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Instructions on

Providing Facilities to Persons with Disabilities

September 2016
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भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

"No voter to be left behind"

**Instructions on
Providing Facilities to
Persons with Disabilities
September 2016**



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

" No voter to be left behind"

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No.464/INST /2016/EPS

Dated: 12th March, 2016

To
Chief Electoral Officers
Of all the States and UTs.

Sub: - Providing facilities to Persons with Disabilities (PWD) –reg.

I am directed to invite your attention to the Commission's letter no. 509/110/2004-JS-I dated 21.04.2004, 20.10.2005 & 26.10.2007 and letter no. 464/Direction/2016-EPS, dated 15 February, 2016 regarding providing facilities to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

Each elector is important for better functioning of democracy and must get his/her rights. The Electoral laws not only guarantee equality to persons with disabilities, but also make provisions for facilitating their access and participation in the election process.

The Commission has further decided about the implementation of the directives stated below to be followed uniformly by all States and UTs :-

A-Identifications of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

1. Preliminary data shall be collected by every State with the help of Census, Social Justice & Empowerment Department, Women and Child Welfare Department and Samagra Yojana.
2. 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.
3. Polling Station wise list of 18+ persons with disabilities shall be prepared from the data collected from the above mentioned departments at DEO/ERO/BLO Level.

B-Electoral Roll

1. A separate polling station wise list of PWDs indicating the type of disability shall be prepared from the voter list.
2. 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.
3. PWDs shall be given preference in obtaining facilities at the Polling Stations, Matadata Shayata Kendras (MSKs), Voter Assistance Centers (VACs), Office of DEOs, EROs, ROs etc. All possible steps should be taken to ensure that PWDs are not required to wait in queue.
4. Adequate instructions to facilitate filling-up of forms 6, 7, 8 and 8A shall be provided at the above mentioned help centers.

C-SVEEP

1. An officer shall be designated/appointed assembly-constituency wise for each district. Such officers shall be trained regarding provision of facilities for PWDs.
2. 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).
3. Special/Mobile camps shall be organized to educate and motivate persons with disabilities and regular programs shall be organized through various Media.
4. Efforts shall be made to prepare volunteers from student organizations like NCC, NSS, NYK etc to motivate and create awareness regarding the election process among persons with disabilities.
5. Publicity regarding the services offered by CSCs/ MSKs shall be augmented.
6. Efforts shall be made to have renowned PWDs as District Campus Ambassadors and District /State Icons.

D-Involvement of NGOs/CSOs/DPOs/RWAs

1. Voluntary and other organizations working for PWDs like Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CSOs), Disabled Persons' Organizations (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. Assistance shall be sought from these organizations to provide various facilities to PWDs.
2. Only non-political & non-partisan organizations should be considered to motivate and create awareness among PWDs.

E-System Sensitization and Training

1. Special training sessions shall be organized to sensitize the election machinery to make efforts to address the needs of PWDs.
2. All officers/employees, police officials etc involved in the election process should be clearly instructed on the facilities to be provided to the PWDs.
3. Instructors qualified in sign language and Braille shall be appointed for training purposes.
4. Basic Information regarding election process shall be prepared in Braille script and displayed (in Hindi, English or Regional language in use).
5. Contribution in elections process by PWDs - The PWDs who volunteer to assist in the election process in the form of working at Voter Help Centers, working as BLOs, working in polling team etc should be assigned such work so that they can motivate other PWDs to participate in the election process.

F-Use of technology to provide help to PWDs

1. The websites of each CEO/DEO shall be made user friendly and readily accessible to persons with disabilities.

2. 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 voters' 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.

G-Special Exclusive Polling Stations for PWDs

1. In places/areas/institutions where PWDs reside in large numbers, special polling stations may be set up. For this purpose, the DEO with the endorsement of Chief Electoral Officer should submit proposal for setting up of special polling stations.

H-Improving Physical Access and facilities at polling stations

1. It shall be ensured that polling stations are situated on the ground floor, if not, lift facility/extension of ramp to each floor should be provided.
2. A standardized and uniform design of ramps shall be implemented.
3. Temporary/Mobile ramps shall be made available where ever permanent ramp facility cannot be provided.
4. Access to ramps shall be made smooth in places of sandy and slushy pathways.
5. Ramps shall be provided in such a manner that it directly leads to the door of polling stations to avoid navigating through corridors.
6. Proper approach roads to Polling Stations shall be ensured by local authorities/ respective departments.
7. Mobile barricades in front of Doors of each Polling Station shall be erected.

8. Entrance door of polling station shall be kept wide open and adequate space around the voting compartment should be ensured for wheel chair movement
9. Facility for separate entry should be made available for persons with disabilities wherever possible.
10. Pathway to polling rooms shall have indicators with standard signage.
11. Depending on the number of PWDs among electors in a polling station, facilities like ramp, tricycles, basic information through audio-video, should be made available. These facilities should be physically verified and certified by the Observer deputed by the Commission.
12. Wheel chairs shall be provided at identified polling stations.
13. Priority entry passes shall be issued to persons with disabilities. All possible steps should be taken to ensure that PWDs are not required to wait in queue.

