



ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

National Consultation on Accessible Elections

3rd & 4th July 2018, New Delhi



CONSULTATION READER



FOREWORD



Since its inception, Election Commission of India has been making sustained effort to register all eligible citizens as voters and facilitate them to vote at the time of election. The Commission has also taken several special initiatives to facilitate inclusion of those voters who face difficulties in registration or voting. From 2009 onwards, the Commission has set up a full-fledged SVEEP division to give further impetus to this process and facilitate voters in the categories of targeted intervention, namely gender, youth, people living in slums and remote locations and Persons with Disability(PwD).

The Commission always paid special attention to the inclusion of persons with disability and instructed for many provisions such as ramps at the polling stations, out of turn voting and need based companion for PwDs, engraving braille font on EVMs, braille ballot paper, and so on. Improvement in general infrastructure and introduction of information and communication technologies opened more vistas for providing amenities to voters with disabilities. In the SVEEP Plan and Strategic Plan, the Commission laid greater emphasis on further facilitation of Persons with Disabilities. The Election Commission of India, declared 'Accessible Elections' as the theme for this year on the National Voters' Day, i.e. 25th January 2018. Emphasis has been laid on enhancing participation, strengthening facilitation, moulding public perceptions about the potential of PwDs, including their voice as equal citizens and set the stage for their social and economic integration.

A lot has already been done, and more is being envisaged. A well designed framework of guidelines has been put in place under the directions of the Commission for facilitating PwDs at every step in the electoral process. Many States and UTs have also done exemplary work by overcoming the barriers and creating accessible and friendly environment for PwDs.

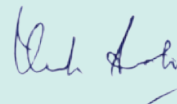
The International Conference on 'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in Electoral Processes', held in January, 2018, set the tone to consolidate the gains from the international experience.

Thereafter, a series of consultations with the stakeholders on 'Inclusion of PwDs in the Electoral Process' were conducted in districts and States across the country to identify the existing barriers and challenges, assess the implementation of the directives given by the Commission on the subject, consolidate the gains from good practices (including innovations and technological support) and for further engagement with the stakeholders.

In this Consultation Reader, the reports sent by the States have been documented and the same would be carefully assessed and analyzed by the working groups in the National Consultation on Accessible Elections.

Recommendations of the National Consultation will help the Commission in further improving the policy and action plan on Accessible Elections.

Let us all unite for the cause of 'Making Elections Accessible' to all persons with disabilities and re-affirm that 'No Voter is left behind'.



Umesh Sinha
Senior Deputy Election Commissioner
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CHAPTER 1



Overview: Accessible Elections

The very foundation of a democracy lies in the representation of all the communities and an indispensable part of nation-building starts with the involvement of all in its electoral process. To uphold the sanctity of free and fair elections, the Election Commission of India has selected 'Accessible Elections' as the central theme of year 2018. While seamlessly integrating with the underlying philosophy of universal adult suffrage and the concept of 'No Voter to be Left Behind', the theme renders a perfect blend of inclusion and the consequent everlasting determination and endeavour for strengthening the democracy in India.

Safeguards provided in the Constitution of India

- a) Article 324 of the Constitution provides for the Election Commission, its powers and functions for maintenance of the Electoral Roll and Conduct of Elections in a free and fair manner.
- b) Article 325 provides that no person shall be ineligible for inclusion in the electoral roll on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, et al.
- c) Article 326 provides that Elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assembly of every State shall be on the basis of adult suffrage. Every citizen of India not less than eighteen years of age on such date as may be fixed in that behalf by law and is not otherwise disqualified and shall be entitled to be registered as a voter at any such election.
- d) Provisions under Rule 49N of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, ECI guidelines, and Supreme Court orders directly address the issue of assistance to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). Under Rule 49N, if owing to blindness or other physical infirmities an elector is unable to recognise the symbol on the EVM or unable to record vote by pressing the appropriate button thereon, the presiding officer shall permit the elector to take with him a companion of not less than eighteen years of age to the voting compartment for recording the vote on his behalf and in accordance with his wishes.
 - Polling personnel are to be given appropriate directions and sensitized through training classes about the special needs of the disabled and to be courteous and to provide necessary support to them at the polling station.
 - Permanent ramps to be provided in all public buildings where polling stations are located. Full facility shall be provided for such electors to take their wheelchair inside the polling station. Where permanent ramps have not

been provided, temporary ramps have to be provided.

- Sufficient publicity to be given well in advance in print and electronic media about the availability of facilities so that the persons with disabilities are aware of the facilities beforehand, and are thus encouraged going and exercising their franchise.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 Section 11 of Chapter II of the Act (RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS) talks about accessibility in voting stating that the Election Commission of India and the State Election Commissions shall ensure that all polling stations are accessible to persons with disabilities and all materials related to the electoral process are easily understandable by and accessible to them.

Elections Provide Choices

Elections provide for exercise of choices by the voters to elect their representatives based on adult suffrage and it calls upon the election machinery to provide for the following:

- (i) Eligible citizens are registered as voters in the electoral roll and
- (ii) Voters are empowered to make choices for their representatives by casting their vote.

Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) constitute a special section of society who require affirmative action wherein the electoral machinery has to reach out to them for registration as voters and provide suitable facilities at the polling stations to enable them to exercise their franchise.

Barriers and Redress

The barriers in access to electoral participation that may be perceived by the PwDs relate to the following:

- (i) Difficulties in voter registration
- (ii) Inaccessible registration materials or facilities
- (iii) Inadequate or inaccessible voter education and related materials
- (iv) Difficulties in physical access to polling stations
- (v) Inability to vote independently and privately
- (vi) Absence of or inappropriate assistance from poll workers etc.

The list is only illustrative but in effect entails discouraging PwDs from exercising their franchise.

In a democracy, in true spirit of universal adult suffrage- every vote matters, every vote counts. Given this fundamental premise, equal access is vital to participation for PwDs. The barriers can be countered if they are addressed appropriately and effectively under a well-designed policy framework.

Directions and Guidelines of the Commission

Directions of the Commission for providing adequate and quality facilitation of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) to ensure their wholesome and constructive participation as also active engagement in the election process focus on the following broad areas of Election Management and Planning. The guidelines have been issued by the Commission via *circular no 464/INST/2016/EPS and 464/INST/PwD/2016/EPS. (Refer to Annexure- I)*

These include:

- Identification of PwDs including polling station-wise list

- Facilitation in filling up voter registration forms
- Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) at Polling Stations
- Priority-based access to facilities at polling stations
- *Matdata Sahayata Kendras* and other election offices in the field
- Involvement of NGOs, CSOs/DPOs, RWAs
- System Sensitisation and Training
- Use of technology in aid of PwDs
- Cooperation of Political Parties
- Building a Comprehensive Statistical Data Base
- Leveraging the services of volunteers
- Training and sensitisation of officials handling the work relating to PwDs

SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation)

Voter education and outreach for PwDs is an integral part of the SVEEP plans. Broad areas of coverage include-

- An officer well versed with provisions of facilities for PwDs shall be designated for each of the Assembly Constituencies.
- Wide publicity through various modes shall be ensured. General publicity material shall be prepared in simple language, sign language and braille.
- Special/mobile camps to be organised to educate and motivate PwDs.
- Efforts to be made to prepare volunteers from NCC, NSS, NYKS etc., to motivate and create awareness among PwDs.
- Publicity regarding services offered by CSC, MSKs shall be enhanced.
- Efforts shall be made to have renowned PwDs as District Ambassadors and State Icons.

Lok Sabha Elections, 2014

During the Lok Sabha Elections of 2014 ECI adopted the following measures that made the registration process voter-friendly for all:

- Initiation of online registration & name search facility on Electoral Roll on website of ECI and CEO.
- Rendering of SMS-based services for searching name and polling booth.
- Providing access to information on election laws, guidelines and details regarding ROs, AROs and BLOs on CEOs' website.
- Establishment of Voter Facilitation Centers (VFCs) for addressing e-Roll issues and EPIC.
- Furnishing Forms 6, 7, 8 & 8A at prominent places including banks, post offices, colleges, universities & schools.
- Holding nation-wide special registration camps in weekly *haats*, during festivals and through mobile vans to facilitate voters for checking their details on the voters' list.

ECI has implemented several measures to ensure basic facilities at the polling stations making them conducive for PwDs to cast their vote. Some of them are as below:

- Braille signage added on the Ballot Unit of EVM.
- Construction of ramps (Temporary ramps are installed wherever permanent ramps are not provided.)
- Entering polling stations without waiting in the queue.
- Facility granted to take wheelchairs inside polling stations.
- Polling personnel briefed about the provisions of Rule 49 N of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, for permitting a companion to accompany a blind/infirm elector.

- Electors with speech & hearing impairment are given special care as in the case of other disabled persons.
- Poll personnel are trained and sensitized regarding the special needs of PwDs.

Special directions of the Commission have been given for providing adequate facilities to the PwDs, such as furnishing Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) at Polling Stations, such as:

- Location of polling stations preferably at the ground floor in good quality buildings with separate entrance and exit
- Drinking water
- Toilets
- Provision of first-aid
- Adequate space with ventilation, sufficient lighting & amenities like chairs, benches & covered shelter

(Refer to Annexure – 2)

Strategic Plan of Election Commission of India 2016-25

Goal 1: Inclusive Special facilitation for registration of certain category of voters including Differently-abled electors etc.

Activity 1: Electoral Roll to be made PwD friendly by identifying such voters in a dedicated section of ER, within each part. It envisages constitution of a Working Group on Facilitation and Inclusion of PwDs.

Goal-2: Accessible Improving and strengthening accessibility for electoral registration with envisaged outcome of Barrier free electoral registration.

Outcome: Barrier-free electoral registration.

Activity1: Making available one Voter Facilitation Centre at every District Headquarters.

Activity2: Making available one Voter Facilitation Centre at every Block Headquarters.

Activity3: Integration with CSCs- Integrating the facility of Common Service Centres voter related services throughout the country by adopting service area approach.

Interventions

The Commission has drafted a framework to strengthen the voter base of persons with disabilities. The implementation of the directives stated below to be followed uniformly by all States and UTs.

Identification of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)

- Preliminary data shall be collected by every State with the help of Census, Social Justice

& Empowerment Department, Women and Child Welfare and Samagra Yojana.

- The officers/employees of Social Justice and Empowerment Department as and when required shall be drawn on deputation/assigned duty as Nodal Officers to ensure the availability of basic facilities to the PwDs.

Polling Station wise list of 18+ persons with disabilities shall be prepared from data collected from the above mentioned departments at DEO/ERO/BLO level.

Mapping

The name of the PwDs shall be mapped and the list be made available to the BLOs but it should not be marked in the electoral roll to maintain the privacy of PwD.

Enrolment

- A separate polling station wise list of PwDs indicating the type of disability shall be prepared from the voter list.
 - After obtaining information regarding PwDs from concerned departments, the process for inclusion of the names of the eligible PwDs who are not listed in the electoral roll shall be initiated.
 - PwDs shall be given preferences in obtaining facilities at the polling stations, Mat data Shayata Kendras (MSKs), Voter Assistance Centres (VACs), Office of DEOs, EROs, ROs etc. All the possible steps shall be taken to ensure that PwDs are not required to wait in queue.
 - Adequate instructions to facilitate filling up of forms 6, 7, 8 and 8A shall be provided at the above mentioned help centres.
- There shall be proper Voters' Guide for PwD Voters especially catering to their needs
 - PwD shall be informed in advance about polling stations where facility of online booking for wheel chairs is available
 - Special /Mobile camps shall be organised to educate and motivate persons with disabilities and regular programs shall be organised through various media.
 - Efforts shall be made to prepare volunteers from student organisations like NCC, NSS, and NYK etc. to motivate and create awareness regarding the election process among PwDs.
 - Publicity regarding the services offered by CSCs/MSKs shall be augmented.
 - Efforts shall be made to have renowned PwDs as District Ambassadors and District/ State Icons.
 - A comprehensive activity chart (Annexure-2) regarding ease of registration and voting by PwDs has been prepared for clarity and coherence. This Chart clearly underlines the various activities to be carried out, steps to be taken, fixing of responsibilities of concerned officials, a definite time frame for each activity and desired outcomes.

SVEEP Strategies – Outreach and Voter Education

- A separate SVEEP plan shall be prepared incorporating information, education and facilitation for PwDs.
- An Officer shall be designated/appointed assembly constituency wise for each district. Such officers shall be trained regarding provision of facilities for PwDs.
- Wide Publicity through various modes shall be ensured. Special basic publicity material shall be prepared by using simple language, sign language and braille in regional languages (by the respective states)
- Audio applications like voice SMS (web or mobile) for registrations shall be developed

Involvement of NGOs/CSOs/DPOs/ RWAs

- Voluntary and other organisations working for PwDs like Non- Government Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CSOs), Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) etc. shall be motivated to help in imparting information regarding election Process to PwDs in a non- political, non- partisan manner.

Assistance shall be sought from these organisations to provide various facilities to PwDs.

- Only non-political & non-partisan organisations shall be considered to motivate and create awareness among PwDs.

System Sensitisation and Training

- Special Training sessions shall be organised to sensitize the election machinery to make efforts to address the needs of PwDs.
- All officers/employees, police officials etc. involved in the election process shall be clearly instructed on the facilities to be provided to the PwDs.
- Instructions qualified in sign language and braille script and displayed (in Hindi, English or Regional language use)
- Contribution in election process by PwDs – The PwDs who volunteer to assist in the election process in the form of working at Voter Help Centres, working as BLOs, working in polling team etc. shall be assigned such work so that they can motivate other PwDs to participate in the election process.

Use of Technology to provide help to PwDs

- The Websites of each CEO/DEO shall be made user friendly and readily accessible to PwDs.
- Visually impaired voters shall be provided the facility of voice SMS to convey information like the status of registration, polling station number, name of polling station, the Serial Number in the Voter's list, the assembly constituency in which the name of PwD is registered, the Voter ID no. (EPIC), Polling Schedule etc.

Note: Data of persons with disabilities shall

not be displayed on website and should not be shared so as to maintain their privacy.

Improving Physical Access and Facilities at Polling Stations

- Exclusive polling booths, as far as practicable, shall be set up for PwDs in places where they reside in large numbers. Other facilities according to the needs of the PwD like proper toilets, tactile signage outside the polling stations and Voters' guide in braille for the visually impaired voters shall be made available
- It shall be ensured that polling stations are situated on the ground floor, if not, lift facility/extension of ramp to each floor shall be provided.
- A standardised and uniform design of ramps shall be implemented.
- Temporary/Mobile ramps shall be made available where ever permanent facility cannot be provided.
- Access to ramps shall be made smooth in places of sandy and slushy pathways.
- Ramps shall be provided in such a manner that it directly leads to the door of polling stations to avoid navigating through corridors.
- Proper approach roads to Polling Stations shall be ensured by local authorities/ respective departments.
- Mobile barricades in front of doors of each Polling Station shall be erected.
- Entrance door of polling station shall be kept wide open and adequate space around the voting compartment shall be ensured for wheel chair movement.
- Facility for separate entry shall be made available for PwDs.
- Pathway to polling rooms shall have indicators with standard signage.
- Depending on the number of PwDs among

electors in a polling station, facilities like ramp, tricycles, basic information through audio- video, shall be made available. These facilities shall be physically verified and certified by the Commission.

- Wheel Chairs shall be provided at identified polling stations.
- Priority entry passes shall be issued to the persons with disabilities. All possible steps shall be taken to ensure that PwDs are not required to wait in queue.

Cooperation of Political Parties

- Political parties shall also be motivated to display publicity material, manifesto, appeal etc. in audio- video and in braille as well as sign language as per the requirement of the PwDs.

COLLABORATIONS

Collaboration with Ministries and Departments

There have been successful collaborations with Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, mainly the Doordarshan and All India Radio, besides the Directorate of Field Publicity and Song and Drama Division.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting extended support by providing airtime and programme content on national channels and regional channels of Doordarshan and All India Radio. Ministry of Railways, Civil Aviation, Department of Posts etc are among others with whom collaborations have been taken up for greater outreach to people. At State level, CEOs shall collaborate with State Government Departments like the departments of Health, Education, WCD, Cooperatives, Welfare etc., so that these departments can extend their existing infrastructure and manpower

(field functionaries) for electoral education and outreach. ASHAs and AWWs shall be roped in for all State elections for continuous engagement with the people. Department of Education shall be taken as an active partner in the SVEEP programmes at District and State level. Collaboration with youth organizations like NYKS, NSS, NCC shall help tap the new voters in the age group of 18-19yrs. For exclusive reach to Persons with Disabilities, Commission actively reaches out to Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Blind Persons' Associations.

Collaboration with Private Media

Besides Public Broadcaster, Private Media plays a significant catalytic role in disseminating information and enhancing electoral awareness among the people. Successful collaboration with Media Houses yielded results in terms of wider reach. ECI has chalked out the Framework of Engagement with Media Organisation, CEOs and DEOs shall collaborate with Private Media Houses within the parameters specified in the Framework for information dissemination and enhancing electoral participation with special focus on the PwDs.

Collaboration with CSOs

Recognising the potential of Civil Society Organisations in playing a significant catalytic role in enhancing citizen engagement of Persons' with Disabilities especially in the areas of reaching out to the last-mile, ECI developed a Framework of Engagement with CSOs. Within this Framework, CEO shall collaborate with CSOs for non-partisan, objective, non-political citizen awareness, facilitation and engagement.

Collaboration with PSUs/Corporates

Public Sector Enterprises and Corporate Houses can play a significant role by extending support to the SVEEP programme and also fulfill their Corporate Social Responsibility. All collaborations that CEOs shall take up with the PSUs and Corporate sector for voter education and wider outreach, shall be within this Framework.

Icons/Ambassadors

Identifying the ability of inspirational personalities to establish authentic connection with the masses, ECI associated with renowned Indians from various field enjoying national appeal and appointed them as ECI's National Icons to motivate voters. Similarly renowned individuals in states were appointed as State Icons. Focus is being laid down on PwD Icons so that they can spread the message more effectively.

Initiatives

Election Commission of India is churning up the wheel of electoral awareness in the nooks and corners of the country with special focus on the Persons with Disabilities this year. The Commission has already set up a Steering Committee to deliberate on the major challenges faced by PwDs with a view to consolidate the status of facilities and address the challenges in this area. A series of guidelines have already been issued as discussed above. (Refer to Annexure 1)

Communication Strategy

- **Interpersonal Contact:** During House-to-House, BLOs to identify PwDs who were eligible for registration yet not enrolled. Efforts were taken to enroll the unenrolled electors during the Pre-Revision Campaign. The left-out eligible as well as the newly eligible PwD electors shall be gleaned from the BLO Registers and necessary action may be taken for their enrolment. For the benefit of potential PwD electors, the practice of Home Registration may be continued as in previous years. In this,

BLOs, at the time of their visits, may collect forms with relevant documents from prospective electors in need of registration or EROs/AEROs may themselves visit and take reasoned decisions on the basis of filled-in forms. Resources available with departments such as Social Welfare and Sarva Shiksha Mission may be suitably utilized, using their knowledge base.

- **Outdoor Campaigns:** Hoardings and banners are to be displayed at prominent places such as Road Junctions /Markets /Offices at Block/Municipalities, Universities/colleges. Stickers are to be placed on vehicles of public transport.
- **Electronic Media:** Electronic media had always been a very important vehicle of mass communication. Audio/video content is being developed to provide an aid to PwDs so that the information can be delivered successfully.
- **Traditional Medium:** Tableau shall be set in motion such that it should move across districts for a considerable stretch of time generating awareness among the electors. DEO's appeal letters will be distributed in the area of low registration and voter turnout during Summary Revision

Programmes and General Elections. Programmes in the local language to be formulated using folk art and other cultural activities to convey the message to be channelized.

Voter Awareness

The content for the PwDs shall aim to address the issues gap in information and motivation in PwDs; to highlight the accessibility initiatives of the Commission and also to sensitize the polling personnel and general public at large to specific needs of the PwDs such as:

- Films are being produced for PwDs detailing the process of registration, voting and other accessibility initiatives of the Commission. The aim of the film is to inform, motivate and sensitize the family and friends towards the importance of inclusive elections. The content and format shall be such as to be able to be understood by widest spectrum of people with different disabilities. All the content to have audible notes for the hearing impaired, also high contrast and text enlargement feature to be made available for the visually challenged. Pilot testing among users is an integral part of the production.
- Short motivational promos shall be made for TV and Radio targeting PwDs and their family members and public at large. This should meet the twin requirements of motivating PwDs to participate in elections and sensitising public to issues of PwDs.
- Other tools like Posters, Flipcharts, Pamphlets, and Brochure for PwDs and Training Kits for Trainers/Facilitators may also be prepared to be shared with CSOs.

Sensitisation of Polling Officials

Sensitisation films on issues like setting up of accessible polling station with all the standard specifications, assistance to be provided to the PwDs at the time of voting, and behavioural aspects is being prepared and the same will be shared during training programme of the election officials and also used during IIIDEM (India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management) trainings.

A small handbook wherein specific needs of the PwDs and relevant interventions to cater the same have been created.

Best Electoral Practices Awards, 2018

During the celebration of 8th NVD, election officials were awarded for initiating good practices for the facilitation of Persons with Disabilities in different states.

Training & Capacity Building

Commission organised a one day training workshop on 'Web Accessibility' for Persons with Disability which was taken by resource person's i.e. members/trainers of Disability Rights Alliance.

Knowledge sharing platform

A special issue was launched on Persons with Disabilities in the VoICE International Magazine, an ECI publication. The issues carry rich experience for knowledge sharing on inclusion of PwDs across the world.

NOVEL INITIATIVES

1. International Conference on 'Inclusion of the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the Electoral Processes' on Jan 24, 2018 at New Delhi as a part of the National Voters' Day celebration.

International Conference on 'Inclusion of the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the Electoral Processes' was held on Jan 24, 2018 at New Delhi as a part of the National Voters' Day celebration. The Conference was organized under the aegis of VoICE.NET, with the purpose of sharing the experience of different EMBs, international institutions and experts with regard to analysis of barriers, policy interventions, strategies, programmes, good practices and technological innovation for inclusion of PwDs in electoral processes.

Delegates at the Conference included Chairpersons, Commissioners and Senior Officials of five Election Management Bodies (EMBs) namely Australia, Bhutan, Guinea, Moldova & Zambia and Heads of two international organisations viz. International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES) and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).

The Conference was divided in to three technical sessions.

Session I on '*Nature and extent of Barriers to Accessibility in Electoral Participation of the PwDs: Analysis and Strategies for addressing the Barriers*' witnessed presentations from Mr David Lang, Member, Assistant Commissioner, IT, AEC and Mr Mani Kumar Ghaley, Chief Planning officer, Election Commission of Bhutan.

Session II on '*Innovation and Technology in facilitating Electoral participation of PwDs/ Efficiency and Efficacy of the existing facilitation to the PwDs for electoral participation: Scope of the Outreach and campaigns*' included detailed presentations by Mr Umesh Sinha, Senior Deputy Election Commissioner, ECI followed

by Mr Corneliu Pasat, Acting Head of Media Division, CEC, Moldova and Mr Antonio Spinelli, International IDEA, Nepal.



Session III on '*Nature and Role of International Organizations, Non-Government Organizations in promoting access to the PwDs*' witnessed technical papers by Mr William Sweeney, President and CEO, IFES, Mr Dylan Kasonde, Director IT, Election Commission of Zambia, Mr Navin Chawla, former Chief Election Commissioner of India and Mr Yves Leterme, Secretary General, International IDEA. Each session ended with detailed discussions on various issues related to inclusion of PwDs and also concluding remark by the Chair. The Conference also witnessed signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the field of election management between Election Commission of India and National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) of Guinea. Another MoU was signed between Election Commission

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of India and Central Election Commission (CEC) of Moldova. An MoU was also signed between India International Institute of Democracy & Election Management (IIIDEM) and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). The MoUs provide for an institutional framework and aim for promotion of exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of organizational and technical development, with an aim to strengthen the administration of electoral processes; exchange of information, material, expertise and technical knowhow related to electoral processes and systems; training of personnel and organizational development and capacity building.



