

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Ashoka Road, Nirvachan Sadan, New Delhi-110001

No: ECI/PN/47/2018

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PRESS NOTE

Election Commission of India holds two days National Consultation on Accessible Elections on 3rd & 4th July, 2018.

Knowledge-sharing, group deliberations on day one of National Consultation on Accessible Elections

The Election Commission of India's two day National Consultation on Accessible Elections scheduled on 3rd & 4th July, 2018 in New Delhi, opened with an enthusiastic start with the participation of more than 50 Civil Society Organizations and all the Chief Electoral Officers of States/UTs besides members of National Political Parties and Ministries, Government of India.



Honourable Chief Election Commissioner, Shri O P Rawat addressing the participants at National Consultation on Accessible Elections

Reaffirming ECI's commitment to make elections entirely inclusive, accessible and hassle free for PwDs, Chief Election Commissioner Shri O P Rawat said in the inaugural session - "Despite having International and National laws and treaties or procedures in place, there is still gap in reaching out to PwDs because of apathy. I urge all the participants to suggest effective measures and help us devise a policy that can serve as a model framework for all Election Management Bodies of the world".

Master Ram Chandra, a technician who was instrumental in creating the Jaipur Foot, which is now famous worldwide for providing assistance to PwDs and like him there are many famous as well as unsung heroes who are the part of war against disability. In addition to that, Election Commissioner Shri Ashok Lavasa emphasised the importance of collaboration with stakeholders and Society as whole, while laying emphasis on awareness initiatives and spirit of volunteering among people to make the entire electoral process accessible. Concluding his remarks he said - “More Sensitize we are, more sensible we become.”

The first day of consultation also witnessed the launch of new dynamic website for ECI’s SVEEP (Systematic Voter’s Education and Electoral Participation) Division with a dedicated section on PwDs and state of the art security and accessibility features.

The first technical session commenced with a presentation by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment followed by the presentation of Best Practices on Accessible Elections by the Chief Electoral Officers of Karnataka, West Bengal, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Meghalaya and District Election Officer of Mandya, Karnataka.



Participants assessing the state reports and deliberating upon the thematic aspects of their presentation.

Post-lunch technical session involved division of working groups as per the five main disabilities and deliberations on three core themes, Accessible Registration Process including Use of IT; Accessible Polling Station including EVM/VVPAT & Other Facilitation measures; Voter Education Outreach and Leveraging Partners.

The *National Consultation on Accessible Elections* is the culmination of more than 3-month long series of District-Level and State-Level Workshops undertaken as a part of ECI's theme for 2018- *Accessible Elections*, to identify barriers in the inclusion of PwDs in the electoral process, assess the present accessibility policies in place and put forward recommendations for addressing barriers to enhance the participation of the differently-abled.



Honourable CEC and ECs visiting Exhibition on various voter awareness initiatives.

The fruitful and meaningful two day Consultation would pave the way for evolving a comprehensive policy framework on 'Accessible Elections' which will help in making electoral process more accessible in the forthcoming State and National Elections. It would be a significant step in pursuit of Election Commission's mission to leave no voter behind.

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(Pawan Diwan)
Under Secretary