

**Inclusive Electoral Literacy through Informal
Education Channel :
Reaching out to those outside schools and other
Marginalized Groups**



Presentation by

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United Nations recognizes the right of each individual to select their own representatives.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights –

Article 21(1)

“Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.”

Article 21(3)

“The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA,
having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a
**SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC** and to secure to all its citizens:
JUSTICE, social, economic and political;
LIBERTY of thought, expression,
belief, faith and worship;
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote
among them all **FRATERNITY** assuring the dignity of the
individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;
IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
this twenty sixth day of November, 1949, do
**HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND
GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

The most important FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT enshrined in the Indian Constitution :

Article 14 : Equality before law.

Article 15 : Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

Article 327 of the Constitution gives Parliament the power to make provision regarding “elections.”

Thus the Representation of the People Act (1950) was born.

Section 19 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 provides that every person who is not less than 18 years of age on the qualifying date and is ordinarily resident in a constituency shall be entitled to be registered in the electoral rolls for that constituency.

The meaning of “ordinarily resident” is laid down in section 20 of the said Act.

Sec. 20. Meaning of "ordinarily resident" —

- (1) A person shall not be deemed to be ordinarily resident in a constituency on the ground only that he owns, or is in possession of, a dwelling house therein.
 - (1A) A person absenting himself temporarily from his place of ordinary residence shall not by reason thereof cease to be ordinarily resident therein.
 - (1B) A member of Parliament or of the Legislature of a State shall not during the term of his office cease to be ordinarily resident in the constituency in the electoral roll of which he is registered as an elector at the time of his election as such member, by reason of his absence from that constituency in connection with his duties as such member.]
- (2) A person who is a patient in any establishment maintained wholly or mainly for the reception and treatment of persons suffering from mental illness or mental defectiveness, or who is detained in prison or other legal custody at any place, shall not by reason thereof be deemed to be ordinarily resident therein.

Challenges before Us

- India has more than 855 million voters.
- About 1.77 million “**homeless**” **citizens** stay in India (as per last census 2011)- enrolling these marginalized residents is a real challenge before E.C.I.



- Election Commission of India has tried to enroll each and every Indian citizen who is eligible for enrollment in electoral roll.

- Election Commission of India instructions say :-

"In all such cases where a homeless applicant does not possess any proof of ordinary residence, booth-level officers have specifically been directed to physically verify the ordinary residence by visiting the address given in Form 6 at night to ascertain that the concerned homeless person actually sleeps at the place as given in the Form".



SVEEP : Showing the way

Compendium of Instructions (March 2013)

- Large segments / sections of the electorate who were not covered by the formal educational system or those who had developed an apathetic attitude or those who are physically cut-off from the mainstream due to various reasons needed to be brought under the ambit of focused voter education. Such segments/ sections needed to be reached through civil society organizations, special agencies of volunteers, govt. departments working for the welfare of deprived and vulnerable sections or marginalized groups etc.

Goal:

To have every eligible citizen on the electoral roll and have every enrolled voter to vote voluntarily, thus ensuring widest electoral participation and inclusive elections through information, education, motivation and facilitation.

Objectives:

- I. To bridge the gender gap in registration and voter turnout.
- II. To fight urban apathy to electoral participation.
- III. To overcome youth disconnect with the electoral process.
- IV. To facilitate inclusion of marginal sections in the electoral process.

Channels of Informal Education

- Efforts are being made to use sports personalities, movie stars, writers, social workers, public opinion makers, NGOs and CSOs to drive home the point of inclusive democracy and equitable society along with other campaigns that they are doing.
- Mass-media, vocational training programs, adult education programs etc. should all be fully utilized to educate our marginalized voters.

Inclusive Electoral Participation

- CSO's like AAA (Ashray Adhikar Abhiyan) gave ID Cards to homeless persons – and helped them to become voters by working closely with ECI.
- RLEK (Rural Litigation Entitlement Kendra) worked with Election Officers to ensure that **“Van Gujjars”** (forest dwellers) are given their voting rights.