The conference was successful in its objective of sharing knowledge and learning from the experiences of each other. In the concluding session, O P Rawat, Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner of India remarked "The deliberations of the Conference have offered us a rich experience sharing on the subject and undoubtedly there is a lot of 'Take Away' emanating from the conference for each one of us. The Conference has set the tone for consolidation and further action on the subject. I am sure we will take positive steps to ensure higher inclusion of PwDs."

2. Special Provisions for PwDs in Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs)

ECI is committed in its efforts towards the inclusion of electoral literacy through the medium of Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) in educational institutions which target students in the age group of 14-17 years, or as we call them, the future voters of the country. ELCs are also being established in colleges targeting 'new voters' and rural communities to target school drop-outs.

Through ELCs, members will learn about the what, where, when and how of the entire electoral process, understand and come to appreciate the value of their vote. This will be



accomplished via the medium of stimulating yet thought-provoking activities organized by the club convener.

A core value of the ELCs is inclusivity, be in terms of gender, marginalized populations or Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). Talking specifically about the latter, each ELC resource guide, which serves as a handbook for the convener, consists of the following guidelines which are to be necessarily followed in the clubs. The ELCs will thus be inclusive entities that must make every attempt to ensure the

participation of students with disabilities –

- The Convener shall make efforts to promote inclusion and sensitize members about the same.
- S/he must try to ensure that the venue for ELC activity is easily accessible.
- If a student with hearing impairment is attending the meeting, a sign language interpreter shall be made available for their convenience (the interpreter can be a companion that the student already has).
- Any activity conducted in the Club should not leave behind students with disabilities and must encourage them to participate.

The ELC activities are developed in a way to ensure inclusivity.

- Various floor games like Ludo on accessible voting and Snakes & Ladders on an enlightened voter convey messages on facilitations for PwD voters such as availability of wheel chairs, ramps, braille signage, volunteers etc. at the polling station.
- The activity on Election Simulation introduces the concept of priority based entry to polling stations and preference given to disabled voters in the queue.
- Another interactive game, Step Up, urges its participants to empathize with the

character of a PwD woman and feel the barriers faced by the character during voting, sensitizing the players in the process.

All the activities also hold the element of motivation for every Indian citizen to exercise their right to vote.

In a recent PwD State consultation held in Gujarat, the participants, especially PwDs, were encouraged to play the games to get the feel of it. The State Level Master Trainer introduced the rules of two games – Snakes & Ladders and Maze Game - and volunteer participants played them with child-like enthusiasm. All other participants surrounded the panel and applauded the players. The participants enjoyed themselves and remarked that the games were indeed engaging methods of learning with fun.

3. District level & State Level Consultations on PwDs

To bridge the gap between the Commission and the stakeholders, Commission directed to organise District and State consultation in collaboration with prominent stakeholder to assess the tasks done to inform, motivate and facilitate the PwDs across the country.



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District report has been analysed at State level and the outcomes of the state report and key recommendations from various stakeholders and CSOs working in this field would be analysed at the National Consultation.

All the deliberations and suggestions with the Election Officials, CSO Partners and Experts would contribute to draft a National Policy for the Inclusion of PwDs in the electoral process. This is another attempt in ECIs' endeavour to provide effective and efficient information, awareness, and facilitation for enhancing participation of PwDs.





National Consultation: The Concept

Universal Adult Suffrage forms the essence of the electoral system of India. This fundamental aspect paves the way for Election Commission of India. The commitment to the spirit of 'No voter to be left behind' is unwavering.

When presented differently, it implies that the Election Commission is dedicated to the conduct of Inclusive Elections in which all categories of voters are engaged in electoral processes thereby ensuring their holistic participation. In this context, inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the electoral process has been one of the core areas of the Commission for long and holds a prominent status under its Strategic Plan 2016. In view of its importance, the Commission has taken a prodigious step by declaring 'Accessible Elections' as the theme for the year 2018.

While, a diverse set of tangible and practical measures have been adopted in adherence to the directives, it also remains necessary to glance at the outcomes, the good practices (including innovations and technological support), the existing barriers, the redressal

of the barrier; efficacy and efficiency of the directives and further engagement via comprehensive consultation with the stakeholders.

Hence, a series of Consultations for Inclusion of PwDs in the Electoral Process were conducted in districts and states across the country, with an aim to identify barriers and challenges as also the means to overcome them. Also strategies were drafted with an objective to increase the participation of PwDs. The Offices of the Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) of States/UTs were made in-charge of collating and compiling reports received from the districts. This aided in the development of State- Level Reports which included databases on related achievements and good practices. The reports were taken up as key agenda documents for State-Level Consultations, serving a role in further enriching aspects relating to the inclusion of PwDs particularly with regard to matters of registration and polling.

Overall, the State Consultation Reports dealt with aspects including- polling station-wise mapping of PwD electors not registered on the electoral roll, PwD friendly and accessible websites of CEOs/DEOs, specially-abled specific Voter Facilitation Centres, accessible voter awareness resources, special registration and sensitisation camps for the concerned electorate, partnering with PwDs as District/ State Icons, collaboration with subject-specific NGOs/CSOs, training and sensitisation

of the election machinery, engagement of volunteers in facilitation-support, accessibility enhancements at the polling station level, appointment of district-level Nodal Officers for PwD Voters, et al.

Apart from carrying key recommendations on the following, the State Reports delved upon Physical, Attitudinal, Social, Policy, Transportation and Communication barriers presently facing the PwD electorate as well as methods to address the concerns via a set of rationally-rooted Action Points on the following:

- **Accessible Registration process inclusive of Use of IT**
- **Accessible Polling Station including EVM/ VVPAT & other facilitation measures**
- **Voter Education and leveraging Partnerships**

Furthermore, as a run-up to the State/ District Consultations, a thorough mapping of PwDs extending to the level of the Assembly Constituency was also conducted, classifying the concerned electorate into the following 5 categories-

- Electors with Visual Disability
- Electors with Speech and Hearing Disability
- Electors with Locomotors Disability
- Electors with Intellectual Disability
- Electors with Multiple Disabilities

The entire process aided in generating a nationwide data of proven veracity on Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) that is expected to be of vital use in designing accessibility initiatives, developing PwD-friendly communication strategies, making provisions available and rendering requisite amenities targeted right

to the polling station level for specially-abled electors.

Chaired by the Commission, the two-day Consultation would include senior Ministry officials, Government of India delegates, representatives from political parties, major field-specific CSO/NGO representatives and disability expert panelists and spokespersons in attendance. Attendees shall be studying, reviewing and discussing the following issues including-

- Review of framework on targeting PwDs,
- Implementation and communication strategy,
- Inclusion of left out voters,
- Facilitation issues at ground level,
- Coordination with government departments,
- Challenges posed to electoral literacy in special schools, et al.

The national consultation would begin with sharing of initiatives for Accessible Elections in Technical Session I. CEOs from different states would give presentations on Best Practices on Accessible Elections.

Then the participants shall be divided into five groups, for discussions, based on specific disabilities. The different groups are:

Group 1: Blindness and Low Vision

Group 2: Deaf and hard of hearing

Group 3: Locomotor Disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims of muscular dystrophy

Group 4: Intellectual disability including autism, specific learning disability and mental illness

Group 5: Multiple disabilities including deaf-blindness

In the Technical Session II, the groups shall go through the reports submitted by States/ UT and assess barriers, challenges specific to the disabilities; study existing initiatives, take inputs from the participating CSOs and discuss at length to come out with findings and recommendations for thematic presentations on three different topics namely:

- Accessible Registration Process including use of IT
- Accessible Polling Station including EVM/ VVPAT & other Facilitation measures
- Voter Education and leveraging Partnerships

Each group shall give a presentation on all three topics. All the presentations on a specific topic would be summarized by the moderator of the session and presented in the closing session to the Commission and senior officials for further deliberations in future.

State Report on Accessible Elections

Commission developed a report performat and directed the states to furnish reports in the format prescribed. In the following section, the reports are divided on the same lines as mentioned in the format. Please see the following:

- Data as Der the Reporting Format sent vide Commission's letter No'4 /ECI/LET / FUNC/ SVEEP-II/PWD/2017
- Barriers and Challenges encountered by the states
- Suggestions and Recommendations pertaining to the 4 themes as mentioned above.
- Data of Voters and Electors
- Good Practices

Further recommendations has been carved out and documented in the Key recommendation section. Post-Consultation, a national report would be prepared taking into account-barriers/suggestions along with short-term and long-term action points aimed at inclusive elections. The generated reports would also be incorporated as a part of the National Policy Document- a landmark step in the Commission's endeavour to make elections accessible in India.

Compilation

1. Websites of CEO/DEO- to PwDs [A3 standards.]

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	Yes
Andhra Pradesh	No, Action to be taken
Arunachal Pradesh	—
Assam	No, Work in Progress
Bihar	No, Work in Progress
Chhattisgarh	Work in Progress
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	No, Work in Progress.
Delhi (NCT)	Yes
Goa	Yes
Gujarat	Yes
Haryana	Yes
Himachal Pradesh	Yes
Jammu & Kashmir	Work in Progress
Jharkhand	Yes
Karnataka	Yes
Kerala	No. Action to be taken
Madhya Pradesh	No, Work in Progress
Maharashtra	No, Work in Progress
Manipur	Yes
Nagaland	Yes
Puducherry (UT)	Yes
Sikkim	No
Tripura	Yes
Uttarakhand	No, Work in Progress
Uttar Pradesh	No, Work in Progress
West Bengal	No, Work in Progress

2. Identifying PwDs, polling station wise, who are not listed in the electoral roll and their enrolment

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	No, Work in Progress
Andhra Pradesh	Work in Progress
Arunachal Pradesh	—
Assam	Work in Progress
Bihar	Work in Progress
Chhattisgarh	No. Action to be taken
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	Work in Progress
Delhi (NCT)	Yes
Goa	Yes
Gujarat	Yes, 89920
Haryana	Yes, 14878
Himachal Pradesh	Yes, 13677
Jammu & Kashmir	Yes, Around 34600 PwDs are enrolled in existing electoral roll.
Jharkhand	Yes, 50497
Karnataka	Yes, Total Number of PwDs - 436650, No of recent registration – 15673
Kerala	Yes. 983 PwDs identified as of now.
Madhya Pradesh	No, Data to be collected with Social Justice Department
Maharashtra	56000 PwDs enrolled in the electoral roll so far.
Manipur	Yes, 5336 PwDs enrolled
Nagaland	Yes, 2321 PwDs identified
Puducherry (UT)	10642 PwD electors enrolled so far.
Sikkim	No
Tripura	Work in Progress
Uttarakhand	Yes
Uttar Pradesh	Yes, 631244
West Bengal	Yes

3. Mapping of PwD electors ahead of elections to extend assistance

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	Yes
Andhra Pradesh	No, Action to be taken
Arunachal Pradesh	—
Assam	During Assembly Election, 2016 approx. 10000 electors were provided assistance.
Bihar	PwD electors to be mapped Polling station wise and according to their types of disability before the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections.
Chhattisgarh	No. Mapping of PwD electors in collaboration with the census and social justice department.
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	To be ensured during the General Election to Lok Sabha-2019
Delhi (NCT)	Total 2689 PwDs identified. An optional column has been added in the registration form i.e Form-6 for recording the type of disability.
Goa	Yes
Gujarat	28077
Haryana	Yes, total number of PwD electors (14878) were facilitated on poll day
Himachal Pradesh	Yes
Jammu & Kashmir	Work in Progress
Jharkhand	Yes
Karnataka	Total Number of PwD Electors - 382449
Kerala	No. Mapping of PwD electors to be done shortly ahead of Lok Sabha election 2019.
Madhya Pradesh	No, Collaboration with Social Justice Department is under process
Maharashtra	Work in Progress.
Manipur	Yes
Nagaland	Yes
Puducherry (UT)	Yes
Sikkim	No record available, assistance to PwDs is being provided whenever needed.
Tripura	8000 voters mapped during Assembly Election, 2018. 26000 PwDs has been mapped out of the list of 79000(approx.) obtained from Social Welfare and Social Education Department.
Uttarakhand	Yes
Uttar Pradesh	Yes, 570806
West Bengal	Yes

4. Accessible awareness material on elections process e.g- In braille script and sign language

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	No, Work in Progress
Andhra Pradesh	No, Action to be taken
Arunachal Pradesh	
Assam	Work in Progress
Bihar	To be done before upcoming elections.
Chhattisgarh	Yes, a general brochure explaining the use of form 6, 7 and 8 was printed in braille script and distributed amongst the new and future PwDs electors at the place of their schooling and residence.
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	To be ensured
Delhi (NCT)	Signage and other election materials to be prepared in braille provided at each polling locations as well as in voter centres.
Goa	Yes
Gujarat	Braille script and sign language was introduced
Haryana	Yes
Himachal Pradesh	Yes, braille Photo Voter Slips, braille EPICs were distributed to electors. Besides, self-adhesive stickers were fixed on all Bus in braille scripts and sign language sheets were provided at each polling station.
Jammu & Kashmir	Work in Progress
Jharkhand	Yes
Karnataka	Yes, Video Clippings, Audio/Radio Jingles developed, Voter's Guide, Postal Ballots, Brochures, Hand-outs and posters developed in braille
Kerala	Yes
Madhya Pradesh	Yes, Dummy ballot paper in braille, display of signage in Hindi outside polling station etc.
Maharashtra	Yes
Manipur	Yes, 5260 PwDs facilitated on Poll Day
Nagaland	Specific SVEEP posters on PwDs prepared and circulated for the general public.
Puducherry (UT)	Braille ballot papers are provided at each polling stations during General Elections
Sikkim	No, due to lack of expertise and very negligible number of PwD electors
Tripura	Work in Progress
Uttarakhand	General Voter Guide in Hindi braille for visually impaired person is to be developed. Voter slip & brochure is also proposed.
Uttar Pradesh	Dummy Ballot Sheets Printed
West Bengal	Yes, Instruction leaflets in braille developed to spread awareness about EVM and VVPAT.

5. Special camps for enrolment and sensitisation of PwDs.

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	Yes, AEROs of all tehsils directed to organise special camps for the purpose and to submit the report.
Andhra Pradesh	Work In Progress
Arunachal Pradesh	—
Assam	Work in Progress
Bihar	Special camps to be planned during the Special Revision.
Chhattisgarh	Yes, sensitisation programs conducted
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	House to House survey is running from 15th May 2018 to 20 the June 2018 for the same
Delhi (NCT)	Special Camps have been organized at some voter centres. Camps shall also be organized in future with the help of NGOs/CSOs and Special Educational Institutions.
Goa	Yes, Sensitisation activities are in progress
Gujarat	Yes, Sensitisation programmes organised across the districts
Haryana	-
Himachal Pradesh	Yes, 84 camps organised
Jammu & Kashmir	Yes
Jharkhand	Yes
Karnataka	Yes
Kerala	No. Based on the survey, special camps to be conducted.
Madhya Pradesh	Yes
Maharashtra	Around 110 camps organised
Manipur	Yes, 2 camps per district organised
Nagaland	The camp helped in 820 new identification/enrolments
Puducherry (UT)	Two special camps organised.
Sikkim	No, due to lack of expertise and very negligible number of PwD electors
Tripura	Sensitisation of PwD electors through field level workers (BLOs, Asha Workers etc.)
Uttarakhand	Yes
Uttar Pradesh	1416 camps organised
West Bengal	Yes

6. Appointment of PwDs as district/state icons.

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	No
Andhra Pradesh	Action to be taken
Arunachal Pradesh	-
Assam	Work in Progress
Bihar	In the last Lok Sabha/ Vidhan Sabha election, 2014- 15 hearing and speech impaired girl, Nidhi Kumari was made district icon in Gaya district. PwD icons to be identified in other districts as well.
Chhattisgarh	Yes, Icons appointed in few districts
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	Nil
Delhi (NCT)	Work in Progress.
Goa	PwD icons appointed during 2017 Elections. Identification of apolitical PwDs is under consideration.
Gujarat	5 PwD icons have been appointed at district level and two at the State Level. Following are the details: District: Mr.Nandlal Changa, Kachchh; Shri Jimish Parekh, Rajkot; Ms.Nistha Thaker Anand; Ahmedabad; Mr. Rakesh S Dave; Vadodara; Dr Tanvi Joshi; Surat State: Shri Ganesh Muhudkar, Cricket Player of Indian National Blind Cricket Team; Ms. Parul D. Parmar, National Badminton Player
Haryana	—
Himachal Pradesh	Yes, State Icon appointed. District Level PwD icons to be appointed shortly.
Jammu & Kashmir	Yes
Jharkhand	Work in Progress
Karnataka	Yes
Kerala	No, Work in Progress.
Madhya Pradesh	Yes
Maharashtra	PwDs appointed as icons in some districts.
Manipur	No, Work in Progress
Nagaland	One of the two State Icons is a PwD.
Puducherry (UT)	No
Sikkim	No
Tripura	1 State Icon is appointed, District Icons to be appointed
Uttarakhand	Yes
Uttar Pradesh	Yes, 1 State Icon and 27 District Icons
West Bengal	Some PwD Icons appointed

NATIONAL CONSULTATION: THE CONCEPT

7. Collaboration with NGOs and CSOs working for PwDs.

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	Yes
Andhra Pradesh	Yes
Arunachal Pradesh	-
Assam	Yes
Bihar	No, NGOs/CSOs are yet to be identified. However collaboration with the Directorate of Disabilities, Social Welfare Department and other field offices in the districts like the Office of Civil Surgeon etc. has started.
Chhattisgarh	Yes
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	Being a small UT, no CSO is registered. However, one NGO (Indian Red Cross Society, Silvassa) is being consulted for improving the facilities being provided to PwDs.
Delhi (NCT)	Yes, Consultations have been held at District as well as State Level with the NGOs/CSOs like AADI etc.
Goa	Major NGOs and CSOs working for PwDs consulted for improving the facilities being provided to PwDs.
Gujarat	Yes
Haryana	-
Himachal Pradesh	Yes
Jammu & Kashmir	Yes
Jharkhand	Yes
Karnataka	Yes
Kerala	Yes
Madhya Pradesh	Yes
Maharashtra	Yes
Manipur	Yes
Nagaland	Yes
Puducherry (UT)	To be taken up during SVEEP activities
Sikkim	No
Tripura	The representative of NSS, Scouts and NYKS also attended the State Level Consultation
Uttarakhand	Yes
Uttar Pradesh	Yes
West Bengal	Yes

8. Training for the election machinery on sensitizing them on special needs of PwDs

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	Yes
Andhra Pradesh	Yes. Being conducted.
Arunachal Pradesh	-
Assam	Yes
Bihar	DEOs, EROs and other election related officers have already been sensitized on the matter. Detailed training on the facilities to be provided to PwDs to be given to the polling personnel before elections.
Chhattisgarh	Yes
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	Trainings will be imparted during the period of General Election to Lok Sabha-2019.
Delhi (NCT)	Yes, training for the election machinery to sensitize them on special needs of PwDs conducted from time to time.
Goa	Yes, trainings imparted during onset of every election to train PwDs of all categorises.
Gujarat	Yes, sensitisation regarding behavioural attitude for PwD conducted during General Election to Gujarat Legislative Assembly, 2017.
Haryana	-
Himachal Pradesh	Yes
Jammu & Kashmir	Work in Progress
Jharkhand	Yes
Karnataka	Yes
Kerala	Yes
Madhya Pradesh	Yes
Maharashtra	Yes. Electoral machinery is being trained.
Manipur	Yes
Nagaland	Yes
Puducherry (UT)	Yes
Sikkim	Yes. Sensitisation of BLOs is being done during their training
Uttarakhand	Yes
Uttar Pradesh	Yes
West Bengal	No, To be implemented in the upcoming general elections.

9. PwDs volunteers involved in election process (as BLO, at voter help desk etc.)

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	No, planned to do in future election process
Andhra Pradesh	Action to be taken
Arunachal Pradesh	-
Assam	Yes
Bihar	No, volunteers to be identified before the elections.
Chhattisgarh	Yes
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	To be ensured in General Election to Lok Sabha-2019.
Delhi (NCT)	Yes, PwD volunteers to be deployed during the forthcoming Elections
Goa	Yes, Divyang Polling Station managed by PwDs.
Gujarat	Yes, involved at some polling stations
Haryana	-
Himachal Pradesh	No
Jammu & Kashmir	Work in Progress
Jharkhand	Yes
Karnataka	Yes
Kerala	No. PwD volunteers to be engaged as BLO at voter help desk during the next Loksabha Election.
Madhya Pradesh	Yes
Maharashtra	PwD volunteer to be involved during election period
Manipur	Yes, a few times. Improvement under process
Nagaland	Yes
Puducherry (UT)	Action to be taken
Sikkim	No
Uttarakhand	Yes
Uttar Pradesh	Yes
West Bengal	Action to be taken

10. Accessible polling station including wide entrance, ramps, signage, wheelchair, a/v for hearing impaired, priority in voting etc.

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	Yes
Andhra Pradesh	Yes
Arunachal Pradesh	—
Assam	Yes
Bihar	Some of these arrangements are in place. DEOs have been instructed to ensure other requirements are also put in place before the next elections.
Chhattisgarh	Yes
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	All Polling stations to be made accessible.
Delhi (NCT)	Yes, Polling stations are accessible to PwDs.
Goa	Yes
Gujarat	Yes
Haryana	-
Himachal Pradesh	Yes
Jammu & Kashmir	Yes
Jharkhand	Yes
Karnataka	Yes
Kerala	Yes
Madhya Pradesh	Yes
Maharashtra	Yes.
Manipur	Yes
Nagaland	Yes
Puducherry (UT)	Yes
Sikkim	Yes
Uttarakhand	Yes
Uttar Pradesh	Yes
West Bengal	Yes

11. Allocation of budget for accessible electoral process.

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	No, fund requisition is under process
Andhra Pradesh	Yes
Arunachal Pradesh	—
Assam	No
Bihar	Yes
Chhattisgarh	Yes
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	No separate budgetary provision has been made.
Delhi (NCT)	Yes, funds will be allocated as per need basis.
Goa	No
Gujarat	Yes
Haryana	—
Himachal Pradesh	Yes
Jammu & Kashmir	No, Action Proposed
Jharkhand	Yes
Karnataka	Yes
Kerala	Yes
Madhya Pradesh	Yes
Maharashtra	Action proposed
Manipur	Yes
Nagaland	No
Puducherry (UT)	Yes
Sikkim	No
Uttarakhand	Action Proposed
Uttar Pradesh	Budget allocated to district for SVEEP activities for all voters including PwDs
West Bengal	No

12. Designated officer appointed assembly constituency wise for PwDs

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	Yes
Andhra Pradesh	Assembly Constituency wise designated officer for PwDs to be appointed
Arunachal Pradesh	—
Assam	DEOs asked to appoint one designated officer AC wise
Bihar	Not yet, officers to be appointed after the polling station wise mapping of PwDs.
Chhattisgarh	To be appointed
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	To be appointed
Delhi (NCT)	Yes, Nodal Officers appointed assembly constituency wise.
Goa	No, however Magistrate on Flying Squad are instructed to take care of PwDs including pick and drop through special vehicles.
Gujarat	Assembly Constituency wise designated Officers appointed
Haryana	—
Himachal Pradesh	No
Jammu & Kashmir	Yes
Jharkhand	Work in Progress
Karnataka	Yes
Kerala	No
Madhya Pradesh	Yes
Maharashtra	Yes. EROs will be appointed as designated officers and AEROs as assistant designated officers for PwDs.
Manipur	No
Nagaland	No
Puducherry (UT)	Yes
Sikkim	Yes
Uttarakhand	Yes, State Coordinator also assigned for PwD Facilitation
Uttar Pradesh	Yes
West Bengal	Yes. AC Level Nodal Officers of SVEEP to look after implementation of programmes dedicated to the PwDs.

