allocation of Membership Fees

- 1) Life Membership – To be capitalised (corpus) as follows:
 - i) National Executive - 50%
 - ii) State Executive - 25%
 - iii) District Committee - 25%
- 2) Active membership/ Active Student Membership - To be allocated as follows:
 - i) National Executive - 40%
 - ii) State Executive - 25%
 - iii) District Committee - 25%
- 3) Ordinary membership:
 - District Committee - 100%

Amendment:

Substitute existing Article 5(d) by the following new Article 5(d)

The Amended Article will read as follows

5(d) Allocation of Membership Fees

- 1) Life Membership - To be capitalised (corpus) as follows:
 - iv) National Executive - 40%
 - v) State Chapter 20%
 - vi) Local Chapter 40%

- 2) Active membership1 Active Student Membership - To be allocated as follows:
 - iv) National Executive - 40%
 - v) State Chapter 20%
 - vi) Local Chapter 40%

- 3) Ordinary membership:
 - Local Chapter 100%

Article 5 (e) & (f) – Termination of Membership

5(e) Termination of Membership

On the recommendation of the State Executive or on its own initiative when required, the National Executive shall have the power to terminate the membership of a Life/Active/Student/Ordinary Member for actions that involve moral turpitude, or for expressing publicly views that are contrary to the objectives of the ILG as laid down in Article 2 of this Constitution. The National Executive shall however give the member concerned an opportunity to explain before taking action.

5(f) Similarly on the recommendation of the State Executive or on its own initiative, the National Executive shall have the power to terminate the Associate Membership of an organisation for actions or statements that go contrary to the objectives and basic principles of the ILG.

Amendment:

Substitute 5(e) in view of the change of nomenclatures of State Executive and District Committees to State Chapter and Local Chapter

Delete 5(f) in view of the removal of the provision for associate membership

The Amended Article will read as follows

e) Termination of Membership

On the recommendation of the State /Local Chapter or on its own initiative when required, the National Executive shall have the power to terminate the membership of a Life/Active/student/ordinary member for actions that involve moral turpitude, or for expressing publicly views that are contrary to the objectives of the ILG as laid down in Article 2 of this Constitution. The National Executive shall however give the member concerned an opportunity to explain before taking action.

Explanation: *Article 5(e) is substituted in view of the change of nomenclatures of State Executive and District Committees to State Chapter and Local Chapter respectively 5(f) is deleted in view of the removal of the provision for associate membership*

Article 6 – National Council

6. National Council

- a) The National Council shall be made up of the Presidents and Secretaries of State Executives.
- b) The National Council shall elect
 - i) the National President from among the Life/ Active1 Members of the ILG duly proposed and seconded by any two members of the National Council respectively and
 - ii) not more than 12 members of the National Executive from among members of the National Council

- (c) The National Council shall have the power to nominate Honorary Members of the ILG at its discretion.
- (d) The National Council will be responsible for all policy pronouncements and to interpret the policy of the ILG.

Amendment:

Delete Article 6

Explanation: Please see amendment to Article 4 which recommends the abolition of the National Council. As a consequence Article 6 becomes redundant hence to be deleted. The policy making functions will now be the responsibility of the National Convention and of the National Executive in between conventions.

Article 7 – National Executive

7. National Executive

- (i) The National Executive shall shall nominate the Secretary/ies and the Treasurer of the ILG from among members of the National Executive
- (ii) The National Executive shall have the power to co-opt two members from among the Life Members/ Active Members/Active Student Members.
- (iii) The National Executive will conduct the day to day activities of the ILG and take policy decisions, when required, between meetings of the National Council.

Amendment:

Substitute Article 7 by the following new Article 6

The Amended Article will read as follows

6. National Executive

- (a) The National Executive shall consist of a National President, two National Vice-presidents, a National Secretary, a National Treasurer and a National Public Relations Officer.
- (b) The National President shall nominate the National Secretary, the National Treasurer and the National Public Relations Officer from among members of the Indian Liberal Group. These nominations will be subject to confirmation by delegates at a National Convention.
- (c) The National Vice-presidents shall be elected by the delegates at a National Convention.
- (d) Where members do not live in the city, town or village where the Convention is being held and are unable to be present personally they shall have the option to cast their votes through postal ballots.
- (e) The National Executive shall conduct the day to day activities of the ILG and take policy decisions, when required, between National Conventions.

