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VOICE International

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Voter Education for Informed & Ethical Voting





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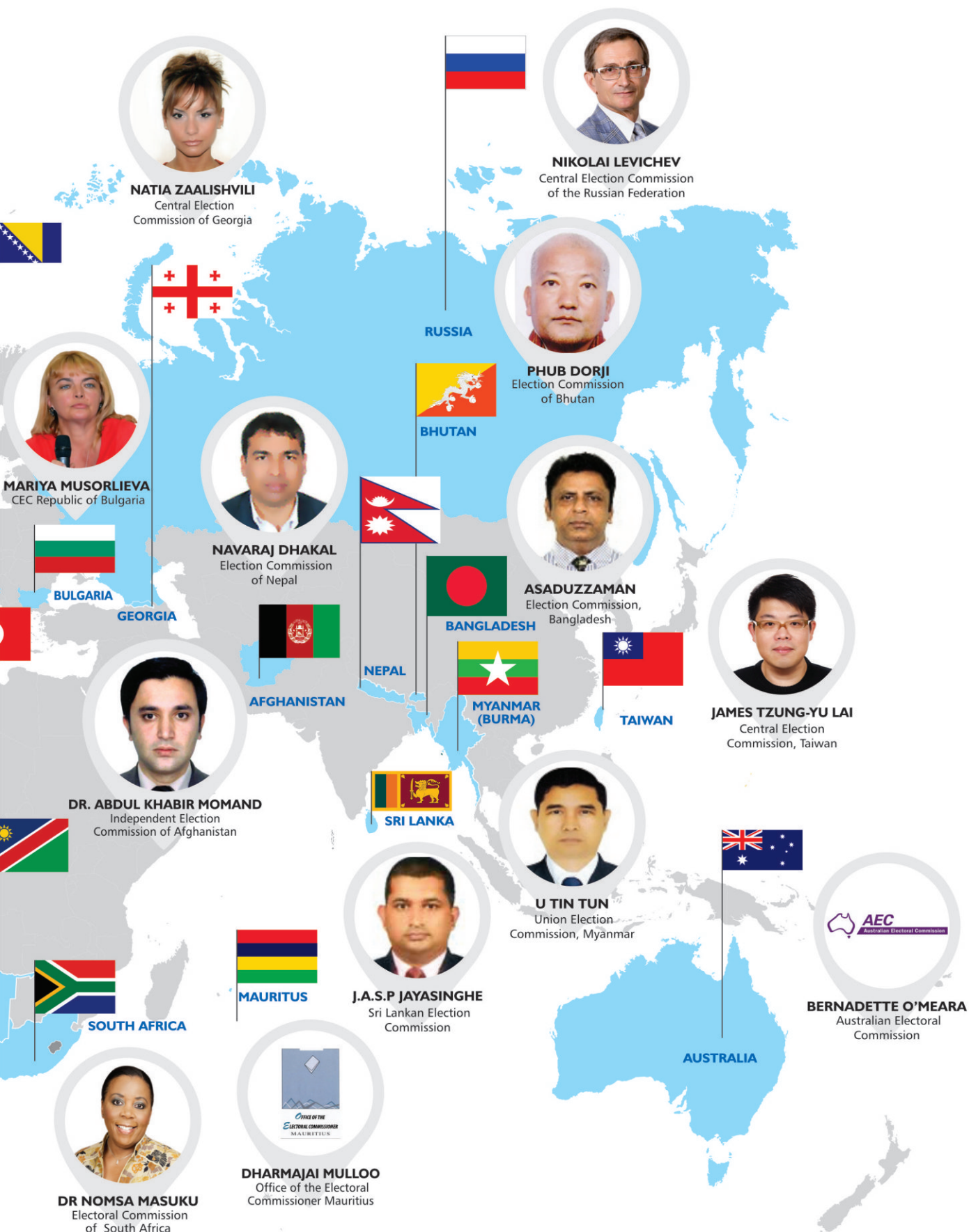
NAMIBIA



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of Namibia



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Editorial

Dear Reader,
It gives me immense pleasure to share with you that 'VoICE International has successfully completed two years of its journey in sharing knowledge and global experience on a thematic progression. Starting with the challenges of citizenship development and investment in future of democracy in the inaugural Issue with the theme 'Strategies for Empowering Young and Future Voters' the journey of the magazine covered themes on 'Voter Education for Enhancing Gender Participation', 'Special Initiatives for Enhancing Participation by the Persons with Disabilities' and 'Enabling Overseas Electors and Service Voters' in subsequent Issues during the first year.



The thematic progression continued during the second year and the successive Issues of your magazine covered themes 'Using Digital Technology & Social Media; 'Voter Education through Educational Institutions' followed by 'Making Polling Stations Accessible and Voter Friendly'. I find it a very satisfying outcome at VoICE.NET when I look at this treasure of shared knowledge of practice, experience and there is so much to learn from each other.