13. CEO/DEOs offices made accessible as per GOI standards.

Name of the State	Status
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	Yes
Andhra Pradesh	Work in Progress
Arunachal Pradesh	—
Assam	Yes, All the DEOs office are accessible
Bihar	Not yet. Instructions are being given to ensure ramps/lifts in the offices, apart from other facilities.
Chhattisgarh	To be appointed
Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UT)	Yes
Delhi (NCT)	Yes, ramps and toilet facility for PwDs has been provided in the CEO office.
Goa	Yes
Gujarat	Yes
Haryana	—
Himachal Pradesh	Yes
Jammu & Kashmir	Yes
Jharkhand	Yes
Karnataka	Yes
Kerala	Yes
Madhya Pradesh	Yes
Maharashtra	Yes
Manipur	Yes
Nagaland	Work in Progress
Puducherry (UT)	Yes
Sikkim	No
Uttarakhand	Yes
Uttar Pradesh	Yes
West Bengal	Work in Progress

Challenges & Redress Measures

ANDHRA PRADESH

Blindness and low vision-

- Lack of empowerment and perceived lack of capacity, lack of awareness.
- Lack of accessible conveyance in Voter Education activities, Registration and Voting
- Persons with blindness or low vision require an audio/ tactile output; large print and electronic texts which are not image files so that their technology can read it out to them.

Deaf and hard of hearing:

- Lack of interpreter for assistance in Electoral matters
- People with hearing impairment would require textual or picture based forms of communications also require interpreter for felicitation

Locomotors disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy:

- Social Stigma and Physical barrier in approaching the concerned for enrolment and also for exercising franchise
- Providing registration information on the website in an accessible manner
- Ensuring record of all voters with disabilities registered in each constituency and recording their specific needs and ensuring that special efforts are made to facilitate their voting.

Autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disability and mental illness:

- Lack of assistance and positive attitude from family members.

- Keeping a flexible time for registration of persons with disabilities and allocating specific dates for carrying out special registration drives for persons with disabilities can help overcoming the barriers
- Multiple disabilities form amongst persons under clauses (a) to (d) including deaf-blindness etc.
- Lack of accessible transport for public meetings, voter education activities, voter registration and voting
- Lack of access to information like the timing of public meeting and voter registration camp etc.
- For PwDs with visual impairments, absence of alternative voting devices or accessible voting methods
- Polling Stations, rooms are small to accommodate persons using wheel chairs and placing EVMs on high tables are common barriers to physical access.

Redress Measures:

- Identifying the PwDs for enrolment by conducting door to door survey by BLOs
- Obtaining the PwDs data from the department of Disabled Welfare to cross check the left over PwDs
- Prior to elections, information can be given to electors about locations for polling stations, locations for special access, wheel chair facilities, technological assistance etc.
- Allocating special time for persons with disabilities to cast their vote
- By passing the queues to PwDs at polling stations and providing conveyance (to and fro) to the PwDs for their participation.
- Sensitizing the polling personnel for positive and courteous attitude towards PwDs in electoral process

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

- Blindness and low vision - Social stigma, topography and poor facility in the Polling stations in this hilly state
- Deaf and hard of hearing - Social stigma and non-availability of proper equipments for communication of persons in the remote locations
- Locomotors disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy - Hilly terrain and non-availability of road communication up to the polling stations/ non up gradation of Govt. building. Arranging polling in the easily accessible building/ upgrading building easily accessible for this group of people.
- Autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disability and mental illness - Social stigma and non-availability of trained persons to help such persons
- Multiple disabilities from amongst persons under clauses (a) to (d) including deaf – blindness etc. Social stigma and all other barriers and taboos.

ASSAM

- Blindness and low vision: Lack of awareness, Social and attitudinal.
- Deaf and hard of hearing: Lack of awareness, attitudinal, communication and social.
- Locomotors disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy: Lack of awareness, attitudinal, social and transportation.
- Autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disability and mental illness: Social and attitudinal.
- Multiple disabilities from amongst persons under clauses (a) to (d) including: Lack of awareness, Social and attitudinal.

BIHAR

- General attitudinal tendency of underestimation and apathy in the Society to leave such persons from the active life and decision making process, also acts as an impediment to their active participation in the electoral process.
- Communication and social issues also prevent them from exercising their franchise. Due to the disabilities they are generally not aware of the voting process, their right, date of poll, information about the candidates, administrative arrangements and facilities which are being provided to them.
- There is a lack of awareness material developed for persons with disabilities, specially aimed at the different types of disabilities and therefore insufficient awareness campaigns aiming them.
- Disabilities prevent them from getting enrolled and if enrolled then reaching to the Polling Station on the date of Poll. Thus, transportation issues inhibit them from getting involved in the voting process.
- The biggest challenge is identification of PwDs and their mapping with the Electoral Roll. In Bihar, a strategy has been prepared to identify and map the PwDs. Directorate for Disabilities has just been created. There is no credible data on PwDs with the Social Welfare Department.
- Another major challenge is the desire and development of knowledge and capacity in the electoral machinery (including police personnel) about the manner that would facilitate the disabled. There are specific needs of persons with different types of disabilities like locomotors disability, blindness, hearing issues, multiple disabilities etc. Apart from sensitisation, clear cut and precise guidelines and training to the personnel on it, is required.

- Lack of sufficient awareness materials in braille, specified awareness campaign, identifying and involving such persons, who can communicate with the PwDs in the best manner considering their disabilities for example – people who know sign language etc. is another issue.

CHHATTISGARH

- Only wheelchairs and ramps are mostly available at PS level but these are not of much use for the deaf and dumb persons. Disability wise guidelines aren't available.
- Persons with Disabilities are exposed to exclusion and marginalization in society.
- The problem of reaching polling stations
- Lack of space for free movement of wheelchairs inside the polling station. (Specific one for blind and locomotors disabled persons)
- Absence of proper signage and other relevant material for facilitation (especially for deaf and dumb persons)
- Absence of a polling personnel having command on communicating with the deaf and dumb electors in signage language.
- Sensitisation of both the election machinery and the field staff towards the problems faced by PwDs
- No separate data for PwDs identifying their respective categories
- The challenges of poverty, gender inequality and illiteracy persist for ever.
- Census data available can be cross examined from the registers of social justice and empowerment department, woman and child welfare department
- Polling station wise 18+ persons with disabilities can be prepared.
- Efforts can be made to carve out a separate polling station for PwDs in some constituencies.

- In the upcoming summary revision in June 2018, BLOs directed to form a separate list of PwDs indicating their respective disabilities.
- A continuous updating process can be devised for the inclusion of eligible unregistered PwDs
- Efforts can be made to sensitize the new PwD voters about the electoral process.
- A full-fledged SVEEP campaign can be launched to target the needs of PwDs
- Proper instructions to facilitate filling-up of forms 6, 7, 8, 8A provided at help centres.
- One polling person in the team to converse with the deaf and dumb electors in sign language. (For only those PS mark for PwDs)
- The training videos prepared to display all important instructions
- Meeting shall be organized with concerned department and all association of PwDs at state and district level.

DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI

- Blindness & low vision - braille experts can be put on the job for creating required training to PwDs

DELHI

- Blindness and low vision - Very difficult for Blind/Low vision persons to visit voter centres physically. Most of them are not very conversant with the online process of the electoral registration. Polling stations are always required to have Assured Minimum Facilities for PwDs which involves permanent ramps, braille language facility in EVMs, proper accessibility of Polling Stations and proper parking facility at the Polling Stations location on the poll day.

- Deaf and hard of hearing - Difficulties faced in understanding the directions/ instructions related to enrolment, addition and correction etc. Proper signages and instructions related to polling/election are made available and visible at voter centres and at polling stations on voting day to guide such person's locations on the poll day.
- Locomotor disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy - Wheel chairs are provided to the physically challenged persons in the polling station locations on voting day to enable them to access the polling station and cast their vote comfortably. Ramps are also provided for easy access in the polling stations.

GOA

- Blindness & low vision - braille experts to be put on the job for creating required training to PwDs
- No other barriers identified

GUJARAT

- Social status - Family constraints to participate in electoral process due to hardship in enrolment and voting
- Difficulty to reach Polling Station in case of multiple disabilities / bedridden person's difficulty
- Narrow entrance in the Polling Station
- Inadequate electricity for low vision disability
- Improper parking space for the vehicle of PwDs at Polling Station
- Insufficient wheel chairs at polling stations.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

- Communication barrier despite making website of CEO/DEO user friendly by inserting 'Screen Reader Access' to visually

impaired persons as there is an absence of such facility in case of a visually impaired-cum-deaf person.

- Sensitisation issue whereby despite having online registration facility, sensitisation of PwDs on how to avail the facility is by and large missing
- Attitudinal issues and a feeling of indifference to participate in electoral process.
- Physical issues whereby PwDs find it difficult in visiting office of EROs for getting registered and other problems they face on the day of poll.
- Programmatic/Policy issues; transportation facilities not adequate to accommodate needs of PwDs
- Communication barrier in case of a visually impaired cum deaf person could be addressed by way of providing 'Refreshable Braille Keyboard' facility at every voter facilitation centre
- An intensive sensitisation campaign can be launched for sensitisation of PwDs on the use of online facilities involving PwD IT experts.
- PwD Icons at State/District/AC level can be appointed
- Mobile facilitation centres for registration of PwDs can be established at AC level.

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Blindness and low vision:

- Lack of empowerment and perceived lack of capacity, lack of awareness, Lack of accessible conveyance in Voter Education activities, Registration and Voting.
- Persons with blindness or low vision require an audio/ tactile output; large print and electronic texts which are not image files so that their technology can read it out to them.

Deaf and hard of hearing:

- Non-availability of interpreter for assistance in Electoral matters.
- People with hearing impairment would require textual or picture based forms of communications; also require interpreter for facilitation.

Locomotive disability including cerebral palsy, cured leprosy, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy:

- Social Stigma and Physical barrier in approaching the official machinery for enrolment and also in exercising franchise
- Providing registration information on the website in an accessible manner
- Ensuring that there is a record of all voters with disabilities registered in each constituency and recording their specific needs and ensuring that special efforts are made to facilitate their voting.

Autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disability and mental illness:

- Familial shame/ home imprisonment, lack of assistance and positive attitude from family members.
- Keeping a flexible time for registration of persons with disabilities
- Allocating specific dates for carrying out special registration drives for persons with disabilities.

Multiple disabilities form amongst persons under clauses (a) to (d) including deaf-blindness etc.:

- Lack of accessible transport to the persons with disabilities is a barrier in attending public meetings, voter education activities, voter registration and in voting. Sufficient training to election staff is also a barrier discouraging the PwDs from participation in electoral process. Lack of access to information like the timing of public meeting and voter registration camp, etc.,



also act as barriers to participation. For PwDs with visual impairments, absence of alternative voting devices or accessible voting methods is significant barriers. In some Polling Stations, rooms are small to accommodate persons using wheel chairs and placement of EVMs on high tables is common barriers to physical access.

JHARKHAND

- Lack of assured minimum facilities at P.S. Level. Ramps are available at polling stations but in most of the cases these are not constructed as per standardised specification.
- No separate queue for disabled persons
- Lack of awareness
- The problem of reaching polling stations.
- Height of the compartment table is not up to the mark to be efficiently used by special type of disabled persons such as person with locomotors disability and dwarf person.
- Insufficient light in voting compartment area, especially for persons having low vision.
- Lack of space for free movement of wheelchairs inside the polling station. (Specific one for blind and locomotors disabled persons)

- Absence of proper signage and other relevant material for facilitation (especially for deaf and dumb persons)
- No proper signage facilities for deaf and dumb electors
- No audio facility is available in the EVM, particularly for blind and low vision persons

KARNATAKA

- Inconvenience of orthopedically challenged persons in registration/ enrolment of PwDs voters
- Lack of awareness among the PwDs
- Inadequate infrastructure, Temporary buildings, Buildings under construction, Paucity of space
- Door to door survey to identify orthopedically challenged persons polling station wise.
- Providing sturdy ramps at all polling stations.
- All polling stations should be on ground floor.
- Providing suitable road, culverts etc.
- More than 30,000 wheel chairs have been arranged in polling locations for orthopedically challenged persons.
- Magnifying glasses were made available to all who need at every polling station.

KERALA

- The most important barrier pointed out by the representatives of disabled organisations which prevent the PwDs for reaching the polling station is lack of transportation. The practice now seen is that representatives of some political parties provide vehicles to the disabled for casting their votes and after that leave them in the polling station itself.

MADHYA PRADESH

- Lack of proper facilities for persons with disabilities (PwDs) at Matadata Sahayata Kendras (MSKs), Common Service Centres (CSCs) and Polling Stations.
- Lack of information regarding registration and voting process among persons with disabilities.
- Lack of awareness regarding the need to vote among persons with disabilities.
- Difficulty in reaching polling stations and space for free movement of wheel chair inside the polling station. (specially for Blind and Locomotors disabled persons)
- Lack of proper signage and relevant material for facilitation. (specially for Deaf and Dumb persons)
- Lack of adequate knowledge amongst the election personnel and the polling staff regarding the special needs of PwDs
- Electoral registration officers shall ensure that they attend the 'Disability Equality Trainings' provided by their appointing council and use their own judgments while tackling matters related to access to Polling Stations. With the diversity of local authorities and the different types of access barriers encountered, it is difficult to provide a one-size-fits-all guidance. So the authorities should use their discretion while dealing with such cases.
- The biggest challenge faced in removal of barriers for PwDs is sensitisation of both the election machinery and the field staff towards the problems faced by PwDs.
- Collection of preliminary data about PwDs and identification of the different types of disabilities
- The wide spread illiteracy, poverty and gender inequality is also a major stumbling block.
- The preliminary data has been collected

with the help of Census, Social Justice & Empowerment Department, Women and Child Welfare Department and Samagra Yojana.

- The link for data sharing has been obtained from the concerned departments.
- Polling Station wise list of 18+ persons with disabilities is being prepared from the data collected from the above mentioned departments at DEO/ERO/BLO Level.
- A separate polling station wise list of PwDs indicating the type of disability shall be prepared from the voter list.
- A detailed exercise carried out to check the names of PwDs in the Electoral Roll. For this, door to door survey during which verification of PwDs shall be carried out and relevant entries shall be made in the BLO registers.
- On the basis of survey, marking in electoral roll database can be made.
- On the basis of the above mentioned analysis done, plan for special SVEEP activities for enrolment of PwDs would be chalked out.
- A continuous updation process would be devised for the inclusion of eligible unregistered PwDs.
- Adequate instructions to facilitate filling-up of forms 6, 7, 8 and 8A would be provided at help centers.
- Electoral Machinery would be sensitized to address the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Persons with disabilities among the existing staff (DEOs/ EROs / AEROs/BLOs/Polling Personnel etc.) can be included in electoral/ election machinery after taking their consent to motivate other persons with disabilities.
- Meetings to be organized with concerned departments and all associations of PwDs at State and District levels.

- Special trainings planned can be conducted for the Electoral /Election Machinery.
- The handbooks of Returning and Presiding Officers and all other training materials etc. suitably revised and modified to address needs of PwDs.
- Training videos displaying all important instructions for persons with disabilities being prepared.
- Special Training Campus for Police Officers/ Home Guards to assist people with special needs outside polling stations is also being planned.

MAHARASHTRA

- Social Non-Acceptance - Persons with Disabilities suffer from social non-acceptance
- Lack of awareness - Ignorance of electoral process is one of the reasons for non-participation of PwDs
- Need of sensitisation - Sensitisation of the officials of the electoral machinery regarding the special needs of PwD voters
- Accessibilities - Polling stations can be made accessible to the disabled voters
- Identification - Every PwD do not mention their disability, as it is optional to mention, in their Form 6. Therefore, it is difficult to identify PwDs
- Lack of communication between election machinery and PwDs
- Lack of sensitisation of the society as well as election machinery
- Persons with Disabilities unwilling can be identified as PwDs in their official documents
- Due to different types of disabilities, different types of facilities and communication required.
- Poverty and lack of literacy
- Lack of accessible friendly infrastructure

MIZORAM

- Blindness and low vision: Lack of motivation and enthusiasm in coming out and vote.
- Locomotors disability - Due to the hilly terrain of the state, even those having wheel chairs face difficulty as the roads to the Polling Stations are often inclined, making it difficult even with the assistance of one other person to reach the Polling Station. In addition, a few instances of existence of Polling stations which have flight of stairs leading to the entrance of the PS building from the nearby road/pathway were cited. In such cases, the provision of ramp did not prove useful as voters have to walk up a flight of stair before reaching the ramp.
- Sensitisation of polling officials on their duty regarding facilitation of PwD voters
- Enthusiasm of blind voters to go out and vote is reported can be low. In this regard, voice based awareness materials such as radio clips may be prepared by DEO which may be used as a tool to woo blind voters on poll day.
- It is crucial that any negative complex developed by deaf voters be tackled tactfully using videos and other tools, so that they cultivate a true sense of belongingness.
- PwDs with locomotors disability face the problem of mobility, which is worsened by the hilly terrain in Mizoram. In some cases, they use vehicles of friends and close ones to reach polling station. However, only a few have this facility and most of them rely on volunteers of NGOs on poll day.
- Reaching out to volunteers formally and providing incentives can lead better results.
- Finding an alternative polling station to avoid approach stairs from the nearby road/

pathway may be difficult. However DEOs can be asked to make such exercise for finding alternative location if possible.

NAGALAND

There is neither religious dogma nor social stigmas exist against PwDs for their electoral participation. However, a series of SVEEP campaigns are required to create awareness / motivation for getting their names registered and for facilitating the exercise of their franchises.

ODISHA

- Disappointment in waiting in queue
- Lack of interest on the part of the family members / relatives / neighbours for accompanying him /her to cast votes;
- Unsympathetic attitude of the public;
- Movement from their residence to Polling stations and back;
- At the time of exercising franchise, the chance of voting option is manipulated by the companion / attendant;
- Unfriendly and impolite behaviours of the public

PUDUCHERRY

- Blindness & low vision - Though ballot papers in braille are placed in each polling station, due to poor braille literate electors, this facility is not utilized.
- Locomotors disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured dwarfism, acid attack victims & muscular dystrophy - No specific barriers have been identified. All the polling stations in the UT of Puducherry are located on the ground floor and are equipped with ramp facility.

PUNJAB

- Physical barrier is identified during enrolment of PwDs in electoral roll. Some voters failed to register themselves during special camps organised during Summary Revision of Electoral Roll. As per data collected, 1499 PwDs out of 4625 are left out for enrolment. These all to be covered to the possible extend, during continuous updation of Electoral Roll. All the Electoral Registration Officers has already been instructed for enrolment of all left out PwDs during house to house visit by BLOs.

RAJASTHAN

- Not all VI persons know braille; many who know braille are comfortable in regional language braille and not english braille
- Proper maintenance of braille Ballot Papers is not done currently in all polling booths
- Websites are inaccessible and content is not readable, non-availability of text to speech software. Other documents, circulars, notices issued by the election department are similarly inaccessible
- Inadequate lighting / illumination at the polling booth
- No grievance redress mechanism for visually impaired persons related to voting and electoral processes
- Lack of awareness about registration
- All polling booths do not confine to the accessibility norms including dimensions and specification of the ramps and braille signage's.
- Lack of tactile path / indicators and hand rails.
- Lack of adequate transportation interferes with a person's ability to be independent
- Lack of dedicated information in manifestos
- Lack of sign language training for polling officers
- Lack of walk through video- covering all steps from home to polling booth
- Multiple challenges in 1 person make it very difficult to go and vote
- Lack of awareness among the election machinery as well as the community in the independent voting ability of persons with multi-sensory impairment and those reasonable accommodations are required for the same.
- Not recognizing Tactile Sign language in elections as a means of communication
- Lack of Awareness campaigns on special days like World Disability day.
- Lack of voting rights and facilities for people with multi-sensory disabilities
- Booth Level Officers overloaded with work making it difficult to cater to PwDs
- Lack of Mapping done on the basis of all new disabilities
- Psycho social disabilities are invisible and need to be captured
- Family members are not aware that their adult children with disability can vote and don't consider importance of their voting rights. Officials in Election Machinery not sensitised either
- Polling process is not known in advance by families and people with intellectual disabilities because there is no system available to make them aware before voting
- Section 49D Conduct of Election Rule should be modified and amended (a person accompanying a blind or infirm elector who cannot move without help), as per 2016 RPwD Act
- Lack of first aid facility at polling booth
- Unavailability of Escorts, Good ramps for severe disabled (persons with high support needs)
- Transportation is not available to reach polling booth (for people with high support)

UTTAR PRADESH

- Hindrances in communication strategies
- Gender based challenges are another issue. Disabled women's political participation is hindered by a variety of institutional, social and cultural barriers.
- Inaccessibility to polling stations, vulnerability to physical and sexual violence and lack of independence often impede the electoral participation of these women.

UTTARAKHAND

- Accessible approach road to polling booths.
- Physically disabled persons are not able to make independent utilization of public transport for self.
- Reserved parking area for wheel chairs at PS.
- Lack of smooth movement of Wheel chair or other mobility devices inside of PS due to rough, cracked Surfaces/floor & corses, sand stone, bajari bound inner path/lawn.
- Lack of standard size ramp.
- Height of table & cables creates difficulty to approach EVM.
- Lack of Seating facility, accessible toilet & Drinking water facility for PwD as well as their companion.
- PwDs hesitate to mix with other society or election related programme/public affairs/ meeting.
- Lack of self-motivation due to physical unfitness.
- PwDs with Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD) may not adjust well to strangers /election personnel, trying to help them vote and this may result in them not voting
- Lack of information regarding voter registration and voting process in accessible formats.
- A person with ASD & intellectual disability often does not know how to vote or are

unaware of the nature and significance of voting.

- Lack of awareness regarding the need to vote among persons with disabilities.
- Lack of Knowledge of braille language to visually impaired persons.
- Public broadcast of political campaigning and election awareness are not offered with closed captioning or live sign language interpretation.
- No clear guide lines for 21 disability wise facilitation of PwDs as per Right of PwD Act-2016.
- Lack of Budget/Funds/ required resources for proper facilitation of PwDs voters.
- Political parties rarely address the needs of person with disabilities at their political campaign and in party manifestos, when they do, the disability community are treated as beneficiaries of care as opposed to active participants of society.
- Removal of gap occurred between projected population of eligible PwD voters & no. of identified PwD voters by BLO.
- Resource person for data collection drive from different sources for PwD Voter identification.
- Lack of expected coordination between Stakeholders, Departments and Election Machinery.
- Non availability of diverse facilities to meet diverse needs,



WEST BENGAL

- Due to various circumstantial problems and infrastructural barriers, PwDs with visual impairment and low vision are often unable to take part spontaneously in the electoral process.
- Lack of awareness among the common people in the interiors of distant districts like Darjelling, Coochbihar, Jalpaiguri, Purulia regarding enrolment.
- The fear of social stigma or prejudice is common among the people when it comes to the choice of casting votes by the PwDs (V.I and L.V electors). It may be due to negligence or sense of over burden of the head of the family to include the Visually Impaired in the electoral process.
- The problem of accessibility by Visually Impaired and Low Vision electors in terms of structural or environmental barrier,

barrier in transportation or mobility and lack of communicating information regarding polls.