Explanation: The National Executive is as the name suggests the managing and executing organ of the ILG at the national level. It should be meeting as often as possible to review discuss and initiate action. To do this the executive needs to be compact, functional and cohesive. Hence the amended article recommends that the President be allowed to choose a team of his or her choice which consists of officers with specific portfolios and ensure that democratic norms are satisfied by getting the nominations confirmed by the delegates at a national convention. Such nominations should be held at a least a month before the Convention so that there is not much of a time-lag between nominations and confirmation.

Article 8 – State Councils

8. State Councils

- (a) State Councils shall be made up of the President and Secretaries of District Committees of the State concerned
- (b) The State Councils shall elect
 - (i) the State President from among the Life Members and Active Members/Active Student Members of the ILG in the State, duly proposed and seconded by any two Members of the State Council concerned respectively, and,
 - (ii) not more than twelve members of the State Executive from among members of the State Council
- (c) The State Council will be responsible for all policy pronouncements vis-a-vis the State concerned

Amendment:

Delete Article 8

Explanation: Please see amendment to Article 4 which recommends the abolition of the State Council. As a consequence Article 8 becomes redundant hence to be deleted. The policy making functions will now be the responsibility of the State Convention and of the State Chapter in between conventions.

Article 9 – State Executives

8. State Executives

- (i) The State Executive shall nominate the Secretary and the Treasurer of the ILG in the State from among members of the State Executive.
- (ii) The State Executive shall have the power to co-opt two members from among the Life Members and Active Members/Active Student Members in the State.
- (iii) The State Executive will conduct the day to day activities of the ILG in the State and take policy decisions, when required, between meetings of the State Council.

Amendment:

Substitute Article 9 by the following new article 8

The Amended Article will read as follows

8. State Chapters

- (i) The National Executive shall authorise the setting up of State Chapters in a State where there are at least 50 members.
- (ii) The Office Bearers of State Chapters shall comprise of a President, two Vice Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer and a Public Relations Officer.
- (iii) The President and the two Vice Presidents shall be elected by the Life/Active Members/Active Student Members of the ILG in the State concerned at a State Convention.
- (iv) Where members do not live in the city, town or village where the Convention has been convened, they shall have the option to cast their votes through postal ballots.
- (v) The State Chapter shall monitor the work of the Local Chapters in their State and will be responsible for all policy pronouncements vis-a-vis the State concerned.

Explanation: The role envisaged for State Chapters in the revised structure is to manage, monitor, guide and coordinate the work of Local Chapters in the State concerned. The State Chapter should

be meeting as often as possible to review discuss and initiate action. To do this the State Chapter needs to be compact, functional and cohesive. Hence the amended article recommends that the President be allowed to choose 'a team of his or her choice which consists of officers with specific portfolios. To ensure that democratic norms are satisfied. These nominations need to be confirmed by the delegates at a State Convention. Such nominations should be held at a least a month before the Convention so that there is not much of a time-lag between nominations and confirmation.

Article 10 – District Committees

10. District Committees

- (i) The District Committee will consist of a President, Secretary/ies, Treasurer and not more than twelve members.
- (ii) The President and twelve members of the District Committee shall be elected by the Life / Active Members/Active Student Members in the District.
- (iii) The President shall nominate the Secretary/ies and the Treasurer
- (iv) The District Committee shall have the power to co-opt two members from among the Life/Active Members/Active Student Members in the District.

Amendment:

Substitute Article 10 by the following Article 9

The Amended Article will read as follows

9. Local Chapters

- (i) Any municipal ward in a city or town or a village in the countryside with at least ten members shall be entitled to form a Local Chapter. When membership exceeds 50 by at least ten the ward/village will have the option to form another Local Chapter in the same ward or village with a slightly different name to distinguish it from the other local Chapter in the area.
- (ii) The National Executive may on its own or on the recommendation of the State Chapter
- (iii) authorise the formation of a Local Chapter.
- (iv) A Local Chapter shall consist of a President, two Vice-presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer and a Public Relations Officer.
- (v) The President and the two Vice Presidents shall be elected by the members of the Chapter concerned at a meeting of members of the ward/village convened for the purpose, within the ward or village concerned. The President shall nominate the Secretary, the Treasurer and the Public Relations Officer. These nominations shall be confirmed at this meeting.