'Voter Education for Informed & Ethical Voting' is important for health of democracy and as such requires investment in empowering voters through information, awareness and motivation for participation besides enabling a voter to appreciate significance and relevance of ethical voting. The voter education has to empower an elector for taking informed, considered and confident ballot decisions. Different EMBs have shaped up their systems for informed and ethical voting, yet there is lot more to be done. In this Issue, EMBs of BiH, Georgia, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Maldives, India besides International IDEA share rich experience on the subject besides papers on good practices from Russia. The Issue further brings to you interesting snippets, election updates, international events and announcements of interest from different EMBs and International Institutions. We stand to gain from this vibrant experience sharing through VoICE International at VoICE.NET Platform.

I heartily thank the authors for making valuable contribution and look forward to their continued support to the magazine through more contributory articles for knowledge sharing.

I dedicate this Issue to the cause of 'Voters; Empowered for Informed and Ethical Voting'.

Umesh Sinha
Executive Secretary, VoICE.NET
Editor-in-Chief, VoICE International

C O N T E N T S

Country	Feature	Score
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	Voter Education for Informed and Ethical Voting	9
FIJI	Fiji's 'Know Your Election [KYE]' Awareness Drives	12
GEORGIA	Voter Education – Georgian Experience	16
INDIA	SVEEP – Voter Education and Outreach for Lok Sabha Election 2019	22
	Social Media: Ethics for Elections	27
	The 100 Minute Success Story of cVIGIL	32
MALDIVES	Voter Education for Informed & Ethical Voting	37
INTERNATIONAL IDEA	The Informed and Ethical Voter – Whose Responsibility?	39
FEATURES		
	The Informed Voter: Empowered Voter	41
AUSTRALIA	Australian Electoral Commission	43
CANADA	Elections Canada	45
KENYA	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, Kenya	47
USA	U.S. Election Assistance Commission	49
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS	Electing the next European Parliament: 40 years since first direct elections	53
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES		
KAZAKHSTAN	About The Pilot Project 'Elections of the School President'	55
RUSSIA	Implementation of the electoral rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Russian Federation	59
	Use of the 'Mobile Voter' system in elections in the Russian Federation	64
PERSPECTIVES OF INCLUSION		
EL SALVADOR	El Salvador elects a new President	69
ESTONIA	Electronic voting surge in Estonian election	70
INDIA	General Election to 17 th Lok Sabha witnesses highest turnout ever	71
INDONESIA	Indonesia Holds World's Largest Single-Day Election	80
ISRAEL	Israel elects 21 st Knesset Closely contested election throws up tie	81
KOREA	Korean National Assembly Elections	82
MOLDOVA	Moldova gets a new Parliament	82
NIGERIA	Nigeria conducts 'triple' elections	83
SENEGAL	Macky Sall retains Presidency in Senegal	84
GLOBAL ELECTION UPDATE		

C O N T E N T S

85	A-WEB	
86	Argentina	
87	India	
89	India	
95	Indonesia	
96	International IDEA	
	EVENTS	
97	BELGIUM	
98	INDIA	
99	JAPAN	
100	KOREA	
101	MALAWI	
102	MAURITANIA	
103	SINGAPORE	
	ANNOUNCEMENTS	
		• My Vote Matters 104
		• VoICE International 105
		• Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies? 106
		• The Party Abroad And Its Role For National Party Politics 107
		• Violence Against Women in Elections in Afghanistan: An IFES Assessment 108
	PUBLICATIONS	
		GLOSSARY 109
		QUIZ 110



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Voter Education for Informed and Ethical Voting

The Election Law of BiH stipulates that the BiH Central Election Commission shall disseminate voter information and other information necessary for the implementation of this Law through the official gazettes and the media in and outside Bosnia and Herzegovina. The so-called passive registration of voters in the country has been in effect since 2006, and it means that the Central Voters Register is prepared on the basis of the official records contained in the Civil Registry of the Citizens. In accordance with its legal obligation, the BiH Central Election Commission continuously publishes information of importance to voters and informs the public about its work and efforts to improve the work of the institution and the electoral practice in BiH.

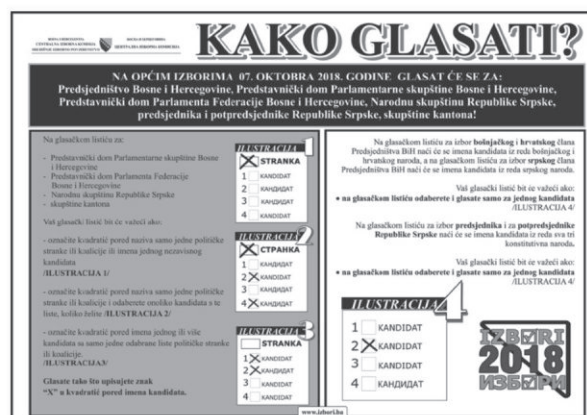
Activities related to the BiH Central Election Commission's information campaign are particularly intensified in the election year and can be divided into two segments:

- Educational campaign
- Motivational campaign

The implementation period of the educational campaign lasts from the announcement of the elections in May until the end of September, given that the elections in BiH are held on the first Sunday in October, while the motivational campaign lasts one month before the Election Day.