- Family may hide the disability of the person and Families may not be aware that this group also has voting right
- Lack of awareness & acceptability in the immediate Community
- Lack of awareness & training of Booth level Officers
- Lack of sensitivity/empathy among the officers at the Polling Station
- Lack of exposure of PwDs to voting procedure
- Feeling of alienation as campaigning by persons as well as campaigning with materials is mostly without PwDs. So, identification is hardly developed.

Session-wise Recommendations

ACCESSIBLE REGISTRATION PROCESS INCLUDING USE OF IT

ANDHRA PRADESH

- Standards for accessibility should be adopted in all domains.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

- Provision for transportation or visit by concerned ERO/AER to the home of PwDs can help for enrolment and encourage of such voters.
- Necessary IT application can be developed to provide better facility for PwDs.

ASSAM

- NGOs should be engaged for enrolment of PwDs electors through NVSP portal. Special camps should be organised to enrol the left out PwD electors.

CHHATTISGARH

- To facilitate and making linking easier, EPICs of PwDs should be incorporated in the data base of all the concerned departments.
- Facility of SMS may be provided to give alerts to the PwDs on poll day.
- Website of CEOs and DEOs should be made user friendly and easily accessible for PwDs.
- Voter slips should be provided in braille script to the PwDs (Blind).

DELHI

- Mobile App/Web based module designed and developed by CEO Delhi's Office can be used extensively for better coordination,

reaching out to differently abled voters and creating a database of such persons.

HARYANA

- The CEO's website has been upgraded in the year 2012 as per the directions of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Govt. of India under the directive of United Nations Convention of the rights of persons with disabilities for implementation of international web content accessibility guidelines.

JHARKHAND

- Extended support and help should be provided to PwDs and all required materials to be made easily accessible to them.
- Two special campaign should be organized during SSR especially for PwDs registration at various levels. On the Campaign day PwDs or their family members should come with all necessary documents for registration.
- Facility of SMS should be provided to give alerts to the PwDs on poll day.
- Website of CEOs and DEOs to be made user friendly to a greater extents and be made easily accessible for PwDs.
- State and District advisor committee to be set up.
- Matdata Sahayata Kendra (MSK) may be setup at DEOs, EROs and AEROs offices to provide enrolment facilitation to PwDs.
- Special dates should be specified during revision period for making enrolment easily accessible for PwDs by home visit of BLO.

MADHYA PRADESH

- EPIC number of persons with disabilities should be incorporated in the database of different departments so that linking can be made easier.
- Identified polling stations to have facility of online booking of wheel chairs.
- Websites of the CEO and DEOs should be made user friendly and readily accessible for persons with disabilities.
- Online registration facility for persons with disabilities should be made easier and user friendly.
- Voter Slips & Voter ID cards (EPIC) should be prepared in braille for visually impaired voters.

MIZORAM

- A reliable database of PwDs Polling station wise may be shared with BLOs, who can in turn ensure that all get registered in the electoral roll. In this regard, Social Welfare Department's assistance may be sought.

PUDUCHERRY

- Apolitical representatives of PwDs association should be roped in to identify left out PwD electors and they may also be permitted to collect applications from these categories in bulk and submit it to the concerned EROs for inclusion subject to verification.
- Separate Special camps may also be conducted exclusively for enrolment of PwDs.

ACCESSIBLE POLLING STATION INCLUDING EVM/VVPAT & OTHER FACILITATION MEASURES

ANDHRA PRADESH

- A toll free help line should be developed to assist voters with disabilities.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

- During election, volunteers from NCC or scout and guide should be arranged in the polling stations where PwDs are available.

ASSAM

- Wheel chair should be provided in all PS with the help of Social Welfare Department. Temporary waiting shed should be erected for PwD electors with seating and drinking water facilities in all Polling Stations.

CHHATTISGARH

- In the polling location area where the PwDs reside in abundance, a separate polling station may be considered exclusively for them.
- AMF should be essentially secured at all P.S level.
- Special arrangements with the help of the volunteers of NSS and scout guides should be made to escort the PwDs directly inside the polling room.
- PwDs will not be asked to stand in long queues, instead should be directly allowed to vote.
- Doors of polling stations should be suitably modified to enable the wheelchair carrying the PwDs elector to enter into polling station.
- Pathway to polling rooms should be equipped with signage indicators

- Adequate space around the voting compartment should be ensured for unhindered movement of wheelchairs.
- The popular and famous PwDs personalities should be appointed as state and district icons.
- The social organizations with exclusive non-political identity should be encouraged to provide transportation facilities to the needy PwDs at poll day.
- Proper approach roads to polling stations should be insured by local authorities/ respective department.

DELHI

- Volunteers / Assistance should be made available near the gate / parking area for escorting PwDs to the polling stations for casting their votes. Wheel chairs should also be made available at each Polling location.
- Infrastructure needs should be improved at the polling stations in order to make the entire election process all inclusive and accessible to all including PwDs.
- Priority may be given to the PwDs during casting their votes and a dedicated waiting area along with chairs may be arranged.
- Police personnel on polling duty should be sensitized and trained about the special needs and requirements of the PwDs.

HARYANA

- There are 17,046 Polling Stations in the State. Assured Minimum Facilities are available at each and every Polling Station. Ramps are also intact at all the Polling Stations. Wheel Chairs will also be made available at the time of poll.

JHARKHAND

- Polling Station to be made accessible and should be acquainted with all Assured Minimum Facilities. Apart from that sitting facilities should be made available at polling station during poll as PwDs may not be able to stand in queue full long duration. In view of extended facility, PwDs contribution towards electoral process might increase significantly.
- Standardized and uniform design of ramps shall be implemented. Committee suggested that ramp should be ratio of 1:12
- Voting compartment table to be made accessible. It should be kept on standard height.
- Proper Lighting facilities to be ensured near voting compartment area.
- In places/areas/institutions where PwDs reside in large numbers, setting up of special polling station may be considered after proper survey.
- AMF to be essentially secured at all P.S. level.
- Special arrangements with the help of the volunteers of NSS and scout guides should be made to escort the PwDs directly inside the polling room.
- PwDs will not be asked to stand in long queues, instead will be directly allowed to vote.
- Doors of polling stations should be suitable modified to enable the wheelchair carrying the PwDs elector to enter into polling station.
- Pathway to polling rooms will be equipped with signage indicators
- Adequate space around the voting compartment should be ensured for unhindered movement of wheelchairs.
- The social organizations with exclusive non political identity should be encouraged

- to provide transportation facilities to the needy PwDs at poll day.
- Proper approach roads to polling stations should be insured by local authorities/ respective department.
- Information through audio/video should be ensured in specific polling station for PwDs.
- Committee Suggested for the implementation of JAW software in EVM's.

MADHYA PRADESH

- Special polling stations should be setup for persons with disabilities in places where they reside in large numbers like Blind Schools/Institutions etc
- Voting process should be made more convenient by creating uniformly designed ramps at polling stations.
- Priority entry passes should be issued to persons with disabilities.
- Proper approach roads to Polling Stations should be ensured by local authorities/ respective departments.
- It should be ensured that polling stations are situated on the ground floor, if not, lift facility/extension of ramp to each floor should be provided.
- Temporary/Mobile ramps should be made available wherever permanent ramp facility cannot be provided.

- Access to ramps should be made smooth in places of sandy and slushy pathways.
- Ramps should be built in such a manner that it directly leads to the door of polling stations to avoid navigating through corridors.
- Facility for separate entry should be made available for persons with disabilities wherever possible.
- Pathway to polling rooms shall have indicators with standard signage.
- Doors of polling stations should be suitably modified to have wide entrance
- Adequate space around the voting compartment should be ensured for unhindered movement of wheel chairs
- Provision should be made for wheel chairs at identified polling stations.

MIZORAM

- Location of Polling stations should be accessible. However, this may be a challenge especially in urban areas where building density is very high. Formal reach out to NGOs to provide volunteers should be useful.

PUDUCHERRY

- All Polling Stations are PwD friendly.

VOTER EDUCATION AND LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS

ANDHRA PRADESH

- Communication should be available in multiple formats and other different media such as print, television and websites to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access information.
- Involvement of NSS, NYK and PwDs' organizations is a key.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

- All DEO's should be directed to organize awareness campaign in the Polling Stations where PwDs voters exist.

ASSAM

- Member of ELC, BLOs and NGOs should be engaged for awareness of PwD electors and their families.
- Awareness videos should be produced and which can be telecasted through electronic media.

CHHATTISGARH

- To impress upon the PwD electors, the trained and qualified instructors in sign language and Braille script should be employed.
- A brochure detailing the general election process and the use of forms 6, 7 and 8 should be prepared in Braille script should be distributed amongst PwDs.
- An effort should be made to explain election process in sign language too.

DELHI

- School and college students can be very useful in reaching out to PwDs in their neighbourhood and ensuring their registration as voters and sensitizing them

about the importance of casting of votes and the facilities available to them.

HARYANA

- Numeric sticker in braille should be pasted on BUs for facilitation of the blind and low vision elector.
- Wheel Chair should be given to the locomotors disability person on the poll day. During election ballot paper should be given to the blind and low vision

JHARKHAND

- Proper awareness about the electoral process should be imparted persons with disabilities and their family members
- Spreading awareness among PwDs via different means of communications, e.g TV, Radio, News Paper, Prabhat-Pheri and other various means about the electoral process and voter registration.
- To impart proper education especially among the PwDs and their family members through electoral literacy club and Chunav Pathshala.
- Awareness programme should be organized at Gram Panchayat/Ward level especially focusing on PwDs and encouraging them to exercise their voting rights.
- To facilitate the PwD electors, the trained and qualified instructors in sign language should be deployed.
- An effort should be made to explain election process in sign language too.
- Special camps organized by DEO-cum-DC, Ranchi for enrolment and sensitisation of PwDs.
- Special and exclusive polling station was established to facilitate disabled and old age persons for casting their vote easily.

MADHYA PRADESH

- Qualified instructors in Sign language and braille script in regional languages should be appointed for training purposes.
- Basic information regarding election process should be prepared in braille script and displayed (in Hindi, English or Regional language in use)
- Instructions for all electoral activities should be made available in sign language for deaf & dumb and in braille for visually impaired voters in Hindi

MIZORAM

- Engaging and informative video clips should be prepared for electoral awareness in this regard.
- Concise voter awareness materials should also be prepared in braille. These materials may include all the assistance that PwDs are entitled to.

PUDUCHERRY

- Special voter awareness education programmes should be initiated exclusively for PwDs, their families as part of SVEEP initiatives.

Strategies for Enhancing participation of PwDs

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

- Training should be organized for the BLOs of the concerned polling stations to handle the situation during enrolment of PwD voters and during elections.

ASSAM

- It is proposed to train the poll personnel to take special care for the PwD electors. It is also proposed to create one help desk in all DEOs office for the PwDs electors.

ANDHRA PRADESH

- Sensitisation programme for presiding officers, sector magistrates and staff at voter registration centres and polling

booths to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

BIHAR

- A standardized performa for identifying PwDs and keeping the information should be developed. Collaboration with departments like SECC (Social Economic and Caste Census), Social Justice and Empowerment should be initiated in mapping PwDs.
- Special requirements of PwDs should be documented polling station wise for more efficient and proper arrangement of facilities.

CHHATTISGARH

- A separate nodal officer to look after the requirements of PwDs should be appointed in each constituency.
- In the partnership and collaboration with other government and non-government agencies like census and social justice empowerment department, a detail program of activities like collection of data

and reassuring the basic facilities at polling stations for PwDs should be carved out.

- Election machinery should be enabled by capacity building to create awareness among the PwDs.

DADRA NAGAR HAVELI

- PwDs should be involved in the process of elections by establishing a Polling Station where all the staffs are PwDs.
- Hands on training to be organized so that PwDs become conversant with the procedure to be adopted at the polling station. The companion to be allowed up to voting compartment.
- Signages for all categories of PwDs should be arranged at the Polling station.
- Volunteers should be arranged from the organizations working for the welfare of PwDs as these organizations are conversant with the requirement of PwDs.

DELHI

- Training is provided to all the volunteers and staff involved in election to help the PwDs during Elections. In the State Level Consultation, CEO, Delhi has requested AADI for drafting a policy paper covering all aspects relating to differently abled voters for National Level Consultation.
- Services of Nehru Yuva Kendra, ASHA workers and NGOs like Saint John's Ambulance etc. may be utilized on voluntary basis considering their experience in handling the differently able citizens.

GOA

- Ramps should be maintained as per the prescribed norms.
- The temporary ramps should also be provided with support so that walking on

the ramps becomes comfortable.

- The Companion to be allowed up to voting compartment.
- Enrolment of all the categories of PwDs should be undertaken classifying clearly the type of disabilities, to provide the required assistance at the time of voting.
- Different queue for Persons with Locomotors disability including cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, and autism, blind and low vision.
- Arrangement of wheel chairs should be arranged for voters with Locomotors disability.

GUJARAT

- Female volunteers for female voters at Polling Stations
- Ramps as per the specification, Ramp height and length should be 1:18
- Category of Disability or specific symbol of disability should be included in Electoral Roll as well as in EPIC so that polling personnel can behave with them accordingly.
- To prepare Polling Station wise list of PwDs and to ensure their voting by BLO or Supervisors or volunteers.
- Accessible washroom facilities to be provided at the Polling Station
- Sensitisation of the Booth Level Officer and other Polling Officer in handling queries from the PwDs
- Vote at Home option should be considered for PwDs, Postal Ballot facility can be provided to voters having more than 70% disability.
- Since not many visually impaired people know braille, it can be in Audio-Form
- Introducing Special Polling Station for the PwDs in the areas where higher ratio of PwDs are identified

- EVM must have an audio output for the visually impaired.
- Health department has a list of PwD which can be procured and be cross verified with Voters by the BLO through Door to Door visit and a new list of Voters can be prepared.
- Separate budget allocation for the mass media communication for the PwDs, pictorial posters & signage for PwD Voters with hearing impairment should be introduced at every place at polling station.
- The BLO and the other staff of the Election Officials should be trained on some basic signs of sign language
- There was an instance of deputing the nursing students at the polling stations to assist PwD. Similarly people with empathy and sensitivity towards PwDs should be deputed at maximum number of polling stations to assist PwDs.
- Tableaus for awareness in rural areas should be prepared
- Video calling on WhatsApp facility for the Deaf and Dumb with sign language messages
- Celebrities should be approached to celebrate awareness
- Facility for change of name on EPIC should be arranged at home for PwDs
- Accessible Washrooms for PwDs
- EVM - VVPAT demonstrations for PwDs, Large printer, signs and Signages in 'braille', Utilization of 108 ambulance service for the PwDs, when not in use for the visually impaired and partially blind
- Sensitising the ASHA Workers, Angawadi workers and women staff regarding facilitation of the PwD in casting their votes
- Experts working at grassroots for the PwDs and MR should be contacted and their help can be taken to collect suggestions for

understanding PwDs better and making Electoral Education for them possible in regional languages

- Screening of the films on PwDs for voter awareness at the cinema halls at the start of the movie
- Pamphlets indicating all the services and facilities available for PwDs to be provided to the PwD voters during BLO visit to their homes
- Transportation with a low level pedestal to be provided
- A toll free helpline like 1950 should be created for seeking information for the PwDs about their Polling Stations and its facilities.
- Allowing vehicle of PwDs up to the voting room entrance should be an exception and be provided to all PwD Voters.
- More special camps for demonstration of EVM to be carried out with PwDs

HARYANA

- Training to the BLOs and polling party should be imparted at appropriate time. Different CSOs, RWAs, Red Cross Societies, Department of Health etc. should be involved for spreading the awareness.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

- Motivational/Inspiring videos of prominent PwDs should be produced and telecasted widely.
- WhatsApp group of PwDs should be created and all inspirational/motivational audios/videos to be shared among them.
- District SVEEP Nodal Officers should be drawn from District Welfare Officers/Tehsil Welfare Officers.
- Chief Medical Officers should be associated as a team member of District SVEEP team.
- Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan should be associated

for the purpose wherein a disability wing should be created for informing/motivating PwDs on electoral process.

- Special cells of PwDs should be created in all Sr. Sec. Schools/Colleges/Universities and the most proactive member out of the PwDs be appointed as Campus Ambassador.
- Transportation facilities should be provided to the PwDs on the day of Poll at their doorstep.
- Volunteers should be provided at all polling stations to assist PwDs. Such volunteers should be pre-sensitized on all major issues related to PwDs.
- Polling stations should be made barrier-free, wherein PwD voters could cast their vote without even waiting for a while.
- Teachers working in special schools should be associated on the day of poll to assist PwDs on the help desk setup outside every polling station.

JHARKHAND

- A separate nodal officer to look after the requirements of PwDs should be appointed in each District. District welfare Officers can be nominated as on Nodal Officer and with the Assistance of NGO's, CSO's, and various other organization can contribute significantly in identifying barriers, voter registration and exercising their voting rights.
- Engagement and collaboration with other government, non-government agencies and NGO's, CSO's should be made and a detail strategy should be carved out.
- Election machinery to be enabled by capacity building and training to create awareness among the PwDs.
- Proper Training of Registration officers, Presiding Officers, Polling Officers,

Supervisor, BLOs and other Officers, on how they should be acquainted with to facilitate PwDs in a certain specific manner that they required.

- State/District/Assembly and local level Icons should be nominated among PwDs.
- Disabilities Commissioner should be nominated as Nodal Officer
- Training of NYK, NSS by the CSOs working in this sector.

KARNATAKA

- Sensitisation programs for the Booth Level Officers and other personnel should be conducted
- Print, electronic and folk media should be adopted to spread awareness among the PwDs.
- Relevant tools and techniques should be made available such as braille magnified glass scripts, letters, brochures for Visually Impaired, wheel chair for orthopedically challenged.
- Transmission of the awareness messages via radio programs run by PwDs
- Android App with facility to book wheel chair or request other assistances should be developed.

KERALA

- The District Election Officers should conduct a polling station wise survey with the help of Social Justice Department,
- National Services Scheme and Booth Level Officers to identify eligible PwDs who are not listed in the electoral roll and to conduct special camps for their enrolment and sensitisation as part of SVEEP activity.
- District Election Officers should provide transportation facilities to them with the help of Motor Vehicles Department & Social Justice Department. Volunteers

from National Service Scheme/Nehru Yuva Kendras can assist.

- Some activities should be conducted in Electoral Literacy Clubs for the PwDs and sensitisation of others in the polling stations

LAKSHADWEEP

- Special Camps in coordination with NGOs should be started for enrolment and sensitisation of PwDs during the on-going Special Summery Revision.
- The Director, Social Welfare and Tribal Affairs should be designated as State Coordinator for inclusion of PwDs in electoral process
- Directions should be issued to colleges for identifying PwDs as Campus Ambassadors.
- Necessary directions should also be issued for non-political & non-partisan NGOs and CSO working for PwDs for facilitating the electoral participation of PwDs

MADHYA PRADESH

- A separate Nodal Officer to deal with issues related to PwDs should be appointed in each constituency.
- Cooperation should be sought from Census and Social Justice & Empowerment Department to identify eligible persons who could be helpful in system sensitisation. An official from Social Justice & Empowerment Department should be appointed on deputation to coordinate all activities like collection of data, coordination with nodal officers of assembly constituencies etc.
- Election machinery should be given training to create awareness and sensitize them towards the special needs of PwDs.

MAHARASHTRA

- Vehicles of PwDs should be allowed to enter till the doorstep of the polling stations to cast their vote by relaxing 200 meters restriction.
- In case of voter identity cards, when filling Form 6, there is an option to state whether the applicant is a Person with Disability.
- Through ELCs, school and college going children should be sensitized about PwDs and their rights.
- Polling booths should be setup at ground level to facilitate ease of movement.
- Politically neutral NGOs should be appointed to ensure enrolment of PwDs in electoral roll.
- NGOs working as volunteers for PwDs should be allowed to vote through postal ballot.
- The information about enrolment & voting should be included in the special news given on Doordarshan, Local radio for PwDs.
- NCC & NSS members should be appointed as volunteers for PwDs during poll period for helping PwDs to reach polling stations and any other help if required.
- Voice SMS system and WhatsApp can be used to send important messages about elections.
- Seating arrangements should be made available for PwDs outside polling stations.
- Wheelchairs should be provided to PwD voters at the time of voting.
- Proxy voting for legal guardian(s) of mentally sound but physically unfit voters such as bedridden PwDs should be made available.
- PwDs should be allowed to use their foot for voting on EVMs if needed.
- Information regarding PwDs to be shared by the NGOs with CEO office.

- It is proposed to conduct training exercises for BLOs by the NCC, NSS who educate PwDs.

MIZORAM

- Polling party should be properly trained so that they extend all facilities to PwDs as per rules.
- Partnerships shall also be made with NGOs in the field of PwDs for better planning and coordination

NAGALAND

- Polling station-wise PwD census should be conducted by BLOs visiting house to house both in the Pre-Revision and Revision periods with the help of officials of Social Welfare department and CSOs who work for the cause of PwDs. Thereafter, special camp for enrolment can be organized.
- The SVEEP campaign materials in the form of pamphlets and brochures etc. should be printed in braille and developed in other accessible format.
- The election machineries should be thoroughly sensitised to understand the special needs of the PwDs for registration and turnout on day of poll.
- A Nodal Officer from the Social Welfare department should be deployed at constituency level for the PwDs related campaign for registration, turnout and sensitisation purposes.
- PwD Icons should be appointed at the district and state level.
- The services of organizations like Churches, NCC, NSS, NYKS should be engaged for outreach programmes
- Sufficient budget should be kept aside for above campaign activities.

PUDUCHERRY

- Audio visual facility should be made in the EVMs so that visually impaired person can verify and cast their vote through audio headless in addition to braille ballot papers.
- Mentally challenged persons to be permitted to vote with the help of a guardian.
- Statistics about the number of person with disability should be strengthened by adopting scientific approaches and information technology tool.
- Promotional videos and advertisement produced by Commission need to include closed captions (CC).
- Training to assist PwDs at polling station should be included as a part of training to the Polling and Police Personnel and Designated Officers at polling stations

PUNJAB

- Ramps should be provided at each and every polling station of the district.
- BLO should be directed to get register PwD's from their house to provide facilitation.
- On the day of poll special arrangements should be done for transportation of PwDs voters.
- Youth Volunteers should be roped in for facilitation of PwD Voters for enrolment as well as voting.
- Proper accessibility to polling station should be ensured.
- More SVEEP activities should be conducted for enrolment of PwD Voters
- Man to man marking of PwDs with volunteers of NYKS, NSS, NCC, NGOs should be done.
- Special rallies should be organized to encourage PwDs to participate in electoral process.

- District Education Officer (Sec) has been directed to fill up the Form No. 6 of eligible PwD and send these forms to concerned EROs for verification and registration purpose
- PwD student should be appointed as Campus Ambassadors.