Explanation: In the revised structure the Local Chapters are the key to the ILG's organisational effectiveness. The Local Chapters are small (as against District Committees which are often very large areas), where members know each other by name, are able to meet at a moment's notice though the prescription is that they must meet at least once a month. They are more or less autonomous acting within the parameters of the ILG's constitution and policies. The recommended strength of Local chapters is 50 though they can go beyond that number. The autonomy of Local Chapters is the Liberal belief in decentralisation being put into practice. Again the President is enabled to choose his team. This will contribute to a cohesive team.

Article 11 – National Convention

10. National Convention

A National Convention of the ILG should be held at least once every three years or earlier if required to review the work of the ILG and, in the light of the situation then prevailing take Liberal Positions

on National and International issues that are of concern to us as citizens of India. Such Conventions can, if a majority of delegates so desire, recommend policy and organisational changes including changes to the ILG Constitution, for the consideration of the National Council of the ILG.

Attendance at this Convention shall be open to all members of the ILG. Voting will be restricted to Life and Active Members

Amendment:

Substitute Article 11 by the following Article 9

The Amended Article will read as follows

9. National Convention

A National Convention of the ILG should be held alternate year or earlier. The Main business **before** these biennial Conventions will be the election of the Presidents and two Vice Presidents and confirm the nominees of the President for the offices of **Secretary, Treasurer** and Publication Relations Officer. The Convention will also decide on policy and amendments to the Constitution of the ILG. The National Executive shall draw up the business of the Convention and give adequate notice to delegates to move resolutions for the consideration of the Convention. If the situation warrants, the National Executive can convene an emergency Convention between in the intervening year.

Attendance at this Convention shall be open to all members of the ILG. Voting will, however be restricted to Life Members, Active Members and Active Student Members. .

Explanation: The National Convention replaces the National Council as the policy making body of the ILG. Also every member of the ILG whose membership is valid will be entitled to be a delegate to the Convention. This gives every delegate the democratic right fully to participate in the affairs of the ILG

Article 12 – Term of Office

12. Term of Office

No National/State/District Office Bearers can serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

Amendment:

Substitute the word State by the words 'State Chapters' and 'District' by the words 'Local Chapters'

The Amended Article will read as follows

10. Term of Office

No National Executive /State Chapter/Local Chapter Office Bearers can serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office

Article 13 – Convening of Meetings

13. Convening of Meetings

All meetings of the various elective bodies and of the Convention shall be called by the Secretary concerned in consultation with the President concerned

Amendment:

Article 13 becomes Article 11

Article 14 - Notice of Meetings

14. Notice of Meetings

- 4 weeks for National Convention
- 3 weeks for National Executive
- 2 weeks for State Executive
- 1 week for District Committee

Amendment:

Substitute article14 by the following new article 12

The Amended Article will read as follows

12. Notice of Meetings

- National Convention - At least 4 weeks
- National Executive - At least 3 weeks
- State Chapters - At least 2 weeks
- Local Chapters - Local Chapters shall meet on a fixed day each month.

The day to be decided by the Local Chapter concerned

Explanation: The idea in changing from District to *Ward/Village* committee is to enable members to meet more frequently. However they must meet at least once month.

Article 15 - Quorum

15. Quorum

50% of the Life/Active Members shall constitute the quorum for meetings of Committees, Councils and Conventions.If there is no quorum, the meeting will stand adjourned for 30 minutes from the time announced in the notice of meeting. Thereafter the meeting called to order if at least three members are present of which one must be an office bearer.