Educational campaign Voter registration in the Central Voters Register takes place in several stages throughout the election year, depending on the voter category it covers. There are 4 (four) categories of voters:

1. Voters who wish to **stand as candidates** at the elections (we remind them that they must have a permanent place of residence in the constituency for which they wish to run by the day elections are announced at the latest);
2. Voters who have the **status of a displaced person**, we inform the voters about the modes of registration in the Central Voters Register and the possibility to change the voting option. A TV-Telop is prepared for this category of voters, and it is broadcast on public and private TV stations, whilst the printed ad Selecting a Voting Option is published six times in three daily newspapers on the territory of BiH at the time of highest circulation;
3. **Regular voters**, for whom a printed information ad is published explaining the modes of registration in the Central Voters Register;
4. **Voters living outside of BiH**, educational and information campaigns for this category of voters are done primarily through the BiH CEC's website, to which all relevant materials are uploaded as from the day elections are announced. The Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina has for the 2018 General Election produced a TV-Telop for voters living outside of BiH, which was broadcast by the public and private TV stations. In order to motivate and educate voters living outside BiH, the BiH Central



Election Commission has intensified its activities in 2018 and has undertaken additional activities to motivate voters living outside BiH. In the period May 10 to July 2, 2018 the BiH CEC organized a direct information and education campaign by visiting the voters in the countries in which a significant number of out-of-country voters has been registered.

Educational campaign ‘How to vote’ is intended inform the voters about the bodies of authority for which elections are conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina (local or general elections) and about the correct way to mark the ballot. This campaign lasts a month before the Election Day, and includes TV spots, printed ads and promotional leaflets in daily newspapers with detailed instructions on how to properly mark the ballot; as well as posters ‘How to vote’ to be put up at the polling stations.

Educational campaign – Abuse of voting right

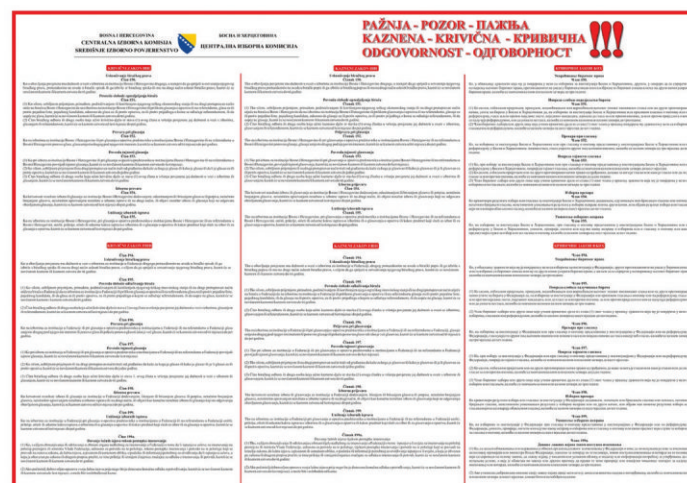
The Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina prepares and prints poster that shows relevant provisions of the BiH Criminal Code, the Criminal Code of RS and the Criminal Code of FBiH.

The aforementioned provisions set forth penalties for voters or members of polling station committees who violate the voters’ freedom to make decision, commit a fraud during voting, deny voting right, or breach secrecy of the vote. The criminal codes set forth sanctions for these violations, which can be either a pecuniary fine or even imprisonment for three months up to five years.

The poster ‘Abuse of Voting Right’ is printed and distributed to all polling stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and it is put up at the polling station’s entrance. In this way, the Central Election Commission of BiH points to the importance of ethical voting and the secrecy of the vote, which both informative and educational in nature.