RAJASTHAN

Visual Impaired

Actions Points: 2019 General Election

- Setting up special polling booths in special institutions and homes
- Providing option of Postal Ballots to PwDs
- Creating facility for online voting
- An option of verification of vote should be added in EVM using IVRS
- Disabled candidates to contest elections in 2019
- 3% reservation in contesting all level of elections
- 3% of seats in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha to be reserved for disabled people
- Cross platform accessible mobile app for providing election related information
- All party manifestos to be in accessible formats such as braille, audio format and should be uploaded on their websites, which need to be made accessible for persons with print disabilities

Long Term Action Plan

- EVM should have toggle keys
Deaf blind voters should get interpreters of their choice
- Tactile braille system should be made available for all deaf blind voters
- Adequate illumination at polling stations for low vision voters
- Proactive use of FMs and other radio stations for election IEC

- Announcing list of candidates with serial numbers ballot papers through FM and Other Radio Channels
- Audio announcements of ballot sheets to be available at polling booths as well as CEO/DEO's accessible websites.
- Braille ballot sheets to be made available in regional language apart from English
- Robust IVRS based grievance redressal system
- Using geo fencing technology for enrolment of left out/new visually impaired/disabled voters
- Specific IVR system (Helpline) to be developed for all information to be communicated to the population, which will be used for identifying candidate's information, location and accessibility of polling booths etc. This has to be created by all mobile network service providers under the direction of the government.
- Adequate modification in the VV (voter verified) pad machines for ensuring the suitability of VV pad for visually impaired voters. This is to ensure the confirmation of the pressed button against the candidate
- All websites related to elections and political parties should be made accessible ensuring accessibility of design and content including social media. As currently the documents uploaded are not accessible to assistive technology used by visually impaired persons.
- Tactile indicators and railings along the pathway
- Magnifiers for people with low vision to read the registers/ballot sheets
- Polling officers to allow adequate time for voters with disabilities to cast their vote without hurrying them
- Free transport through all available public transport system on voting day

- 108 should be available with wheel chair
- Escort to be of one's own choice should be allowed for visually impaired persons
- Election official should be sensitised through visits of special institutions
- A popular celebrity Brand Ambassador should be engaged in all campaigns, awareness drives and encouraging population to ensure disabled citizens to vote and ensure accessible voting
- Sensitisation of Political Parties and their media cells regarding the voting of PwD citizens
- Walk in Voting should be made mandatory in all voting booths for disabled citizens
- Grievance redressal mechanism to be made accessible for persons with all categories

Hearing Impaired

Action Points: 2019 General Election

- Standardised signage for all polling booths
- Training for polling staff
- Door to Door Survey to identify PwD
- Films on Mock Poll for PwD voters
- Tag/Voting Slip to PwD voters
- Toll free call centre (with video call access)
- All information including media announcements and interviews of Election officials to be telecasted in sign language
- All SVEEP activities to include sign language versions /human interface
- All manifestos / campaigns of political parties to have sign language version / human interface
- There are 4 people working in polling booth- need to have 4 posters outside polling booth stating what each person is doing- will help HI people
- Involve HI associations- strong federations should be involved in the pre-election period for enabling them to vote

Long Term Plan

- Early initiation and sensitisation for election
- Hassle free and facilitated inclusion of name in the voter's list
- Right kind of communication that tells PwDs the date of voting and place of voting
- Signage and trained human interface (sign language interpreter) that helps deaf voter to cast his vote. Induction loop to be made available in polling booths based on the requirement of the mapped voters
- Customised training to all election related employees
- Documented AV film that would be made available to all employees having smart phones covering all categories of disability
- Walk through videos for voting
- Use of Social Media and all other communication platforms available for dissemination of information like cinema screen etc
- Use of Postal ballots
- Grievance redressal mechanism to facilitate deaf persons by sign language video call facility at control room, etc

Multi Sensory Impairment

Action Points: 2019 General Election

- Tamil Nadu (Disability Rights Alliance India) App- checklist (for accessibility of polling booth) can be replicated.
- Organise voting in institutions
- Depiction of PwDs in all campaigns around voting
- Tactile path to be made in polling booths similar to the ones used in metros
- Train BLOs and depute people from each state who can communicate in sign language in each state for elections in the state

- Provide disability certificate for reasonable accommodation
- Polling officers to allow adequate time for voters with disabilities to cast their vote without hurrying them / making them nervous
- Demonstrations of how the EVMs are to be used should be given to Persons with Disability

Long Term Plan

- Sensitisation of PwD and family members and other stakeholders
- Identification and mapping of disabled voters and linking them with voters list with reasonable accommodation or support he/she requires
- Organize Mobile Voting
- Awareness of all stakeholders, - BLOs, Police, electoral officers
- Increase the number of Master Trainers
- Persons with disabilities with high support needs including blood disorders should be given Postal Ballot options
- Persons with disability should train the master trainers and the BLOs
- Accessibility of the polling booth must be confirmed including that of the cubicle, table size etc and should be standardized
- Election Accessible observer who should be a person with disability must be appointed
- Disability representation should be included in every election material – like hoardings, campaigns, songs, films, TV
- Tactile path and support for deaf blind people
- Family members and friends play an important role in helping us understand elections. So, awareness generation targeting family members
- Making it easier to reach the polling stations

- Disability certificates to be made possible especially for Autism, Intellectual disability and psycho social disability and learning disability, (District Collectors to be proactive to organize medical board).
- Disability icons in every district to create awareness
- Accessibility election officers with checklist to be appointed in every district

Intellectual Disabilities

Action Points: 2019 General Election

- Regular Awareness of community at large about civil and political rights of PwDs
- Polling party vehicle can be used for the transportation of PwDs on election days
- Media awareness: Short movies and jingles in picture halls, television, radio, FM, local channels
- Mock/experiential voting demonstrations to be conducted in the community as well as institutions working with persons with intellectual disabilities
- Information regarding facilities made available and voting process in easy to understand language by print/picture/video/audio to be provided prior to polls as well as made available at polling stations
- Availability of escort in certain situations
- Orientation of officers involved in enrolment as well as polling team along with police officers and polling agents
- Transportation for high support group
- First-Aid should be available at polling booth and polling officer should know the ambulance no. to call in emergency
- Quiet resting/seating area to be made available, to be used if required by voters with high support needs.
- Availability of material in pictorial, print, visual or auditory form to understand the voting process

Long Term Plan

- Amendment in Representation of the People Act
 - Mandate manifestos in accessible format
 - Polling agent should be sensitized
 - Postal Ballot for certain condition where they cannot reach
 - Final aim- every citizen is empowered
 - Next 5-7 years, regular awareness regarding political rights of person with Intellectual Disability through brand ambassadors or through famous personality
 - Disability should be mentioned in Voter ID, if possible. Impairment is not mentioned in voter ID- especially intellectual disability
 - Provide some incentives to escort to encourage support of escorts for PwDs
 - Voter ID Card may mention disability if possible, but if person doesn't have a certificate it should not be a barrier
- Accessibility audit of all polling booths by trained officers and report uploaded in CEO/DEO websites
 - Polling booths in residential institutions
 - Reorganisation of polling booths wrt distribution of PwDs
 - Postal ballot should be incorporated for PwD, senior citizens
 - Training of booth volunteer/police personnel
 - Standardised learning material for election officers to be evolved
 - District level officer/Nodal officer for accessible and inclusive electoral officer to be persons with disabilities
 - Special Gram Sabhas to be conducted on participation of PwDs in electoral process, specifically before elections for PwDs and grass root election machinery.
 - General SVEEP/Awareness programs to be inclusive and in accessible formats including sign language, braille, easy to understand language etc
 - Specific SVEEP measures such as experiential demo, pre-recorded audio messages, films, SMS to be relayed pre-polls
 - Repeated announcements / programs about PwD facilities in elections in Television, Radio, Cinema theatres, Cable network
 - ELCs to be inclusive; and specific measures to reach PwDs to be evolved.
 - CEO/DEO/ROs offices to be accessible
 - Observers checklist to include accessible electoral process to be audited / observed periodically from the time of arrival of observers.

Orthopedically Impaired

Action Points: 2019 General Election

- Facilitation of free transport including one accessible vehicle for a small cluster of booths
 - Budget allocation for accessible facilities like standardised ramps, wheel chairs, transport / awareness programs
 - District innovation fund to be utilised for reasonable accommodations for elections
 - Accessible tables with knee space for voting compartment. Stool for short persons in each polling booth. 1 m extra length cord to be attached
 - Standard Ramps of at least 1:12 gradient with hand rails
 - Clearance of debris / obstacles/ unlevelled surface at polling booths
 - Disabled friendly toilets, drinking water facility and seating arrangements
- ### Long Term Plan
- Data mapping of 21 disabilities and others who require specific support
 - Block/Village level Community Based

Rehabilitation CBR approach for mapping PwDs; CSOs to extend support in intimating facilities required by pwws in their directory.

- Inclusive Electoral literacy in school curriculum with specific focus on reasonable accommodations for different groups including PwDs
- Sensitisation of LLCs and legal guardians; Central/State/District advisory boards
- Mobile polling booths

TELANGANA

- SADEREM (Software for Assessment of Disabled for Access Rehabilitation and Empowerment Society) data should be utilised by the EROs in the identification of PwDs
- Separate column should be in BLO register to list out the PwDs
- Postal ballot facility for person should be considered who aren't able to move
- Only 18+ persons should be allowed as companion with PwDs
- Party name and symbol should be in braille on EVM
- Providing contrast glow light in the EVMs to facilitate low and poor vision person

TRIPURA

- Sensitisation of PwD electors should be initiated through field level workers (BLOs and Asha workers) etc. to participate in the electoral process and explain the various facilities available.
- Voter slip in braille should be provided for blind voters.
- Accessible toilets should be made available at the polling stations.

TAMIL NADU

- Exclusive Polling Station should be setup for the PwDs, as being done for Women, etc.
- Special Camp under SVEEP activity through DDAWO and NGO's should be conducted representing active and ethnic voting.
- DDAWO, NGO's and Volunteer Organisations should be used to identify the need of PwD's so as to facilitate them.
- The service of 108 Ambulance should be utilized for the transport of PwD's during elections, which cannot come to Polling Stations.
- Special identification check mark ✓ should be provided in Form-6 so as to enable identify and list out the PwD's.
- The height of placing of EVMs and VVPAT should be reduced to facilitate the PwD's to cast their vote easily without the help of volunteers
- A separate section in a part may be provided in Electoral Roll so as to easily identify the PwD as done for service electors.
- A toll free number should be introduced for PwD's for getting assistance.
- All the polling stations for the disabled should be located in the ground floor itself.
- Awareness programme materials to be conducted in braille and sign language in co-ordination with PwD officers.
- Accessible toilets should be setup to facilitate the PwDs.
- District icons should be appointed in all districts to create awareness and protect the interest of the PwDs.
- Press releases and media slides disseminating the facilities made available for the PwD's should be periodically given.
- Meeting with political parties and BLA's should be organised to create awareness on

the facilities available for PwD's.

- Sensitisation programme for BLOs should be conducted during the BLO meeting regarding action to be taken to increase the participation of PwDs in the electoral rolls
- Special voter awareness videos should be created for the PwDs and the same may be disseminated through whatsapp/Facebook and other social media.
- As per the instructions of the Election Commission of India the PwD's may be utilized in the ongoing Electoral Literacy Club on their own willingness.
- The Grievances of PwDs should be heard during the special Grievance day which is conducted monthly at the District Head Quarters by the District Collector and taluk level headed by the respective Revenue Divisional Officers.
- Tactile maps of the polling stations should be prepared
- Polling officials should be sensitized to treat PwDs with respect and to allow them to vote, without waiting in queue.
- Polling agents also to be sensitized to the needs of the PwDs.
- Identification and mapping of PwDs, along with their polling station details
- Facilities at the polling station for the disabled should be checked well in advance and it should be ensured that all facilities are present and up to required standards
- Special attention to be given to placement of ramps, especially the standards for the inclination.
- All election awareness material to be made accessible
- Awareness material to be made available in pictorial, visual or audio formats, with bright colours, wherever possible for easy accessibility

UTTAR PRADESH

- Identification of PwD voters can be done with the help of other departments such as District Handicapped Welfare Office, Chief Medical Officer, Red cross etc
- Cooperation of NSS, NYK, Scout Guide etc. can be obtained or registration of PwD voters.
- Political parties should be encouraged to provide manifestos and other information in accessible formats.
- Special polling station should be set up in such places/areas/institutions where PwDs reside in large numbers.
- A standardised and uniform design of ramps should be implemented
- Entrance door of polling stations should be kept wide open
- Accessible toilet should be arranged
- Proper lighting arrangement inside the polling booth should be ensured
- PwD officer should be employed at district level to supervise the work done.

UTTARAKHAND

Physical:

- All polling stations should be on ground floor and election authority should consult with disability organization to develop standards for selecting polling station. (SRC/AE/DDN)
- A person with wheel chair reaches till the polling room by using the ramp but cannot enter in the polling room due to poll system fixed in the middle of the room hence poll system should be adjusted in suitable place in the polling room.
- While selecting polling stations, election authorities should envision having level access from the curb side outside the polling station all the way inside the building to the polling booth itself, and that

polling should be at table height, reachable by someone using a wheelchair, at an absolute minimum

- The length of the cable of voting machine should be adjusted in such a way that a dwarf person can also able to cast his vote easily.
- Instruction should be issued to all school for maintaining their school barrier free & smooth movement without any barrier, crack, cores or stone bajari on the main path/floor inside the school.
- Proper approach road to PS should be ensured by local authorities/concerned department.
- Proper ramp as per standard, seating & drinking water facility accessible toilet & repairing of cracked part of the approach road or floor of PS/School are being arranged from budget of Rural Department, Panchayati Raj, MANREGA, Education Dept., MANREGA, State finance Dept. & through CSR also by banks, non-political & neutral corporate organizations by adopting individual school in war mode in view of GE-2019.
- Ground level & Satire free school for polling station & wide Entrance door, adequate space around the voting compartment for smooth movement of wheel chair.

Attitudinal:

- Strict instruction should be issued to the polling personnel for well behave so that no PwD voter feel inferior, insulted & insecure.
- Counselling should be provided to PwDs through concerning agencies for change of mindset & creating positive attitude of PwDs for social & democratic insertion.
- Appreciation Letter/Certificate: Providing certificate as “mark of appreciation” to PwD voters who exercised their right of vote.
- Provision for incentive in kind of

engagement with electoral process for regular & appropriate PwD voter could be also consider for future elections.

- Appreciation Letter/Certificate to companion: Appreciation for ESCORT/COMPANION should also be provided for accompanying the PwD Voter.
- Invitation Card: PwD- should be invited for exercised their vote in a gesture manner through a colourful /feelingly invitation card prepared by school children's.

Communicational:

- A candidate wise list with their name, mark & serial No. should be provided in braille to visually impaired voters in same sequence as of list of EVM.
- Special Mobile apps, Software, training of personnel, feedback mechanism should also have to created.
- Special token/passes/Badge would be issued to PwDs for their identification.
- Appropriate & specified readable signage should be displayed at the venue of polling station including room no., name of the polling booth, direction for movement. & election related actions, indelible ink, EVM in pictorial form.
- Voice SMSs should be developed for Visually impaired to intimate them about polling booth, serial no. in voter list, available facilities.
- Election related information & political party manifestos/campaign material should be provided in “Accessible formats’ i.e. braille, large text, easy to read, audio-visuals’, in sign language for communication with physical, motor, cognitive & others.
- Voter education in “Accessible Formats” for instance person with blindness or low vision would require an audio/tactile output, large print & electronic text.
- People with hearing impairment would

NATIONAL CONSULTATION: THE CONCEPT

require textual or pictorial based forms of communication.

- You-Tube for videos should be prepared on sign language in training of polling personnel for communication with PwDs in Speech and Hearing.
- You-Tube Video should be also prepared in accessible format "how to Register & Vote".

Policy:

- Separate polling booth should be established for PwDs, senior citizens, sick person /permanent patient, women with appropriate facilitation.
- Keeping a flexible time for registration of PwDs i.e. alternatively fixed particular weak/month in the year as a special drive widely communicates this.
- Specific dates for carrying out special registration drive for PwDs in the premises of selected nonpartisan, neutral disabilities organizations.
- Systematic arrangement at Voter Assistant Booth for roping neutral youth volunteer & civil societies/Org.:
 - Deployment of youth volunteers
 - Engagement of NGOs/CSOs/CBOs/ DPOs.
 - Allotment of logistics i.e. wheel chairs, walker, Divyang doli
 - First aid box
 - Drinking water
 - Seating facility.
 - One Male+ One Female volunteer
 - With a group of supporting students clubbed by campus ambassador.
- A network/hub of such type of Youth volunteers/Social worker should be also developed for PwD voters help.
- Honorarium also recommended for devoted youth volunteers/rep. of NGOs/ CSOs/CBOs/SHGs/DPOs ,who are key of Voter Assistance Booth ,which is a hub of services for all i.e. Identification of PwDs, awareness , name search, helping hands for pregnant women, for old age person as well as PwDs, serving drinking water, first aid, logistics wheel chair,divyang doli,stick,walker ,e-rickshaw on poll day as well in registration period.
- Making necessary structural modifications to MSK/VFC to make them accessible for users of wheel chairs as well as their parking.
- A separate Queue/line shoule be provided for PwDs, Very Old age person, sick person /patient, pregenent women.
- Policy for Smart PS concept should be considered.
- Political parties should design policies and write their manifestos with more inclusive mindset so that they are relevant and engaging to those with disabilities.
- Election monitoring by disabled citizens can also lead to a change in public attitude about the rights and abilities of persons with disabilities, and about their ability to play a positive role in shaping a democratic society. (SRC/AE/DDN)
- An observer should be deputed by ECI

for observing proper facilitation provided for PwD at PS/AC/ District/State level.

PS Location & No.		Voter Assistance Booth					No. of Student attached
Name & Reg. No. of Appointed Youth Volunteers	Name & Reg. No. of Rep. of NGO/ CSO/ DPO/ SHG/	Detail of PwDs Disability wise	No. of Logistic allotted with bar code*				
			Wheel chair / divyang doli	Walker	Stick	e-ricksha	

*for systematic delivery &return after use to concerning dept.

- In view of heavy crowd & long queues of polling stations No. Token M/C with seating facility can be also used.
- Candidate profile/detail book should be publicised in accessible format.
- In time of registration a form should be filled about specific need of PwD voter in view accessible election.
- On line training & evaluation of election personnel.

Budget:

- For proper budgeting/funding for making electoral process, awareness material, polling booth, venue & approaches accessible as well as training of resource person & to take other appropriate measures like accessible awareness material & media campaign.
- Some type of works can be also executed through sugmya bharaat campaign of govt. of india.
- A complete & clear guide lines covering every & all issues /measures regarding facilitation of PwD as per 21 types of disabilities in text & pictorial form should be prepared and inclusion of feedback regarding specific needs as per disability type from health/psychology department , concerned NGOs/csos/dps working in the related field is also expected in this guide lines.
- Infrastructure audit team should be constituted AC/District Level to audit infrastructure status of polling Station with specific checklist. If any polling station does not qualify the norms of ECI, should be avoided as a PS. DPOs should be involved in the team.
- DPOs should be involved in the election process, voter education/assistance, developing guidelines/manual.
- Postal Ballot/On-line Voting/Voting by

- proxy: Disabled person with restricted mobility (Ortho-CP PwDs) should extend the facility of POSTAL BALLOT as a trial project or by proxy voting in view of movement of Locomotors type disabled person is very tough in up down roots of hill areas (topological /geographical condition).
- Person with disabilities should be involved in the election process by having them serve as an officer or staff a polling station, Wherever possible, in collaborator with DPOs.
- Specific KAP survey designed for PwDs.
- Accessible complaint/grievances redressal mechanism.



Programmatic:

- In view of lack of awareness in PwDs towards the importance of the voting as well as electoral process. There should be specific programme for them. An inclusive series of contact programs would be highly recommended for motivation of PwDs.
- This exercise contributes to election reform ,as disabled citizens becomes knowledgeable of election process, and become informed partners to election management bodies.

- Awareness of PwDs edutainment manner i.e. nukkad Natak (Street play), Yuva sansad, quiz & speech etc. performed by PwDs.
- PwD Voter fest should be organized at District/State/ECI level for their encouragement/promotion/motivation & moral empowerment.
- A polling booth wise & category wise PwD list also should be prepared according their disability and grading with most prefer category, second prefer category & third prefer category by A/B/C due to limited resources at PS level with maintain caution in view of moral empowerment of each & every PwD voter is must and no PwD voter should be left behind .
- Special camps: for motivation, counselling, enrollement to include PwDs in electoral role & hands on practice with EVM/VVPAT with the help of non-partisan /neutral nature Youth Volunteers & NGOs/CSOs/ DPOS/CBO/SHGs & concerning agencies working in health/physicogical sector.
- Integrated camp should be also organised with other department, who's are working in the field of welfare of PwDs.
- Enrolment form should be in accessible format also.
- Publicity/Awareness: Voter Information & education is paramount importance for an electoral process. Reaching out to PwDs is a tough task. To increase the participation of PwDs in the electoral process, PwD focused awareness programme must be carried out in every village/town. Diverse methodology may be used to capture PwD voters such as print/electronic/social media/folk / interpersonal media through animations films, theme songs, folk songs, radio jingles, publicity brochure, in brail & sign language, audio -video format for radio-TV, Appeal, Adds in print media. Awareness material should be also provide in accessible format.
- Manual of Instruction/Education material for sensitisation training as per specific needs of PwDs should be prepare in local language, easy to read format, image boxes in pictorial form for orientation of polling staff, BAGs, Security personnel, Youth Volunteers, Campus ambassador, NGO / CSO/DPOs etc. Self-help group & group & another stakeholder engaged in PS/voter assistant booth.
- Special mock session should be conducted for visual, physical, intellectual disabilities & ASDs with the voting process.
- ELC/Chunav pathashala content should be develop in accessible format for disabled Young & Future Voters , outreach programme should be conduct in special education schools/institutes/org./DPOs to educate person with disabilities about their voting rights & familiarize with the electoral process & hands on practice with EVM through trained election officials/member of CSOs.
- Feedback form should be developed for filed up by PwD Voters.



- Promoting a disabled person as an ICON/ BRAND AMBASSADOR who had performed well in different fields in his/her life, who can motivate properly PwDs.
- Conduct of Survey after election: for Non-Voter/Elector PwD: To find the reason behind PwDs not casting votes.

Social:

- Role of Polling party: Manifasto, profile, name, election mark of polling party/ candidate should be develop & publicised in

braille, sign language, audio-visual format for awareness .

- Disability issue should concern to all govt./non-govt. agencies & Suitable environment should be provided by govt./ non-government agencies to participate effectively in all public affair, meetings as well as election related programmes without discriminations including bodies related to public & political life.
- Role of Govt. Department/Organisation/ Programmes for empowerment of PwDs by which they can trust on democracy/ democratic institutions & motivate as well as accommodate with society.



- Role of NGOs/CSOs/CBOs/DPOs: After intensive filtration various Non-Partisan, Neutral Nature Local NGOs/CSOs/CBOs/ DPOs can be motivate /educate PwDs about to their right & duties to vote.
- Election department should associate disability organization to provide accessible information in forms, complete voter guide in accessible formats about all aspect of electoral process, including importance of voting, information of political parties.
- Motivation by family member: Role of family member of PwD is very important to motivate & encouraging them about importance of voting, comparatively other. Hence it is very important for inclusion of PwD in electoral process to first motivate & their family member.



- PwD volunteers: Involvement of PwDs as a volunteer so that they can motivate other PwDs to participate in electoral process.

Transportation:

- Transport facility: The services of public transport vehicle e-rickshaw etc. Election Team Bus can be engaged for PwDs transportation free of cost with the help of govt.machinery,
- Local school buses can also engaged for parents of students through school management for one round in poll day.