I-Cooperation of Political Parties

1. 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.

J-Statistical data

1. Statistical data should incorporate data regarding PWDs.

Kindly ensure that the instructions given be followed in letter and spirit.

Please acknowledge the receipt of this letter immediately and also confirm action taken as required above at the earliest.

Yours faithfully,
(SUMIT MUKHERJEE)
SECRETARY

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

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No.464/INST/PwD/2016/EPS

Dated 7th September, 2016

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
All the States and Union Territories.

Subject: - Providing facilities to Persons with Disabilities – Regarding.

Madam / Sir,

In continuation to the letter of even number dated 12/03/2016 on the subject cited, the following additional directions are issued by the Commission for ensuring adequate and quality facilitation of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) to ensure their wholesome and constructive participation and active engagement in the election process:-

- I. PwDs in each polling station should be identified by BLOs and its record should be kept in the Database and also as a category-wise separate list;
- II. The names of PwD should 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;
- III. Elaborate instructions on PwD should be prepared by ECI and the same should be displayed outside the Polling Station;
- IV. Voter guide, voter slips and Voter ID cards (EPIC) of visually impaired electors should be prepared in Braille wherever possible;
- V. Department of social Justice should be approached for fulfilling the requirement of wheel Chairs for PwD Voters;

- VI. Neutral youth volunteers should be roped into for facilitation of PwD voters;
- VII. There should be proper Voters' Guide for PwD Voters especially catering to their needs;
- VIII. Assured Minimum Facility (AMF) should be ensured for PwD Voters at each and every Polling Station –
 - a. Permanent ramps with appropriate gradient should be provided as per national standards;
 - b. Braille facility should be provided in the EVMs;
 - c. Proper accessibility to the polling station should be ensured;
 - d. Proper parking facility should be made available at the polling stations;
- IX. The Polling Officials should be given proper training to facilitate PwD and sensitize them about PwD requirements;
- X. Proper environment building and SVEEP activities should be conducted for ethical voting;
- XI. Dissemination of information regarding available facilities should be made known to the Stakeholders, Political Parties, Election Machinery, Media, Electors;
- XII. Exclusive polling booths, as far as practicable, should be set up for PwD 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 should be made available;
- XIII. PwD should be informed in advance about polling stations where facility of online booking for wheel chairs is available;
- XIV. Wherever possible, dummy ballot papers in Braille for visually impaired voters should be prepared;

- XV. Audio applications like voice SMS (web or mobile) for registrations should be developed for visually impaired voters;
2. A comprehensive activity chart (Annexure-I) regarding ease of registration and voting by PwD 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 the desired outcomes. You are requested to initiate immediate steps to implement the above measure in a time bound manner.
3. A separate SVEEP plan should be prepared incorporating information, education and facilitation for Persons with Disabilities.
4. An Action Taken Report in respect of the initiatives and steps taken for facilitation of PwDs as outlined in the instructions herein may be submitted to the Commission within a month.

Yours faithfully,

(Sumit Mukherjee)
Secretary



Annexure-I

Activity chart displaying clarity and coherence regarding ease of registrations 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	Enrollment 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Misuse of facilities by persons other than PwD. 2. Errors of commission and omission in marking. 	Availability of information of electors with disabilities

Activity	Steps	Responsibility	Time Line	Risk	Outcome
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 (SJ & 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.	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	1. Scattered population of PwD, 2. Accounting of type of disability.	Increase in participation of PwD in democratic process.

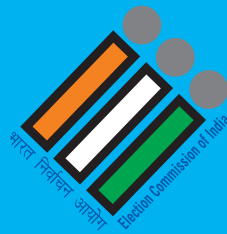
Activity	Steps	Responsibility	Time Line	Risk	Outcome
Creating facilities in Polling Booths according to need of PwD	Providing facilities like Ramps, Signage in Braille as well, Separate queues, Sheds, Seating arrangements, Wheel chairs, Waiting rooms, Assistants etc.	DEO ROs/AROs Nodal Officers	3 months 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.	ROs/AROs BLOs BAGs	15 days prior to poll	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Misuse of the special facility being provided to PwDs. 2. Objections/ complaints may be raised by Political Parties over the facilities provided to PwDs. 	Ease the duties of ROs for making the required arrangements in advance.

Activity	Steps	Responsibility	Time Line	Risk	Outcome
Assistance at Polling Station on poll day.	Enlightening the BLOs, 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 (SJ & DWD)	6 months prior to poll	Objections/ complaints may be raised by Political Parties.	Optimum turnout of electors with disabilities.





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