Amendment

Substitute Article 15 by the following new Article 13

The Amended Article will read as follows

13. Quorum

50% of the Life/Active Members/Active Student Members shall constitute the quorum for meetings of the National Convention, National Executive, State Chapters, and Local Chapters.If there is no quorum, the meeting will stand adjourned for 30 minutes from the time announced in the notice of meeting. Thereafter the meeting called to order if at least three members are present of which one must be an office bearer

Article 16 – Voting at Meetings

16. Voting at Meetings.

- (i) Voting at Meetings shall be by simple majority on all matters other than amendments to this Constitution which shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.
- (ii) Presidents at the National, State and District levels shall preside over their respective meetings and have the casting vote in case of a tie.

Amendment:

Substitute the word 'District' by 'Local' and article 16 becomes 14 to read as follows:

The Amended Article will read as follows

14. Voting at Meetings.

- (i) Voting at Meetings shall be by simple majority on all matters other than amendments to this Constitution, which shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.
 - (ii) Presidents at the National, State and Local levels shall preside over their respective meetings and have the casting vote in case of a tie.
-

Article 17 – Frequency of Meetings

17. Frequency of **Meetings**

Meetings of all elective bodies shall be held at least once in six months

Amendment:

Substitute Article 17 by Article 15 below

The Amended Article will read as follows

15. Frequency of Meetings

The National Executive and the State Chapters shall endeavour to meet at least twice a year, the Local Chapters must meet at least one a month.

Explanation: The newly created Local Chapters at the ward/ village level must meet at least once a month.

Article 18 – Bank Accounts

18. Bank Accounts

Bank accounts can be opened by the National Executive/State Executive and District Committees and Local Chapters who will also prepare their respective annual accounts to be operated jointly by any two office bearers or members of the elective body concerned.

Amendment:

Substitute Article 18 by the following Article 16

The Amended Article will read as follows

16. Bank Accounts

Bank accounts can be opened by the National Executive, State Chapters and Local to be operated jointly by any two office bearers or members of the elective body concerned

Explanation: Apart from correcting State and District nomenclatures, the amendment deletes reference to keeping accounts that has wrongly come here. It has to come under the article dealing with audit,

Article 19 – Financial Year

17. Financial Year

The Financial year of the ILG shall be April 1 of each year to March 31 of the following year.

No Change except Article Number. It will now be No. 17

Article 20 – Auditing of Accounts

18. Auditing of Accounts

Proper accounts shall be maintained and audited by a qualified person who is not a member of the elective body concerned. The Accounts shall be open for inspection by any Life/Active member. The National Executive shall frame rules for this purpose.

No Change except Article Number. It will now be No. 18

Article 21 – Affiliation

19. Affiliation

ILG can, by a decision of the National Executive affiliate with any like-minded national or global organisations.

No Change except Article Number. It will now be No. 19

Article 22 – Interim Arrangements

22. Interim Arrangements

Elections to the Committees and Councils at the various levels listed above shall take place as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the work of the ILG shall be carried on by an ad hoc National Executive to carry out the duties prescribed in clause 7 of this Constitution, comprising a President and members as per list attached (Annexure B). The President shall have powers to co-opt of members so that the total number of members of the National Executive shall not exceed 12. The ad-hoc National Executive shall ensure the completion of the process of organisational elections and the holding of a National Convention as soon as possible, and in any event, not later than December 31, 2001.

Amendment:

Substitute the words in the last line, 'not later than Dec.31, 2001' by the words 'not later than March 31, 2002'

Also the Article number 22 changes to 20

The Amended Article will read as follows

20. Interim Arrangements

Elections to the National Executive, State Chapters and Local Chapters at the various levels listed above shall take place as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the work of the ILG shall be carried on by an ad hoc National Executive to carry out the duties prescribed in clause 7 of this Constitution, comprising a President and members as per list attached (Annexure B). The President shall have powers to co-opt members so that the total number of members of the National Executive shall not exceed 12. The ad-hoc National Executive shall ensure the completion of the process of organisational elections and the holding of a National Convention as soon as possible, and in any event, not later than March 31, 2002.

Explanation: *The restructuring as envisaged in these recommendations will take a while to implement. But once the Local Chapters get into position it should be possible to complete election by end January.*