WEST BENGAL

Visual Impairment:

Blindness and Low Vision

- Sensitisation of the Visually Impaired electors regarding the need to get registered and cast votes in a systematic manner. This will include sensitisation of family members as well, informing the facilities that were available at the Polling Stations on the day of Poll.
- Spreading awareness through various media: short films to be broadcasted on the cable TV and movie halls/social media, posters & banners (with pictorial representation) and also in braille.
- Spreading awareness through creating ELCs at the institutions of visually impaired and low visions where there is a high concentration of persons with special needs. This way all future PwD electors will also become informed citizens with the knowledge of electoral process.
- Iconic visually impaired public figures (who may tug inspiration inside a visually impaired voter) as brand ambassador for promoting awareness.
- Using messaging system (both voice and braille form) at the time of election to inform the Visually Impaired and Low vision voters about the upcoming events.
- One assistant should be there exclusively for helping the PwDs inside the polling Booth who may escort the PwD voter up-to the Voting Compartment. If agreed by the Voter, only then the Presiding Officer should allow the visually impaired voter to get accompanied by family member/legal guardian inside the voting compartment. The visually impaired voter should be encouraged to vote by themselves.
- As far as possible, Polling Stations should be on the ground floor.
- Visually Impaired and Low Vision voters may be taken to the Polling Stations by means of special transportation.
- Provision of Dummy Ballot Sheet in braille.
- Provision of casting votes through postal ballots, SMS.
- Provision of the list of the names of the PwDs in the polling bag for the presiding officer to facilitate the process of casting vote.
- Provision of Ramp with hand rail at Polling Station.
- Provision of Toilet, Drinking water at Polling Station.
- The content of IEC to be designed in braille in case of the Visually Impaired and Low Vision voters.
- Use of voice messages and SMS services
- Specially designed websites with screen reading software (user friendly)
- Online registration through NVSP portal.
- Political parties to be sensitised to enrolment and voting of PwDs with visual impairments.
- Special Awareness Drives for demonstration with Dummy EVMs.
- Provision of talking EVMs with headphones and information in braille and ink.
- Auditory instructions & magnifying glass may be provided at the Polling Stations for persons with low vision.
- Photo Voter Slips in large fonts especially designed for Low Vision people.
- Braille PVS for the blind.

Hearing Impairment:

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- Audio visual materials with sign language interpretation and close captioning on TV, cinema halls, rail stations, restaurants, shopping malls etc. where ever a screen is available.

- Use of social media: You Tube, face book, twitter, instagram, whatsapp etc.
- Pictorial and diagrammatic texts in form of Hoarding, Glow Sign, poster, walling, leaflets, newspaper advertisements, insertions etc.
- Simple text message in ordinary phones in different languages.
- Initiatives to screen awareness films in special schools, resource centres, vocational training centres, CSOs, welfare homes etc.
- Demonstration in special schools.
- Involving CSOs/NGOs/DPOs at grass root level to spread awareness on the issue.
- The family members should be motivated to encourage their deaf member to register and vote.
- House to house survey involving ASHA/ AWW during SRER/Continuous Updating.
- Involving local public representative/ PRI structure.
- Help of sign language interpreter/ special educator for the deaf for effective communication with deaf persons.
- Camp mode registration may be done at Special schools, CSO/NGO/DPOs.
- The campaign encouraging PwDs to participate in voting should continue in similar manner as before; also involving family members as far as possible.
- The candidates to receive message on the location of polling station by SMS and/or whatsapp.
- Orientation on voting through dummy ballot/ EVM.
- Encourage voters to communicate with electoral office for information through free SMS.
- Reminder to carry the voter ID while going to cast vote.
- Explanation of steps to be followed once

inside the polling station in sign language with picture and text outside the polling station.

- Signage inside the polling station as to the facilities guiding a deaf person to reach her/ his booth.
- Picture and text above each member sitting in the booth as to their role and the elector's function.
- Dummy ballot/EVM for voter.
- Separate queue for PwDs and senior citizens.
- Trained person to help deaf voter, if possible.
- The result to be communicated to voter through SMS/whatsapp.
- Encourage voters to communicate with electoral office to know result through free SMS.

Autism and Intellectual Disabilities, specific learning disability and mental illness

- Door to Door Survey.
- Recording needs as mentioned by PWSN /Caregivers/ Special Educators/ Professionals
- Along with door to door survey visit, special institutions can be useful for inclusions of PwDs.
- Help of professionals should be sought in case of confusion, if any.
- Survey and Counselling families and giving them assurance that their son / daughter will have hassle free voting experience
- A wide publicity at the time of registration, campaigning and during election to make general people aware that PWSN have equal democratic right as others.
- Preparing questionnaire for registration which would elicit adequate information regarding the nature of the disability of the person. Some items may be open ended to

know the need perceived by PWSN and also his/her family.

- Preparing pamphlets containing easy, short and realistic stories/pictures regarding equal rights
- Training of Booth Level Officer, officers of polling booth, Booth Shayk, Asha Workers, SHGS, NGO's, that they be empathetic and sensitive to this group. They should carry a list of PwDs in the polling booth.
- Involvement of Special Educators who will act as facilitators.
- PwDs may be included as ambassador/ representative at the time of campaigning as well as within the materials of campaigning.
- Possibilities of rights for postal ballots.
- A dedicated line/ green corridor and waiting lounge where they can move fast and complete the voting activity in a shortest time.

Locomotors disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured dwarfism' acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy

- PwDs using wheelchair / tri-wheeler: For such PwDs provisioning of permanent and safe ramps including location of at least one booth on the ground floor is essential.
- PwDs with amputation/ineffective use of both hands: For such PwDs accompanying guardian should be allowed. Provisioning of headphone to ensure correctness of voting should be made.

- Dwarfism: For such PwDs height adjustable revolving chairs should be provided.
- Low vision/completely visually impaired: For such PwDs, provision of magnifying glass, headphone, and accompanying guardian if needed and braille system for casting vote should be made.
- Cerebral palsy, acid attack victims, leprosy cured and muscular dystrophy will fall into the above categories.
- Volunteers to assist the PwDs.
- Institution and NGOs falling under the jurisdiction of the polling booth as well as expert/reputed PwDs residing in the particular polling area should be consulted.
- Transportation system for arrival of the PWD voters from residence to polling booth should also be looked into.
- Safety of the PwDs is also an important issue in this regard
- A training program should be developed so that the NGOs and institution can include the curricula in their education/training system well in advance. Data base available with office of the Commissioner for PwDs, Mass Education Extension Department, Government of West Bengal, Sarva Siksha Mission should also be made available.



Good Practices

ASSAM

- During Assembly Election, 2016, BLOs were engaged to identify the PwD electors in their Polling Station area and DEOs provided wheel chair in polling stations with the help of Social Welfare Department. In Kamrup District special vehicles were also provided by DEOs for transportation of PwDs electors.
- Steps to be taken to train the polling personnel.
- Interpreter be engaged during special summary revision. For blind voters, Dummy Ballot paper may be created in braille and the same may be provided to the poll personnel to help the blind voters.

BIHAR

- All Polling Stations in the State are on ground floor.
- Ramps have been provided in all Polling Stations. During the Physical Verification of Polling Stations before elections, wherever there is any need to repair it would be completed before elections.
- Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) are provided on each polling station which include signage, toilets, drinking water, shade, ramp, electricity.
- Polling Personnel are instructed to give

preference to the persons with disabilities in the queue of voters.

- The EVM machine has braille facility for the visually impaired.
- Dummy Ballot Papers are printed in braille for the visually impaired and are provided to the Presiding Officer.
- In order to facilitate the PwDs, since the last elections the District Election Officers have been instructed to identify the availability of and provide wheel chairs on the Polling Stations. However, there is a severe shortage of wheel chairs compared to the number of polling stations.
- A quick analysis of the District level consultation reports reveal that the awareness related to PwDs, types of disabilities and realization of their difficulties having increased in the administrative scenario. Thus there would be greater awareness and emphasis on the special requirements of the PwDs. Districts have been emphasized on the facilities and on the need to make the Polling Personnel more sensitive to the special treatment needed for the disabled persons to facilitate in exercising their franchise.

CHHATTISGARH

- Famous and popular PwD district icons and PwD campus ambassadors appointed
- A general brochure explaining the use of form 6, 7 and 8 printed in braille script and distributed amongst the new and future PwDs electors at the place of their schooling and residence.

GOOD PRACTICES

DADRA NAGAR HAVELI

- The data of PwDs is being prepared and as per the request of PwD, the facilities like providing wheel chair, pick and drop from the residence, preference for casting vote to be provided during the next General Election to Lok Sabha-2019.
- All the polling stations will be made accessible as per the specified norms.
- EROs/AEROs visited the organizations working for the cause of disabled for enrolment and also providing training to PwDs in the process to cast the votes.

DELHI

- Further, SVEEP awareness programmes held from time to time which creates awareness amongst the general public including the PwDs.

GOA

- PwDs were involved in the process of elections by establishing Divyang Polling Station where all the staff were 'Divyang'. They were allowed to work with dignity and self-respect where they have proved that they can work like a regular polling staff.
- Exhaustive trainings were given to PwDs both to work as poll staff and also to cast the vote.
- Awareness programmes were also conducted wherein the PwD Icons were introduced.
- Identification of PwDs falling under all the categories irrespective of percentage of disabilities.
- The Directory of PwDs prepared and as per the request of PwDs, the facilities like providing wheel chair, pick and drop from the residence, preference for casting vote etc. facilities provided.
- EROs/ROs visited the organizations

working for PwDs for enrolment and training purpose

HIMACHAL PRADESH

- Database of PwDs was prepared with the help of records maintained by Department of Social Justice & Empowerment/Hospitals and office of CMOs. Hence, the lists of PwDs were circulated down to the level of concerned BLOs so that they could help them in enrolment and subsequent motivation to participate in electoral process.
- Young achiever 'Muskan Thakur' a



university student with excellent academic record from PwD category was selected as an youth icon to promote voter awareness among youth.

- Special modules were developed for PwDs in the form of brochures, audio material etc. with the help of specialized agencies and departments.
- Special drive was taken up to enroll PwD children in colleges with the help of Campus Ambassadors.
- Voter education content was included in the skill development programmes for PwDs run by the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- Some CSOs regularly conduct vocational training for vision and hearing impaired people. Voter education content for PwDs was made available to these CSOs for inclusion in their trainings.

JHARKHAND

- In the educational institutions PwD students are preferred to be appointed as campus ambassadors.
- During NVD celebration, enrolled PwDs were honoured for their participation in electoral process.
- Special camps were organized by DEO-cum-DC, Ranchi for enrolment and sensitisation of PwDs to facilitate the blind and other disable persons in the E-roll.
- Special and exclusive polling station was established to facilitate PwDs and senior citizens in casting their vote easily.

KARNATAKA

- The theme and focus of SVEEP has been “Inclusive, Accessible and Ethical Elections”.
- All efforts have been made to enhance the registration and voting of PwDs
- Celebrities like Bharatha Ratna Prof CNR

Rao, Rahul Dravid, Gynapeetha awardee Dr Chandrasekhar Kambar, Ashwini Angadi, Girish N Gowda, a para Olympian and others were proud State Icons.

- 26 Polling Stations were opened and fully manned by PwDs
- 388 PwD Polling Personnel with Disabilities PwDs took part in various polling stations and elections work across the whole state.
- Special camps were organized for registration of PwDs



KERALA

- Every district has conducted massive drive to ensure the maximum enrolment of PwDs in electoral roll. In majority of public buildings where polling stations for elections would be arranged permanent ramps are being built and some more have to be completed in this way.
- Directions have been given to District Election Officers to set up ramps where they are nil at present.
- In order to enter the wheel chairs inside the polling station, wide entrances have been provided. PwDs are given priority without waiting in the queue.
- Other facilities like tricycles, wheel chairs,

GOOD PRACTICES

and stretchers are provided in all polling stations. Also guidelines through audio/video are supplemented.

MADHYA PRADESH

- Educated and sensitized PwDs have been made Campus Ambassadors for motivating others.
- Educated deaf and dumb PwDs are being motivated to work as BLOs.
- In Bhopal, Ujjain, Indore and Jabalpur districts BRTS bus stops have been made PwD friendly and facilities like toilets, drinking water, ramps, shades etc have been provided for their smooth transit and participation.
- Dummy Ballot Papers for visually impaired voters have been prepared and successfully used in by elections in the state.
- A visually challenged Professor, Dr. Rohit Trivedi posted at Government Sarojini Naidu Autonomus girls college, Bhopal has been identified as State Icon.
- Campaign materials of Video-Films, posters and banners along with Icons were effectively used in cinema halls, malls, print, electronic and social media to create awareness among the PwDs.
- Special postal stamp on the theme of inclusiveness was released
- Provision of Registration and Voting Guide for Visually Impaired in braille script.
- Postal Letters in braille sent to 1000 Visually Impaired Voters by CEO.
- Software for reading WhatsApp and other social media messages.

MAHARASHTRA

- Special camps for awareness and education of PwDs about electoral processes organized in various districts
- Government departments, NSS, NCC,

NYKS, Scouts and Guides, and NGOs/CSOs being involved for the special camps

- PwD icons appointed in various districts to make appeal to PwDs to involve themselves in the electoral process
- Election machinery is sensitized through training programmes.
- Usage of accessible awareness material provided to educate and inform PwDs about electoral processes.

MIZORAM

- It is ensured that whenever PwDs come out to vote, they are not made to stand in queues and are facilitated to vote on priority. As per extant rules, PwDs are also allowed provision of assistance of one person to the voting compartment. This is to make voting exercise as hassle free as possible for PwDs, which in turn will also entice them to come out and vote in even better numbers.
- On the day of poll, various volunteers from non-political NGOs provide assistance to PwDs in whatever way they need. This includes helping blind voters to reach the polling station, and also assisting locomotor disabled to move up inclined roads. There are also instance wherein volunteers carry PwDs on their backs to the polling station

NAGALAND

- Coverage of ramps increased from 24% to 51% which was below the desired level but considering the hilly topography, most of the locations where it could be used in a useful manner were covered
- In the polling stations where identified PwD voters existed, volunteers from local community were stationed for providing assistance.
- The services of State Icon for PwD - a well-

known name in matters concerning PwDs, used for creating awareness among PwD voters.

- In Wokha district of the state, to create awareness among PwD voters, the District In-charge visited the residences of many PwD voters for displaying VVPAT
- In the General Election to Nagaland Legislative Assembly 2018 arrangements were made for placing wheel chairs at 100 odd polling stations across the state by the Social Welfare Department where PwD voters existed.



- In Wokha District, with the initiative of the DEO, an All Divyang Polling Party Station was setup.

PUDUCHERRY

- Wide open entrance door at the polling station, signage and tactile guide in the pathway to polling rooms, wheel chairs, separate queue arrangements for PwDs, comfortable seating arrangements for PwDs.
- Easily accessible rest rooms, student volunteers to provide one to one service and well-lit polling stations with large signage, volunteers were arranged for blind electors
- Apart from this a novel web based initiative called “ENABLED PONDY” having polling station wise details of PwDs with their EPIC card number, the type of disability and kind of assistance required during and before the polling day, telephone number etc. was introduced Under this-
 - the volunteers made a complete survey to capture the requirements of the people with disabilities on the Poll Day.
 - the web application tagged automatically the particular volunteer to the corresponding persons with disabilities.
 - static volunteers and Mobile Volunteers were drafted.
 - static volunteers provided general assistance to all persons with disabilities at the polling station. Mobile Volunteers provided individual transport service to the specific voter with disabilities.

PUNJAB

- Separate Polling Station for PwD Voters
- Encouragement of PwDs through commendation letters, Special Invitation to PwD voters on NVD (National Voter Day)

GOOD PRACTICES

and Gifts and Appreciation certificates were given to the first time PwD and blind voters.

- Arrangement of Mobile Vehicle, Wheel Chairs, Medical facilitation, Special pick up and drop stations were setup to assist PwD and blind voters on polling day.
- Block Level Rallies by Nodal officers and Jago, Street Plays and Candle Marches with special emphasize laid on mobilizing PwD voters.
- Special braille invitation cards for blind voters were personally delivered to each blind voter so that they come forward and



cast their vote.

- Dedicated wall paintings across the district targeting and motivating special category voters were displayed.
- A total of 200 walls covering around 20,000 square feet of area in all the ACs were solely utilized for the purpose of creating awareness among the PwD voters and blind voters.
- Pledge Letters by school students including PwD students for their parents taking commitments for ethical voting.
- Voter awareness programmes for PwD voters were organized at district as well as block level.

UTTARAKHAND

- Divyang Doli: A helping hand for voters with disabilities who could not walk to the polling station on their own



Summary of Recommendations

All the recommendations received by different States and UTs are listed below, have been diversified into Long term, Medium and Short term goals.

Policy Level

SHORT TERM

Accessibility Audit

- Advance accessibility audit of all polling booths by trained personnel.
- Infrastructure Audit Team should be constituted at the AC/District Level to audit infrastructure status of polling station with specific checklist. If any polling station does not qualify the norms of ECI should be avoided as a PS. DPOs should be involved in the team.

Observers' Checklist

- The Observers' Checklist may include accessible electoral process to be audited /observed periodically from the time of arrival of observers.

Collaboration with Political Parties

- Urging Political Parties to make their

Campaign accessible to the extent possible: Pinpointing what the accessible formats are.

MEDIUM TERM

- Adequate Budget allocation for creation of facilities for PwDs, awareness material, polling booth, venue & approaches accessible as well as training of resource person & to take other appropriate measures like accessible awareness material & media campaign.
- Leveraging Govt of India programmes on PwDs; Some work can be also executed through Sugamya Bharat campaign of Govt. of India.
- Announcing results of counting in accessible formats
- Conduct of Survey after election: for Non-Voter/Elector PwD: To find the reason behind, why they not casting their vote.

LONG TERM

Amendment in Conduct of Election Rules, 1961

- Provision for escort with all type of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)

Postal Ballot

- The disabled person with restricted mobility (Ortho-CP PwDs) should be extended the facility of POSTAL BALLOT as a trial project or by proxy voting in view of movement of Locomotors type disabled person is very tough in up down routes of hill areas (topological /geographical condition).
- Vote at Home option should be considered for PwDs, Postal Ballot facility can be provided to voters having more than 70% disability.
- Proxy voting for legal guardian(s) of mentally sound but physically unfit voters such as bedridden PwDs should be made available.

Modifications in Election Machinery

- An option of verification of vote should be added in EVM using IVRS.
- EVM should have toggle keys
- EVM should have an audio output for the visually impaired.
- Specific IVR system (Helpline) to be developed for all information to be communicated to the population, which will be used for identifying candidate's information, location and accessibility of polling booths etc. This has to be created by all mobile network service providers under the direction of the government.
- Adequate modification in the VVPAT machines for ensuring the suitability for visually impaired voters.
- PwDs should be allowed to use their foot for voting on EVMs if needed.
- Party name and symbol should be in braille on EVM
- Providing contrast glow light in the EVMs to facilitate low and poor vision person

Disabled candidates to contest elections

- Reservation for PwDs at all level of elections

Election Accessibility Monitoring Team comprising PwDs

- Creating a body for election monitoring drawn from the PwDs. Post-Election audit on accessibility of Polling Stations and effectiveness of interventions should be made by a third party organization/body comprising PwDs of various categories.

Election Monitoring Team comprising PwDs

- Election monitoring by disabled citizens can also lead to a change in public attitude about the rights and abilities of people with disabilities, and about their ability to play a positive role in shaping a democratic society. (SRC/AE/DDN)

Administrative

SHORT TERM

Data Mapping

- Data regarding PwDs must be comprehensive. Once collected, it may be collated and cross-verified with the database of other departments such as the Social Welfare, School Education and Mass Education. A sustainable partnership is required to be developed with these departments for working cohesively at State and District levels.
- Enrolment of all the categories of PwDs should be undertaken classifying clearly the type of disabilities to provide the required assistance at the time of voting.
- Category of Disability or specific symbol of disability should be included in Electoral Roll as well as in EPIC so that

polling personnel can behave with them accordingly.

Training & Sensitisation

- Polling Personnel should be adequately sensitized about the provisions of the measures for facilitation of PWDs on the Poll day.
- Manual delineating provisions on PWDs and executive directions of the Commission should be part of both the manual and the ROs' Hand Book.
- Encouraging PWD Voters to vote on their own: there should be more clarity in the instruction who may accompany the blind voter to the voting compartment. No person other than a family member may be allowed to accompany a PWD voter inside the voting compartment.
- On line training & capacity building.
- Motivation by family member: Role of family member of PwD is very important to motivate & encouraging them about importance of voting, comparatively other. Hence it is very important for inclusion of PwD in electoral process first motivate & leaning with their family member.
- Qualified instructors in Sign language and Braille Script in regional languages should be appointed for training purposes.

Improvement in AMFs

- Adequate illumination is a problem for low vision voters in a number of polling stations especially towards evening in winters
- Accessible washroom facilities to be provided at the Polling Station In selecting polling stations, election authorities should envision having level access from the curb side outside the polling station all the way inside the building to the polling booth itself, and that polling should be at table

height, reachable by someone using a wheelchair, At an absolute minimum

- The length of the cable of voting machine should be adjusted in such a way that a dwarf person can also able to cast his vote easily.
- Instruction should be issued to all school for maintaining their school barrier free & smooth movement without any barrier, crack, cores or stone bajari on the main path/floor inside the school.
- Proper approach road to PS should be ensured by local authorities/concerned department.
- Proper ramp as per standard, seating & drinking water facility & Disabled friendly toilet & repairing of cracked part of the approach road or floor of PS/School are being arranged from budget of Rural Department, Panchayati Raj, MANREGA, Education Dept., MANREGA, State finance Dept. & through CSR also by banks, non-political & neutral corporate organizations by adopting individual school in war mode in view of GE-2019.
- Ground level & Stair free school for polling station & wide Entrance door, adequate space around the voting compartment for smooth movement of wheel chair.
- Appropriate & specified readable signage should be displayed at the venue of polling station including room no., name of the polling booth, and direction for movement. & election related actions, indelible ink, EVM in pictorial form.
- A polling booth wise & category wise PwD list also should be prepared according their disability and grading with most prefer category, second prefer category & third prefer category by A/B/C due to limited resources at PS level with maintain caution in view of moral empowerment of each &

every PwD voter is must and no PwD voter should be left behind.

- Relevant tools and techniques should be made available such as braille magnified glass scripts, letters, Brochures for Visually Impaired wheel chair for orthopedically challenged.

MEDIUM TERM

PwDs Specific SVEEP Programmes/Activities

- The SVEEP activities should be focused on specific needs of the PwDs voter.
- Specific dates should be allocating for carrying out special registration drive for PwDs in the premises of selected nonpartisan, neutral disabilities organizations.
- PwD focused awareness programme must be carried out in every village/ town. Diverse methodology may be used to capture PwD voters such as print/ electronic/social media/folk /interpersonal media through animations films, theme songs, folk songs, radio jingles, publicity brochure, in brail & sign language, audio – video format for radio-TV, Appeal, Adds in print media.
- Tableaus for awareness in rural areas should be prepared
- Appreciation Letter/Certificate: Providing certificate as “mark of appreciation” to PwD voters who exercised their right of vote to encourage them.
- Make of appreciation for ESCORT/ COMPANION should also be provided for accompanying the PwD Voter.
- PwD- Voters can be invite for exercised their vote in a gesture manner through a colourful /feelingly invitation card prepared by school children's.

LONG TERM

Appointments of PwDs as Election Officials

- District level officer/ Nodal officer for accessible and inclusive electoral officer should be PwDs
- Involvement of PwD officers in the election machinery at national, state and district level. Even General/Expenditure/ Awareness Observers can be inculcated from the pool of officers who are PwDs.
- Persons with Disabilities should be included as short term and long term observers. Long term observation starts in the pre-electoral phase and includes observation of processes like voter registration. Questions about election access should be part of the checklist of the mainstream observer while Persons with Disabilities should be trained on election access monitoring.