- Due to the guidance of SVEEP division of ECI, most of the CEOs of various states have come up with many innovative initiatives for inclusive electoral literacy through informal channels, by reaching out to marginalized groups of society.
- Links are being given to get details of the initiatives taken :-
 - http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/sveep.aspx
 - http://www.ceouttarpradesh.nic.in/SVEEP_2016/SVEEPIII-ProjectDocument.pdf
 - <http://www.ceomadhyapradesh.nic.in/Sveep/NERP/Harda.pdf>
 - <http://ceoharyana.nic.in/docs/sveep2014/pdf/RohtakSVEEP.pdf>
 - http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/SVEEP/Maharashtra19092014.pdf
 - http://ecisveep.nic.in/Sveep_Action_Plan/SVEEP_Plan_of_West_Bengal2016.pdf
 - http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/SVEEP/statesweepplan2014/RAJASTHAN.pdf

SVEEP Activities to make marginalized groups participate in elections :-

- Puppets shows
- Nukkad Nataks & street plays
- Jingles / TV Spots /message from icons in local languages/Village Melas etc.
- Documentary films.
- Cycle rallies/ human chain
- Women SHGs/AWW/Asha etc.



Initiatives taken for Elderly Citizens

- Initiatives taken up by different states included sending personal letters to Senior citizens informing them that they would be getting priority in voting.
- Boat owners close to polling station were asked to charge subsidized fares on poll day.
- Village awareness groups were formed to promote voting among elderly.
- Young volunteers from colleges (less than 18 years of age), designated as Matadata Mitra (Friends of Voters) helped elderly to reach booth.
- All facilities like sitting arrangements, drinking water and medical emergency provided.

ECI reaches out to Rural illiterate women

- To reach out to illiterate rural women, ECI and National Literacy Mission Authority of India signed an MoU in 2013 to impart voter education in identified 500 villages across 15 states/UTs of the country where Adult Literacy Programme was targeted at women through Literacy Volunteers called “Preraks”.
- Program imparted functional literacy on identified themes to rural women. ECI & NLMA developed literacy material on registration process and voting.
- Flipcharts, slogans, plays, radio programs, songs & posters, were used in hindi or regional languages to reach out to illiterate women.



Inclusion of transgender

- ECI has also focused on enrolment of transgender as a third category of voters, thus giving them a separate identity.
- To enroll maximum number of transgender with the help of NGOs/CSOs dealing with transgender rights.
- Enrolment of transgender went up in Maharashtra from 34 to 1071.
- Many voters belonging to the third gender are enrolled in the female category.

Special Initiatives in Uttarakhand

- Special booth for Visually Handicapped at NIVH.
- Braille Dummy Ballot Sheet (candidates names, party affiliation in Braille etc).
- 5962 Anganwadi workers as BLO's out of total 10,854 BLOs.
- Ration shops as facilitation centres for enrolling women since all new NFSA Ration Cards are in women's names.



जबवा है तो कुछ भी मुश्किल नहीं, लोक सभा सामान्य निर्वाचन-2009 में जनपद ट्रेहगढ़ की 22-मसूरी विधान सभा निर्वाचन क्षेत्र के मराठेय स्थल संख्या-29-एन0मई0बी0एच0 (NIVH) कार्यालय किरानपुर में मराठाला एचिस्टर पर हस्ताक्षर करती दृष्टिहीन युवा मराठाला ।



जब लोक सभा निर्वाचन-2009 में जनपद ट्रेहगढ़ की 22-मसूरी विधान सभा निर्वाचन क्षेत्र में सम्पन्न मराठेय स्थल संख्या-29-एन0मई0बी0एच0 (NIVH) कार्यालय किरानपुर में अपनी बाहरी का इलाज करती के NIVH संस्थान के दृष्टिहीन मराठाला

Some Examples of inclusive registration of marginalized citizens:

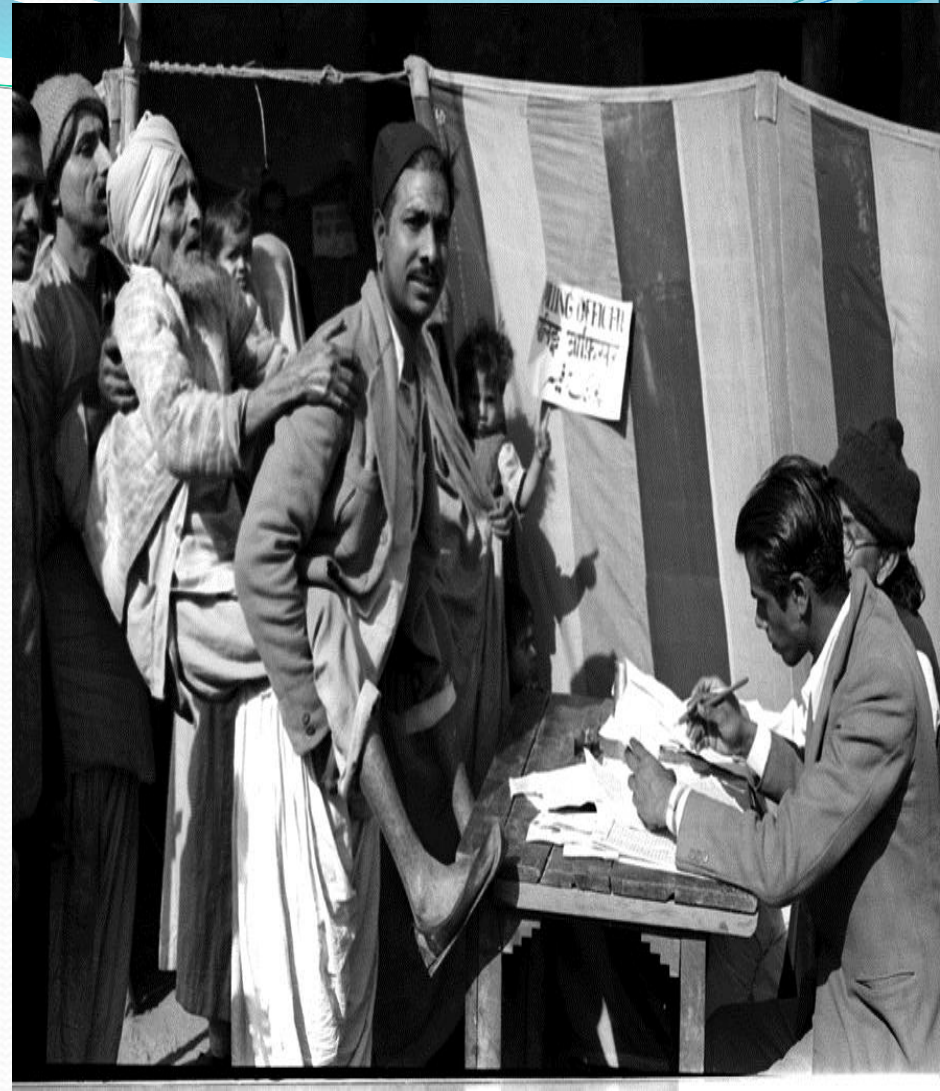
- In Dehradun district, special voter enrollment of 47 “Ghumantu” (Wandering tribes)- the total “Ghumantu” registered in Uttarakhand is about 100.
- In Haridwar, about 3000 “Van Gujjars” enrolled as voters in 9 polling booths in Gujjar Basti Gandhi Khata (part of the forest, near Rajaji National Park.
- In Pauri Garhwal, 311 “Van Gujjars” have been enrolled in Laldhang Forest Area.



Inclusive enrollment (Uttarakhand)

- In Chamoli district (AC - Badrinath)- In 9 polling stations 1852 males and 1734 females (about 3586 voters) have been enrolled in villages of their winter residence.
- These migratory Bhotia tribes migrate to the higher hills between May & October.
- Since Uttarakhand will have a winter poll, special drive launched to facilitate their voting in the lower reaches.

- A similar case of migratory Bhotia tribes has been found in district Pithoragarh (AC-Dharchula).
- 3566 migratory voters have been enrolled in polling booths in the valley for the coming Vidhan Sabha Poll
- 283 voters of Primitive Tribal Group (Van Rawat) have been enrolled in AC-Dharchula & AC-Didihat in District Pithoragarh.



THANKS