Accessible Election Offices and Polling Booths, Accessible Election Processes

- A complete & clear guide lines covering every & all issues /measures regarding facilitation of PwD as per 21 types of disabilities in text & pictorial form should be prepared and inclusion of feedback regarding specific needs as per disability type from health/psychology department , concerned NGOs/csos/dpos working in the related field is also expected in this guide lines.
- DPOs should be involved in the election process, voter education/assistance, developing guidelines/manual.
- Female volunteers should be enrolled for female voters at Polling Stations
- All polling stations should be in ground floor and election authority should consult with disability organization to develop

standards for selecting polling station.
(SRC/AE/DDN)

- A person with wheelchair reaches till the polling room by using the ramp but cannot enter in the polling room due to poll system fixed in the middle of the room hence poll system should be adjusted in suitable place in the polling room.
- A network/hub of such type of Youth volunteers/Social worker should be also developed for PwD voter help.
- Honorarium also recommended for devoted youth volunteers/rep. of NGOs/ CSOs/CBOs/SHGs/DPOs ,who are key of Voter Assistance Booth ,which is a hub of services for all i.e. Identification of PwDs, awareness , name search, helping hands for pregnant women, for old age person as well as PwDs, serving drinking water, first aid, logistics wheel chair, divyangdoli, stick, walker, e-rickshaw on poll day as well in registration period.
- A candidate wise list with their name, mark & serial No. should be provided in braille to visually impaired voters in same sequence of list of EVM.
- Making necessary structural modifications to MSK/VFC to make them accessible for users of wheel chairs as well as their parking.
- Candidate profile/detail book can be publicised in accessible format.
- Teachers working in special schools should be associated on the day of poll to assist PwDs on the help desk setup outside every polling station.
- Tactile maps of the polling stations should be prepared
- Facility for change of name on EPIC should

be arranged at home for PwDs

- A toll free helpline like 1950 be created for seeking information for the PwDs about their Polling Stations and its facilities.

Appointment of Officials

- Along with State level Coordinator on affairs related to PWDs, one officer who enjoys sufficient seniority, should be appointed as District Coordinator who will steer the activities round the year and be responsible for its implementation.
 - Appointment of PWDs as Polling Personnel as has been in Goa LA Elections. Having all polling personnel as PWDs may be set as one criterion of Model Polling Stations
4. Involvement of PwDs in ELCs
- Voter education in “Accessible Formats” for instance a visually challenged person would require an audio/tactile output, large print & electronic text which are not image file so that their technology can read it out to them
 - People with hearing impairment would require textual or pictorial based forms of communication.
 - Manual of Instruction/Education material for sensitisation training as per specific needs of PwDs should be prepare in local language, easy to read format, image boxes in pictorial form for orientation of polling staff, BAGs, Security personnel, Youth Volunteers, Campus ambassador, NGO / CSO/DPOs etc. Self-help group & group & another stakeholder engaged in PS/voter assistant booth.

Communication & Media

SHORT TERM

PwDs Brand Ambassadors

- A popular celebrity Brand Ambassador should be engaged in all campaigns, awareness drives and encouraging population to ensure disabled citizens to vote and ensure accessible voting.
- Disability icons in every district to create awareness

MEDIUM TERM

- FMs and Other radio stations for election Information, Education and Communication (IEC).
- Announcing list of candidates with serial numbers ballot papers through FM and Other Radio Channels
- Awareness of PwDs through edutainment manner i.e. nukkad Natak (Street play), Yuva-sansad ,quiz& speech etc. performed by PwDs.

LONG TERM

Collaboration with Schools, Colleges, Universities

- Special cells of PwDs should be created in all Sr. Sec. Schools/Colleges/Universities and the most proactive member out of the PwDs be appointed as Campus Ambassador.
- An inclusive series of contact programs would be highly recommended for motivation of PwDs.

Technology Level

SHORT TERM

Social Media

- SVEEP campaign through social media for PWD audience
- Interactive solutions towards engagement and inclusion of PWDs
- You-Tube videos should be prepared on sign language in training of polling personnel for communication with PwDs in Speech and Hearing.
- You-Tube Video should be also prepared in accessible format “how to Register & Vote”.
- Voice SMS/Hotline/E-Mailer/Phone to get desired facilitation

LONG TERM

IVRS based grievance redress system

- Robust IVRS based grievance redress system.
- Grievance redress mechanism should be made accessible for persons with all categories

Using Geo-fencing Technology

- Geo-fencing technology should be used for ensuring electoral participation of PwDs.

Cross-platform Accessible Mobile App

- For providing election related information
- All party manifestos to be in accessible formats such as Braille, audio format and be uploaded in their websites, which need to be made accessible for persons with print disabilities
- Apps for easier access and communication with PWDs

Accessible Websites

- All websites related to elections and political parties should be made accessible ensuring accessibility of design and content including social media. As currently the documents uploaded are not accessible to assistive technology used by visually impaired persons.

Field Level

SHORT TERM

Sensitisation of Political Parties and Media

- Sensitisation of Political Parties and their media cells regarding the voting of disabled citizens is important for ensuring greater participation of PwDs persons in the electoral process.
- Political parties should be sensitized. While any request or appeal to the recognized political parties to include PwDs as candidates might go beyond the scope of the present consultation, a more specific proposal in this is as follows: *the Public broadcaster such as the Doordarshan may be requested to make available one sign language interpreter at the time the representatives of recognized national and state political parties appeal to the voters and speak a lot of their manifestoes.*

- NBSA and the Press Council should be approached by the Commission to bring into focus by print and electronic media the initiatives towards making of an accessible elections.

MEDIUM TERM

Special Gram Sabhas

- Special Gram Sabhas shall be conducted on participation of PwDs in electoral process, specifically before elections for PwDs and for grassroots election machinery.

LONG TERM

Community Approach

- Block/ Village level Community Based Rehabilitation CBR should also be approached for mapping PwDs
- CSOs should extend support in intimating facilities required by PwDs in their directory
- Special camps: for motivation, counselling, enrolment to include PwDs in electoral role & hands on practice with EVM/VVPAT with the help of non-partisan /neutral nature Youth Volunteers & NGOs/CSOs/DPOS/ CBO/SHGs & concerning agencies working in health/Physicological sector.
- Integrated camp should be also organised with other department, who are working in the field for welfare of PwDs.



Action for Ability development and Inclusion (AADI)

PROFILE

Started in 1978, as a small centre for special education for children with Cerebral Palsy, AADI is an established National level organization working for the rights of persons with disability, with a focus on working at the grassroots to policy level ensuring that each influences the other in the creation of an Inclusive Society. AADI pursues the Vision of an enabling world in which persons with disability are acknowledged as a form of human diversity and are able to live with dignity, make all decisions about life; pursue equal opportunities; belong and contribute to families and communities.

AADI's dynamism in responding to changing knowledge has resulted in the development of an organization that is reflective, proactive and capable of delivering quality services. AADI works with people with Physical, Intellectual, Cognitive, Sensory and Multiple impairments. The multidisciplinary team of educators, therapists, social workers along with the support of community workers and care giving staff work with people of different age groups, from infants and school aged children to youth and older people with disabilities. The policies, programs and services at AADI are geared towards making inclusion an everyday reality for all persons with disability. This means that all programs focus on the key values of participation and non-discrimination.

I. The Institute for Ability Development and

Inclusion

- An institution to research, design and disseminate and embed capacity building processes for law and policy makers, disabled people, civil society, existing professionals from the fields of education, health, mental health, human resource, law and architecture.
 - Train a workforce for care giving and disability specific services
- II. A web based Knowledge Management and Advocacy Centre for Ability and Inclusion
- A web based and mobile platform for policy makers, service providers, civil society and disabled people.
 - Providing access to information and knowledge resources for all impairments and rights of persons with disabilities
- III. Model Community Program for Ability Development and Inclusion
- A Delhi-NCR based program reaching out to a population of nearly 500000 people for early identification of disabled people in vulnerable circumstances, sensitizing and capacity building resources for health, habilitation and rehabilitation, education, art, culture, transport, livelihoods and independent living.
- IV. Participation and Leadership Program for Persons living with Disability
- Increasing participation and visibility of persons with disabilities
 - Facilitation and Capacity Building of Parents Groups

Consultation Partner's Profile and Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

'No voter to be left behind'

There are many enabling provisions in the election process and attempts are being made to make the current election process accessible for voters with disabilities.

However, they need to be further strengthened - right from increasing the understanding of persons with disabilities about political issues and accessible information about each candidate in the election, to the accessible voting process.

While acknowledging and appreciating the intent of ECI to make elections accessible we recommend the following suggestions that can be adopted:

- There has to be a strategic plan to address the barriers/gaps that people with disabilities face in all phases of the election process. :
 - Pre-election phase
 - During election
 - Post-election
- An implementation manual on each of the above phases has to be detailed, developed and disseminated so that there is uniformity in implementation in every ward through the country. The infrastructure, material, systems and process of voting must be made accessible to people with disabilities.
- Education of all stakeholders, including

persons with disabilities, their family and friends, Election Officials, media etc. is a critical component. The phrase "unsoundness of mind" in the constitution is not clear and there are no guidelines available to the courts to establish it. Stigma, myths and negative attitudes about disability often associate certain kind of disabilities to "unsoundness of mind" and some people with disabilities are debarred from participating in the electoral process. International best practices in the "use of technology" must be adopted to maintain secrecy in voting for all people with disabilities.

- People with disabilities have the right to contest for elections and the same must be made accessible. Education of all stakeholders on the Right of people with disabilities to contest for elections must be a strategic goal of ECI.
- All political manifestos must be in accessible formats and all political parties to ensure the inclusion of the needs of people with disabilities as part of their manifestos.

Association for Disabled People (ADP)

PROFILE

The Association for Disabled People is a nascent body that is set to introduce inclusivity of the differently abled in sectors pertaining to academics, sports, vocational training and allied areas. It wishes to introduce familiarity in areas that were uncommon to the common eye. It continues to be a partner in progress over the next decade and beyond, and have greater participation and enrolment by looking ahead; understanding the trends and forces that will shape the notion of specially challenged in the future and move swiftly to prepare for what's to come. We must get ready for tomorrow today. That's what our 2020 Vision is all about. It creates a long-term destination for our activities in all arenas and provides us with a "Roadmap" for winning together with our battling partners.

ADP's is also working towards Accessible public infrastructure and environment for the PWDs. It has done lot of projects in government and private sector on accessibility and Access Audit. It is also the part of core committee of Accessible India campaign and have done access audit of 139 buildings in different cities of India i.e. Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Visakhapatnam, Nagpur and Kanpur.

Suvarna Raj (Program Officer – Accessibility), ADP has been invited as a special invitee in the conference of Ministers and Secretaries of State/UTs on 24th -25th May 2013 at Vigyan Bhawan, by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports Govt. of India. She was also in the Steering Committee of Planning Commission on Youth Affairs & Sports for 12th Five Year

Plan for comprehensive chapter on disability issues.

ADP is strongly working on advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities. ADP has participated at National and International Conferences, Meetings, Workshops etc. for Disability movement and organized workshops, meetings, consultation for disability movement time to time.

ADP's services for PwDs -

- Legal advice (2016 RPWD Act) to differently able people.
- Create awareness about disability and working for rights of persons with disabilities.
- Provide Counseling/Guidance to persons with disability about the employment/ self-employment
- Create employment opportunities for PwDs in private sector
- Help to get Disability Certificate, Railway & Bus Concession passes, Disability Identity cards, MCD Booth, Pension to people with disabilities
- Promote sports persons with disabilities
- Organize and Promote Paralympic Sports in India since 2006 (Indoor and outdoor games for differently able people)

RECOMMENDATIONS

People with disabilities are often not seen at polling booth for casting their vote because of many reasons. Though the government can play a very big role making the elections accessible to make possible the vote casting for people with disabilities, but it's not just the government whose efforts are required. It has to be a collective effort of government, NGOs, Society, Families, friends, volunteers and people with disabilities themselves. Each one of us has a role to play.

We suggest to the –
Government –

- Create an accessible environment at polling booths taking the PwDs requirements into consideration
- Sensitize the polling officers about PwDs' requirements
- Create awareness amongst the general public, families, friends & People with disabilities

NGOs –

- Advocate for the rights to provide required facilities to enable PwDs' to cast their vote
- Create awareness about their requirements to the Election commission
- Create awareness amongst People with Disabilities and families and motivate them to cast their votes

Families & Friends –

- Bring them out to cast their votes
- Be aware of their requirements at polling booths
- Create awareness about their requirements

People with Disabilities –

- CAST YOUR VOTE. It's your right
- Be aware of your rights and ask for the facilities you need to cast your vote at polling booths
- Motivate other friends with disabilities to cast their vote

Let's come together, let's all of us vote and let's bring the change!

National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled

PROFILE

National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) is a cross-disability, non-profit organization, working as an interface between the Government, Industry, International Agencies, and the Voluntary Sector towards empowerment of persons with disabilities.

Registered in 1996, NCPEDP has since then, successfully advocated several policy changes that have positively impacted the lives of people with disabilities, working across to encourage employment of disabled people; increase public awareness on the issue of disability; empower disabled people with knowledge, information and opportunities; and ensure easy and convenient access to all public places, products, services and technologies.

Headquartered in New Delhi, NCPEDP has a pan India presence through the National Disability Network (NDN). Formed in 1999, NDN has members from majority States and Union Territories across the country. NCPEDP has also constituted the National Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD) consisting of disability sector leaders and experts from across the country that meets at regular intervals to discuss ongoing pertinent issues relevant to people with disabilities, and to plan a strategy to address the same. NCPEDP works on six core principles, also called the six pillars of the organization, namely:

1. Education
2. Employment
3. Accessibility
4. Legislation/Policy
5. Awareness/ Communication
6. Youth

We believe that Employment is not possible without Education. Employment and Education are not possible without Accessibility. Employment, Education, and Accessibility need to be supported by appropriate Legislation and Policy, and it becomes imperative to create Awareness in order to achieve any of the above. Most importantly, we believe that the Youth will be the driving force behind all such initiatives.

NCPEDP's advocacy has a history of significant, path breaking achievements, which include:

1. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill and its introduction in the Rajya Sabha.
2. Setting up of the Department of Persons with Disabilities under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
3. Ratification of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
4. Inclusion of disability as a separate category in the Population Census of 2001. This was the first time ever that disabled people got counted in the Census.
5. Voting process made accessible for disabled people in the General Elections of 2004.
6. Civil Services opened up for people with disabilities, including IAS, IFS.
7. Customs Duty on disability goods waived/ reduced by the Finance Ministry.
8. Comprehensive Plan of Action for Inclusion of Children and Youth with Disabilities announced by MHRD.
9. Inclusion of disability in the social agenda of CII, FICCI and NASSCOM.
10. National Policy on Universal Electronic Accessibility.

People (NCPEDP)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All documents including circulars, audio visuals, apps, etc., need to meet the accessibility standards, as stated in the Rules of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.
2. Identification of all adults with all 21 disabilities as mentioned by the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPDA) 2016 and enrolment of left out electors at their homes/residence and residential institutions, polling station wise, to be conducted at the earliest, as a special drive. Technology need to be taken to homes/ residence of voters with disabilities in villages to facilitate their enrolment.
3. During mapping/data collection of persons with disabilities, there could be a column to note accommodation/ support that they may require for casting their vote. Disability should be mentioned on the voters list / voter ID card to keep track of the voters with disabilities in the polling area and assist them when required.
4. Voter ID cards to have details printed in Braille or use of technology to read out information on voter ID card.
5. Sensitisation of ground level enrolment officers to be ensured. Specific Systematic Voter Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) material targeted at motivating persons with disabilities and specific material targeted at general public, for sensitizing them on issues relating to electoral participation of persons with disabilities to be in accessible and easy to understand formats with captions apart from Braille script as well as sign language, easy read versions, etc, in local languages.
6. All awareness campaigns and material meant for general public to incorporate (1) information on accessible and inclusive elections for persons with disabilities and (2) need to be made available in accessible formats.
7. Each polling station must have women volunteers / trained lady police to help the women voters with disabilities.
8. There could be a dummy Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) to educate voters with disabilities on operating the EVM to cast their vote.
9. In case of persons with intellectual or multiple disabilities (including those related to sensory processing or psycho-social), an understanding of their right to vote from legal capacity point of view need to be developed. Awareness need to be raised among those who are in a position to facilitate people with intellectual disabilities in exercising their political rights as well (including relatives and care takers of people with intellectual disabilities, politicians and public authorities).

National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled

PROFILE

The National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled (NPRD) is an affiliating body of state level membership based cross disability organisations. Formed in 2010, currently it has affiliates in 14 states in the country and a membership of around 2,00,000 (membership of all its affiliates put together).

The NPRD was in the forefront of the campaign for the passage of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill; had campaigned and lobbied with success for several amendments to the Bill, and also played an active role when the rules to the Act were being framed. It is also contributing to the framing of rules for the Act in various states. It has been advocating amending Article 15(1) and 16(2) of the Indian Constitution to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of disability.

It is due to the advocacy done by the NPRD that the government rolled out the universally valid card for persons with disabilities. Again, it was at its insistence that the universal validity of the disability certificate was incorporated in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act.

Another policy intervention was in getting criminal laws amended to specifically address violence against girls and women with disabilities. When the Verma Committee was constituted in the background of the gangrape of a student in Delhi, the NPRD made substantive suggestions in its submission to the Committee. Many of these found reflection in the recommendations of the Committee. Some of them were incorporated in the law.

On accessibility, the NPRD has been working with other organisations to make TV accessible for the blind and the deaf. The government has already taken it up on the agenda as part of its “Accessible India” campaign. Several rounds of talks with all stake holders including broadcasters, set top box manufacturers, concerned departments and ministries have been held.

The NPRD had worked with the UNESCO and Saksham to make the National Museum at Delhi accessible. As part of this effort, a separate section has been set up at the Museum where replicas of artefacts and other items on display at the museum have been created so that the blind can touch and feel the objects.

It is following the intervention of the NPRD in the Supreme Court exemption was granted to certain categories of disabled persons from standing up while the national anthem is played at cinema halls before the commencement of a movie.

The NPRD has taking up cases where the disabled have been discriminated in the matter of education, employment, postings etc. It took up the cases of 9 civil service candidates who were not inducted into the service despite their having cleared the examinations. Due to our persistent efforts over a period of nearly two years, seven of them were inducted. We have also taken up various issues with UPSC, Staff Selection Commission etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the ratification of the UNCRPD, the coming into force of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and the Supreme Court directions of 2004, it is incumbent that we put in place mechanisms to see that these mandates are adhered to and the entire voting process is made accessible to all, including persons with disabilities. Though initiatives have been taken by the ECI in the recent past, much more needs to be done to make the participation of the disabled in the election process meaningful.

To facilitate and include the disabled in the entire election process we would recommend the following:

- 1. Registration of Voters:** Providing registration information on the ECI and CEOs websites in an accessible manner. Since internet penetration and connectivity issues are problematic as till all registration centres are made fully accessible, concerned officials should visit residences to enroll all those covered under the RPD Act, 2016. To reach out to PwDs text messaging, emails, phone calls etc may be used. A certain amount of flexibility should be exercised.
- 2. Sensitisation of Officials:** Officials including polling staff at all levels need to be sensitized on issues and concerns of persons with disabilities and how to address them.
- 3. Accessible Election Material:** All election material must be made available in large print, Braille, audio and other accessible formats.
- 4. Accessible Polling Stations:** All polling stations should be accessible. They should have lifts/ramps; narrow entrances/exits are a NO. Tables on which EVMs are placed also should be accessible to all. Audio/tactile outputs should also be provided in EVMs.
- 5. Arrangements for Transport:** Voters with disabilities who cannot travel to polling booths should be provided transport facility.
- 6. Priority in Voting:** Persons with disability should be able to cast their votes out of turn/on priority.
- 7. Monitoring/Complaint Redressal:** A toll free help line may be set up throughout the country to assist voters with disabilities (in local language). A sub-committee may be constituted by the ECI/CEOs tasked with implementation of accessibility. It may also act as a grievance redressal office.
- 8. Involvement of Stakeholders:** At every stage of the process, involvement of/consultation with stakeholders should be done.

Saksham

PROFILE

The Saksham Charitable Trust has been established in 2003 by Mr. Dipendra Manocha & Ms. Rummi. K. Seth, with the sole purpose to empower the persons belonging to the marginalized section of the society through a variety of strategies. Mr Dipendra Manocha (twice recipient of the PRESIDENT'S AWARD, ASHOKA Fellow, CNN-IBN Super Idol Award), has never let his visual impairment come in his way to achieve his targets in life in carrying forward all the activities of Saksham.

Vision: A sensitized and motivated society that acknowledges the value of **interdependence** and appreciates the abilities of persons with blindness and multiple disabilities and willingly provides equal opportunities for all. Empowering Communities by creating multiple opportunities and providing platforms for the underprivileged for sustainable social upliftment, thus enabling them to emerge as significant contributors in India's growth story.

Projects of Saksham

1. Distribution of Aids & Appliances / Technology Solution Centre
2. Saksham Trust has established the only network of distribution centers of latest high tech assistive devices for the VI in the country. Saksham identifies innovative products useful for the blind from around the world and then distributes them to visually impaired persons PAN India at highly subsidized prices.
3. Daisy – Digital talking books
4. Saksham Trust is the largest producer of DAISY (Digital Access Information System) Talking Books in India. DAISY books offer maximum accessibility and navigation facilities to all categories of print impaired.
5. Saksham School
6. Since person with blindness along with other disability require additional attention, Saksham started a free school in Noida in 2006 for the economical marginalize community. As saksham believes in inclusive education, Dedicated Special educators are there who give special attention to every student thus 22 children have been integrated into main stream schools till now.
7. Development of Replicas of heritage monuments.
8. "Fingers are for blind persons, what eyes are for the sighted". Saksham Trust has started a project by introducing Replicas of heritage Monuments through its informal Education Programme.
9. Smart Cane- Vibrating cane
10. Smart cane is a sensory / electronic travel aid for persons with visual impairment which makes independent mobility easier and safer.
11. Audio description of Movies
12. An interesting project undertaken by Saksham Trust for the first time in India – "Audio Description of Films" for persons with vision impairment. This project is a totally non-commercial venture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The President of DFI, Mr. Dipendra Manocha was instrumental in working with government for Sugamya Pustakalaya an online library for persons with print disabilities which was dedicated to the nation on August 24, 2016. This is a joint effort of Government of India, The DAISY Forum of India and the corporate support.
- Saksham received the Best Institution Award – NATIONAL AWARD 2015 by the Ministry of Social Justice and

Empowerment in the field of disabilities for the visually impaired

- Saksham helped in providing technical support in making one gallery accessible at the National museum through 'guided touch' tour and audio-tour for group of visually impaired persons of all ages under the UNESCO and National Museum Project.

Samarthyam

PROFILE

Samarthyam (www.samarthyam.com) is a disabled people organization (DPO) founded in 1994. Recognizing the pioneering efforts of Samarthyam promoting rights based advocacy, inclusive, accessible and sustainable environment with focus on independent, safe mobility and gender equality (girls and women with disabilities); Samarthyam have Special Consultative Status United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2015.

Under its unit “**National Centre for Accessible Environments**”, it evaluates, develops, and promotes universal accessibility in built & outdoor environments, transportation systems, information communication technology and products.

Goal: Promote the understanding and implementation of accessibility of the sustainable built, social and virtual environments, using the guiding principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Sustainable Development Goals “Leave No One Behind”.

Under its unit “**Women with Disabilities Forum for Action**,” Samarthyam promote, ensure and uphold rights of girls and women with disabilities.

Goal: Towards building a more just and peaceful world, where everyone lives with dignity, respect, and equality.

Samarthyam is regularly nominated by the Government of India as a subject expert to advice on program and policies relating to universal accessibility. Samarthyam team has authored several guidelines and codes,

which are widely used as national accessibility standards and resource manuals.

With the mission to make Incredible India: Inclusive India, Samarthyam have partnered with Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India. Accessible India Campaign (AIC) is the nationwide flagship campaign of Government of India launched in 2015 to achieve this mission and Samarthyam is Advisor and Empanelled Access Auditors for implementation of AIC.

Since 2010, Samarthyam have been actively involved in making election sites and processes accessible for all. Samarthyam team of access auditors has undertaken access audits of 774 schools in 16 states to be accessible for children with disabilities thereby benefitting voters with disabilities. In partnership with Election Commission India, Samarthyam have designed accessibility parameters for accessible elections and have provided ‘to do pointers’ to ensure that no voter with disability is left behind.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Including members from Disability Groups/ CSOs in Committee at State and Districts set up for formulating interventions for 'Accessible Elections'
- Accessible elections benefit not only persons with disabilities but also the elderly, when they come to experience reduced hearing, vision, mobility or manual dexterity; and that these difficulties may call for accessible infrastructure, in transportation, to Information and Communication and all polling services for voters, both in urban and rural areas;
- Orientation of enumerators on disability types and relevant questions to be asked with disability friendly terminology and etiquettes;
- Make polling stations accessible by providing earmarked parking spaces, ramps (1:12 gradient max.; preferred 1:15), provide handrails, visual signage and tactile cues for accessible route and entrance, height of EVM not more than 800mm from floor, Braille and embossed keys in EVM, human assistance/ volunteers having pre-orientation training
- Ensure transportation means to reach out those with severe disabilities and are unable to reach polling stations

Sense India - Working for Persons with Deafblindness

PROFILE

Sense India <http://www.seneintindia.org> is reaching out to +77000 persons with deafblindness through its 57 programmes in 23 states of India. After 20 years of its advocacy, deafblindness is recognised and included in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 by the Government of India; and Sense India has become the only organisation working for deafblind to acquire consultative status with the United Nations.

Due to dual sensory loss, Communication and Accessibility is a major issue for persons with deafblindness. They face difficulties in accessing the physical environment and access to information is a major constraint. These can be addressed by:

- Information adaptation (more application oriented, experiential and practical based information)
- Tactile Sign language interpretation
- Sighted guide service
- Braille and large print signage
- Talking software and refreshable Braille display
- Accessible buildings, public transport and communication system

Lack of awareness is one of the main causes of almost nil participation of persons with deafblindness. Sense India organises deafblind awareness programmes across all the states where it has established its deafblind programmes, utilising important occasions like World Disability day and Helen Keller day to create awareness about persons with deafblindness and their rights. We look forward to collaborate with awareness

initiatives of commission on these occasions by encouraging our partner organisations in respective states to hold awareness activities on that day.

Sense India has developed three national networks of adults with deaf blindness, their families and educators. These groups also established locally at state level play an important role in creating awareness about deafblind rights and can collaborate with commission initiatives to create awareness about their voting rights.

Sensitisation on deafblindness is vital and all polling officials need to be sensitised about the needs of a deafblind person. At the same time a person with deafblindness need to be confident about self and aware of her voting right in order to participate. The persons with deafblindness themselves along with their parents and other family members need to be empowered through training. Sense India conducts national, regional and state level deafblind sensitisation trainings and can contribute during trainings organised by commission for polling officials.

Sense India has been actively contributing since the initial stage of ECI inclusive election initiatives and we are happy to inform that Arihant (L) and Shazia (R) Voted in the #Chennai assembly elections for the first time. Both first-time #deafblind voters were very excited to make their voice count.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Initiatives required for information, motivation and facilitation of persons with deaf blindness to ensure their participation in the electoral process

- Priority for entering the polling station, without having to wait in the queue for other electors and all necessary assistance as may be required should be provided to them at the polling station. This will include, tactile sign language interpretation support and tactile / Braille/ Large print signage
- Provide for permitting a companion to accompany an elector with deaf blindness to assist him/her to cast the vote
- Polling personnel to be trained and sensitized about the special needs of persons with deaf blindness, for courteous behaviour towards them and for providing necessary support to them at the polling station.
- Special queues to be maintained for priority casting of votes,
- Wide dissemination of information in accessible format about the voting rights of deafblind/ MSI voters and the available facilities for family members, professionals working with them and community in general
- For home based deafblind/ MSI persons household contact programme to motivate them and to sensitise their family members about their voting rights
- Setting up of Model Polling Stations with conducive environment and facilities
- Mass media campaigns on Helen Keller day and World Disability day
- Compilation of data of electors with Deafblind/ MSI

- Sensitisation of election machinery for considering their needs while building strategies as well their implementation, and strengthened facilitation measures

There is lack of election literature, including party manifestos, in accessible formats. The Election Commission of India website is also not accessible to people with deaf blindness. There are no provisions for tactile sign language interpreters during elections campaigns and there are no alternative methods for voting available for deafblind people who are unable to reach the voting booth due to their disability. People with deaf blindness face problem in getting Aadhaar cards due to the inaccessibility of the enrolment centres, the inaccessibility and user unfriendliness of the website. Home-based service is required to ensure that people with deaf blindness including elderly people get the Unique Identification number and hence get enlisted for electoral participation.

Audio-Visual Media remains inaccessible to people with sensory disabilities and critical issue of sign language interpretation is overlooked. Initiatives like establishing model polling booth, EVM familiarisation camps, providing conveyance facility, Home to Booth initiative etc would be essential to ensure inclusion of this highly marginalised group of people who have not yet got the opportunity to access their constitutional right.

SVAYAM

PROFILE

Started as an information portal in 2000, Svayam has been one of the pioneers in the field of accessibility in built environment and services. Under the guidance and leadership of Ms. Sminu Jindal, Founder- Chairperson, Svayam, who herself is a wheelchair user, Svayam has demystified accessibility to the stakeholders in order to make it a simple and achievable goal.

In 2006, Svayam began working with Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to make Qutub Minar as the first World Heritage Site (WHS). After several hurdles of conservation concerns, it was able to win over the argument in favour accessibility for all visitors and ASI implemented its recommendations. Svayam inked an MoU with ASI to work more closely on other WHS/ Ticketed monuments and thus worked with several Circles conducting access audits to promote accessibility.

Svayam also helps different government departments as well as corporate houses to incorporate accessibility as non-negotiable component in their infrastructure and services.

Svayam has contributed to the preparation of several policies and guidelines on accessibility as well as for inclusion of persons with disabilities. Few of them are Harmonised Guidelines & Space Standards for Barrier Free Built Environment for Persons with Disability and Elderly Persons, the National Building Code 2016, and the Civil Aviation Requirements for Carriage of Persons with Disabilities by Air, among others. Svayam also actively worked with DGCA along with other

NGOs and contributed to the major revisions in the Civil Aviation Requirements in 2008.

Svayam had signed an MoU with ITDC to conduct access audits of Ashok series of hotels under the project “Ashok Access” to promote accessibility in the Ashok properties in several Indian states.

Svayam hosted 13th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled People in September 2012 which was participated by delegates from over 42 countries. Svayam was a major contributor to the Hon’ble PM’s Accessible India Campaign. It carried out access audit of 340 public buildings in eight cities under the Campaign which are being implemented by the respective agencies.

Svayam has won several awards in India and abroad including the National Tourism Awards of Excellence, jointly with the ASI for three major WHS i.e. Qutub Minar, Red Fort & Fatehpur Sikri being the most accessible monuments and also the GAATES Award of Recognition 2015, among others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Accessible polling stations at the ground floor, including, wide entrance, adequate & dedicated parking within 30 meters, levelled / obstacles free pathways; ramps, signages, direction signs, pictograms of PS, lighting, wheelchair, toilets, drinking water facility, seating arrangement and a/vs to be as per access standards, as mandated in the Rules of the RPDA 2016. EVM chamber should meet access standards like wheel chair manoeuvring space, height of table, proper signage, ample illumination as well as contrast, auditory clues and so on
2. In the EVM, the party symbols need to be provided in tactile format such that a visually impaired person can touch and know what it is. There should be a provision where a voter with visual impairment can connect an earphone so that he/she could hear what they have pressed. Long cables that enable adjusting EVMs, approach to EVM from sideways for people of short stature, etc, to be worked out as there is difficulty in reaching the topmost icon.
3. An easy read version of candidate / ballot sheet, with large pictures, should be hung or kept near the EVM for people with low vision/ intellectual disabilities / high support needs. Alternative methods of casting a ballot such as – Touch screens, a handheld device with Braille labels, magnifiers, joystick, etc need to be considered for all 21 types of disabilities, according to one's requirement.
4. Postal ballot, mobile ballot units (including polling vans to have scheduled stops at hospitals/ rehab institutions to enable participation of people admitted/working, etc), sms voting facility enabled during poll hours and online voting options need to be explored.
5. Allocation of budget to be made for raising awareness on accessible electoral process too.
6. Selection of election ambassador with disability and Civil Society Organisation (CSO) / Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO) for support can to be facilitated through the district committee under Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and election commission.
7. Election Commission should hire persons with disabilities including women with disabilities as polling officers in all districts.
8. Election Commission of India should issue a circular mandating all political parties to make their communication (websites, manifestos, speeches), their offices, venues, etc to be accessible/ in all accessible formats for all persons with disabilities.
9. Election Commission of India should issue a circular to the media (TV etc) to make their information accessible.
10. Election Observer's checklist to include indicators on accessible electoral process for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities can be engaged as observers too.
11. Specific provision of punitive measure for non-compliance of the notices / guidelines or directives regarding "accessibility for persons with disabilities / Women with Disabilities in the electoral process" by the stakeholders including election

commission, should be a part of the ECI policy, including well defined monitoring mechanism for implementation.

12. Human Resource at polling booths (all polling officers, volunteers, police personnel, etc) need to be sensitised and trained on interacting with and providing service to voters with disabilities. Each polling station must have women volunteers / trained lady police to help the women voters with disabilities.
13. Consider providing a dummy Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) to educate voters with disabilities on operating the EVM to cast their vote.
14. Ensure pedestrian and sidewalk accessibility of polling stations
15. Polling station should have accessible pictograms. Directional signage to be provided to orient electors with disabilities.
16. Should have provision of human assistance.
17. Service animal/guide dogs should be allowed along with electors with disability during vote caste.
18. Develop a robust checklist to ensure polling stations are accessible to disabled / elderly voters
19. Awareness regarding the electoral rights of persons with disabilities, about the manner in which these citizens can exercise their right to vote and access justice and redress in case of violation of rights.
20. Priority to be given to electors with disability for entering the polling station, without having wait time.

Examples of Good Practices:

1. Goa Assembly elections 2017 enabled a polling booth fully manned by persons with disabilities.
2. Sign language interpreter was assigned to control room with video call facility during by-Elections to Dr Radhakrishnan Nagar Assembly constituency, Chennai in 2017
3. During 2017 Punjab assembly elections, disability district coordinators (PwDs) were provided id cards from respective district administrations to conduct access audit of polling booths based on an accessible polling booths checklist prepared by Disability Rights Alliance India. The coordinators were also accompanied by staff from the district revenue offices in their office vehicles. The reports presented were acted upon in many polling booths.
4. CEO TN's efforts during 2016 assembly elections where election street plays incorporated a sign language interpreter was much appreciated by Deaf groups. A locally made access audit app enabled access audit of most polling booths in Chennai and its reporting to CEO's server, very simple and easy.

ANNEXURE-I

Activity chart displaying clarity and coherence regarding ease of registration and voting by PwDs:

I. EASE OF REGISTRATION FOR PwD CITIZEN

Activity	Steps	Responsibility	Time Line	Risk	Outcome
Identification of eligible PwD citizens	Data collection, sharing and dissemination of information	DEO EROs/AEROs BLOs Concerned Departments	6 months prior to Summary Revision	1. Identification of PwD and types of disabilities 2. Data collection from different sources.	Mapping of PwD voters
Facilitation to the eligible PwD citizens	Nodal officers for PwD, Organising special camps, Setting up MSKs, CSCS	DEO EROs/AEROs BLOs Concerned Departments (SJ & DWD)	3 months prior to Summary Revision	1. Duplicate entries of electors with disabilities in E-Roll. 2. Improper facilities at MSKs for PwD 3. Lack of skilled staff. 4. Non availability of different types of materials forms etc.	Enrolment of left out electors with disabilities.
Marking in E- Roll Database	Marking in BLO registers. The names of PwDs should be mapped and the list be made available to the BLOs but should not be marked in the electoral roll to maintain the privacy of PwDs	EROs/AEROs BLOs	3 to 6 months prior to Summary Revision	1. Misuse of facilities by persons other than PwD. 2. Errors of commission and omission in marking.	Availability of information of electors with disabilities
Dissemination of information to Stakeholders, Political Parties, Election Machinery, Media, Electors	Organising meeting with Political Parties, Release of Press Notes, Training of Election Machinery.	DEO EROs/AEROs BLOs	6 months prior to Summary Revision	Lack of coordination between Stakeholders and Election Machinery.	Awareness among Electors with disabilities.
Environment building, SVEEP activities for registration	Targeted intervention, Organising Media Campaign, Ensuring involvement of NGOs & BAGs	DEOs CEO/ZP EROs/AEROs BLOs SVEEP partners, Concerned departments (S) & DWD)	6 months prior to Summary Revision	1. Lack of coordination/ co-operation amongst departments. 2. Lack of funds. 3. Non availability of diverse facilities to meet diverse needs.	Maximum inclusion of electors with disabilities.









II. EASE OF VOTING FOR PwD Voters

Activity	Steps	Responsibility	Time Line	Risk	Outcome
Set up of special exclusive Polling Booths for PwD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation of separate list of PwD from E-Roll database. 2. Identification of places where PwD reside in large numbers like Blind schools/ institutions etc. 3. Identification of building for Polling Booths 	DEO ROs/AROs Nodal Officer BLOs	3 to 6 months prior to election	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scattered population of PwD, 2. Accounting of type of disability. 	Increase in participation of PwD in democratic process.
Creating facilities in Polling Booths according to need of PwD.	Providing facilities like Ramps, Signage in Braille as well, Separate queues, Sheds, Seating arrangements, Wheel chairs, Waiting rooms, Assistants etc.	DEO ROs/AROs Nodal Officers	3 months prior to election	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of polling stations at ground floor. 2. Non availability of ramps, lifts, lack of sufficient open space. 3. Non availability of diverse facilities to meet diverse needs. 	Increase in Voter turnout of electors with disabilities
Dissemination of information regarding available facilities to the Stakeholders, Political Parties, Election Machinery, Media, Electors.	Organising meetings with Political Parties, Training of Election Machinery, Release of Press Notes and SVEEP activities. Sending Voice SMS, demonstrating poll process during distribution of voter slips and on the day of polls through signage.	DEO ROs/AROs Nodal Officers Media	30 days prior to poll	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of coordination between Stakeholders and Election Machinery. 2. Election Machinery overloaded with work. 3. Availability of required resources. 	Awareness among Stakeholders regarding facilities and information available for electors with disabilities.
Identification of special needs, if any	Identification and Tabulation of special information regarding needs of electors with disabilities by BLOS within Polling Booth area during door-to-door distribution of voter slips.	DEO ROS/ AROS BLOs	30 days prior to poll	Lack of skilled manpower.	Motivation, Mouth publicity, Increase in voter turnout of electors with disabilities.
Assistance at Polling Station on poll day.	Enlightening the BIOS, POs, Polling Parties, Security personnel etc. about the assistance needed for different types of disabilities during the training, Deployment of skilled personnel in special exclusive PBS and with Sector/ Zonal magistrate.	DEO ROs/ AROS BLOs	30 days prior to poll	Lack of Skilled Manpower	Motivation Mouth Publicity, Increase in voter turnout of electors with disabilities.
Environment building, SVEEP activities for poll and ethical voting.	Organising targeted interventions, Media campaigns, Involving NGOs & BAGs	DEO CEO ZP EROs/AEROs BLOs SVEEP partners, Concerned Departments (S) & DWD)	6 months prior to poll	Objections/ complaints may be raised by Political Parties.	Optimum turnout of electors with disabilities.

ANNEXURE-II

Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF)

AMF constitutes Provision for ramp, drinking water, adequate furniture, proper lighting, proper signage, helpdesk, and toilet. This effort was taken to ensure wholesome and constructive participation of Persons with Disabilities and their active engagement in the Electoral process. Following are the specific guidelines:

AMF	Specifications
 <p>Signage</p>	<p>Parking for Persons with Disability (PwD) coming on wheelchairs or other vehicles (to be visible from the road)</p> <p>After entrance arrow signs marks indicating the queue</p> <p>Arrow mark indicating the polling personnel</p> <p>Signage for Male/Female toilets</p> <p>Signage for toilets for PwD voters</p> <p>Signage indicating drinking water</p>
 <p>Help Desk</p>	<p>Tables of 4' x 2 1/2' with provision for 3 people to sit - one BLO with booth slips, two NSS / NSC volunteers (1 male 1 female) to guide and assist the voters (especially the PwDs) entering the polling station</p>
 <p>Ramp</p>	<p>Ramps should have an inclination ratio of 1:10 and not more than 1:14</p> <p>Firm hand rails to be provided which should not be of shaky material</p> <p>In case there are stairs to reach polling station, ramp should also be provided there</p>
 <p>Toilets</p>	<p>Whether separate toilets for Male and Female voters available</p> <p>Whether toilets are PwD-friendly.</p> <p>Whether running water is there in the toilets</p> <p>If running water facility is not there what arrangement has been done?</p>
 <p>Drinking Water</p>	<p>Whether there is facility of drinking water</p>
 <p>Separate Entry and Exit</p>	<p>Whether separate entrance and exit is provided in the polling station</p> <p>If no separate entrance and exit is available, whether provision of rope separator/ partition can be done? specify</p>
 <p>Lighting</p>	<p>Electricity connection with two plug points</p> <p>Minimum 1 fan</p> <p>2-3 tube lights</p>
 <p>Furniture</p>	<p>Is adequate furniture is available?</p> <p>Height of the table on which the Ballot Unit is kept should be disabled-friendly</p> <p>Sufficient moving space around the table for wheel chairs</p>

STATE- WISE INFORMATION ON PwDs MAPPING

	ELECTORS								VOTERS					
	Total Electors	Electors with Visual Disability	Electors with Hearing Disability	Electors with Locomotor Disability	Electors with Intellectual Disability	Electors with Multiple Disabilities	Total Electors who are PwD =4+5+6+7+8)	Total Voters	Voters with Visual Disability	Voters with Hearing Disability	Voters with Locomotor Disability	Voters with Intellectual Disability	Voters with Multiple Disabilities	Total Voters who are PwD = 11+12+13+14+15
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
ANI														
Andhra Pr.														
Arunachal (18)	789009	1171	584	270.00	121	82	2158	789009.00	1171	584	270	121	82	2158
Assam														
Bihar (20)	39212025	38476	37347	73156.00	14742	29908	193629	12766933.00	5512	7116	11588	5166	10296	39678
Chandigarh														
Chhattisgarh														
DNH														
Daman-Diu														
Delhi	NA	565	297	490.00	NA	1790	3142	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Goa														
Gujarat														
Haryana (21)	NA	1264	1600	10645	1016	353	14,878	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Himachal	5053003	1844	1388	8555	745	1145	13677	3796408	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	2644* (partial data)
J&K	NA	15222	5009	10398	3415	4789	29145							
Jharkhand	21821976	6593	4163	26003	2752	10966	50497							
Karnataka (33)	19496670	32114	28519	172228	14020	34964	281845	21237301	32648	30116	169279	8523	40241	267737
Kerala														
Lakshadweep														
Madhya Pradesh														

	ELECTORS						VOTERS							
	Total Electors	Electors with Visual Disability	Electors with Hearing Disability	Electors with Locomotor Disability	Electors with Intellectual Disability	Electors with Multiple Disabilities	Total Electors who are PwD =4+5+6+7+8)	Total Voters	Voters with Visual Disability	Voters with Hearing Disability	Voters with Locomotor Disability	Voters with Intellectual Disability	Voters with Multiple Disabilities	Total Voters who are PwD = 11+12+13+14+15
Maharashtra (36)	84897230	16172	12564	33778	8464	17523	88501	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Manipur (11)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1854	2927	Others-1486		7016	
Meghalaya	NA	722	781	1659	802	306	4270	NA	408	959	280	99	2094	
Mizoram	759519	214	549	500	663	263	2189	759519	214	500	663	263	2189	
Nagaland	1191511	806	336	614	NA	568	2321							
Odisha														
Puducherry	954062	1336	2122	6032	1098	54	10642	954062	1336	6032	1098	54	10642	
Punjab	20070231	10152	5187	38864	5278	6771	61252	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Rajasthan														
Sikkim														
Tamil Nadu	57511516	19850	30465	108981	19954	27443	206693							
Telangana														
Tripura														
Uttarakhand	NA	3241	2775	13632	1135	2634	23417	NA	NA	3762	NA	179	4565* (Partial Data)	
Uttar Pradesh	106214972	93558	33130	352267	19742	242873	747610	938855001	17230	148708	11097	117162	349869	
West Bengal	NA	25097	39032	72392	Others-47701		184222	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	

SVEEP TEAM

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SKY IS THE LIMIT

MUSICIAN BORN WITHOUT EARS FINDS HIS GROOVE

He listened to his inner voice. Now, the world is all ears

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Ahmedabad: Once upon a time, there was a musician born in Bonn who wrote about his deafness for the first time when he was 30. He revealed that in the encroaching silence, his inner voice told him loudly to kill himself. "Only my art, that is all that held me back," he said. Now, Niraj Mehta, a musician born in Ahmedabad, was deaf at birth. And there is no holding Niraj back. He is only 23 now, but like the musician from Bonn — Ludwig van Beethoven — Niraj is going places at a young age.

Niraj, who was born without external ears, has been selected to perform in Poland at 'Beats of Cochlea', an international festival for musicians with hearing implants. He will be India's first representative at the event that begins in Warsaw in the second week of July.

Growing up, Niraj — grappling with 75% hearing loss — used people's lip movements as visual cues to construct meaning. He could hear only extremely loud voices. While he inherited his father Suresh Mehta's passion for listening to music and would hum songs, Niraj took up music formally only two years ago. "I would sing while strumming the guitar but could not achieve harmony between my playing and singing," he said.

The life-changing moment for Niraj came

this February when he underwent a bone conduction surgery — in which an implant is used to fire up the cochlea by conducting sound waves through skull bones. Finally, he could hear. "Until I underwent the surgery, I could not hear my own voice. Now, I can play the guitar as well as sing," said Niraj, whose condition is called microtia, a congenital defect because of which external ears are underdeveloped.



INSPIRATIONAL BEAT:
Niraj Mehta

At school, some classmates mocked his deformity. "I used to feel low but later realised that people will show respect if you are successful. If you are passionate about your pursuits, success always comes to you," he said. Niraj is now pursuing a PG course in international business at Brunel University of London, hoping it will help him contribute to his father's garment business. "But perhaps music will shape my career," he mused.

His ability to listen to his instincts has served him well. "My life has changed completely. My dream to study in London has come true. Now I want to achieve more. I did not expect to win a place at 'Beats of Cochlea'," he said.

Niraj's father said he had to plead with his son's teachers to allow him to sit in the first row so that he could decode lip movements. Later, Niraj himself searched for a doctor who could help him. And, in Dr Rajesh Vishwakarma, he found one ready to lend ears to his aspirations.



No Voter to be Left Behind



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग Election Commission of India

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