SMS – center

Furthermore, in 2008 the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina established an election service - SMS center,



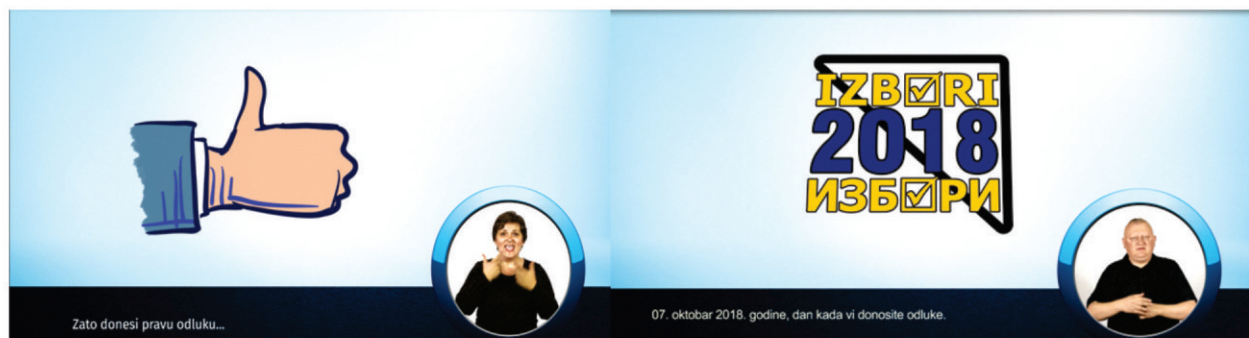
which is actually a unique phone number for all mobile networks through which every voter can check location of his/her polling station by sending a message containing the Unique Citizens’ Identification Number. The telop with the SMS center number is broadcast at prime time by all electronic media – before and after news. The SMS center received 76.856 messages in 2018.

Motivational campaign

The aim of the motivational campaign of the BiH Central Election Commission is to motivate the voters to go out and exercise their voting right, and the campaign lasts a month before the Election Day.

The motivational campaign is conducted in the form of TV ads and radio jingles that are broadcast on all public and most private media outlets. Motivational TV ads and radio jingles were broadcast from 15.09.2018 to 07.10.2018 and it was intended for all voters.

Within the framework of the Council of Europe’s pre-election assistance program for the 2016 Local Elections, the BiH Central Election Commission had in the period September 1-30, 2016 organized and carried out an information and education campaign for three target groups: women, national minorities and senior citizens. The goal of this campaign was to raise awareness of voters in these target groups and to actively involve them in the electoral process.



All campaigns of the BiH Central Election Commission are realized through electronic (TV and radio) media, and print media. It is important to emphasize that the law stipulates the obligation for the public electronic media to broadcast radio and TV ads, entire statements and information by the Central Election Commission of BiH free of

Also, all video material is available on the website of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Information Communication Technologies used by the Central Election Commission of BiH to inform the voters are:



charge for the purpose of informing voters about all aspects of the electoral process.

In 2018, TV spots, telops and radio jingles prepared by the Central Election Commission of BiH for education and motivation of voters were broadcast on 16 public TV stations and 53 radio stations. The Central Election Commission of BiH also sent the voter information materials to private TV/radio stations (approximately 30 private TV stations and 87 radio stations)

- Info line for voters, making information accessible to voters and communication via telephone and e-mail possible,
- SMS center for checking the location of the polling station,
- YouTube channel to present videos from informational and motivational campaign.

Zehra Tepić

*Voter Education Specialist, Central Election Commission
Bosnia & Herzegovina*

Fiji's 'Know Your Election [KYE]' Awareness Drives

Introduction

A well-documented platform for the Fijian Elections Office [FEO] awareness programs was devised for the 2018 General Election whereby key messages were standardized for its respective target audience.

With the aim of equipping voters with enough knowledge to actively participate in the electoral processes, the information plan was successfully implemented amongst all FEO stakeholders. A voter turnout of 72 per cent attests to this commitment. The FEO capitalized on existing and new channels of communications to convey its messages during the KYE Awareness Drive.

The Know Your Election Awareness Drive

The launch of the voter awareness drive named Know Your Election was done on March 14, 2018 at Fiji's Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva. This voter awareness drive served as a platform for the FEO to capture its key target audiences [voters] and to ensure the successful delivery of critical information relating to the conduct of elections in Fiji. The FEO designed a multi-media and multi-lingual voter awareness approach which was based on six general themes:

- When to vote
- Where to vote
- How to vote
- All Fijians should vote
- General reminder for Election Day and Pre-Poll voters
- The ideal voter



Members of the Electoral Commission and the Supervisor of Elections with the awareness materials at the launch of the Know Your Election Awareness Drive, at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva, Fiji.

Along with the launch of the awareness drive, and for the first time in Fiji's history, the FEO launched an information booklet titled Election Information Booklet, which served as a primary awareness tool, containing all relevant electoral information for the voter. These included instructions on how to vote, illustrations of a standard Polling Station layout and pictorials, methods of voting, the counting process, the declaration of results and allocation of seats. The FEO printed and distributed 673, 000 booklets which was translated into six [6] different languages.



FEO's Graphics Designer, Ronald Mario [right] receives an award from the Electoral Commission. All voter awareness material was designed in-house by the FEO.

The breakdown is as follows:

English – 335,000 copies printed and distributed

I'Taukei [Fijian] – 200,000 copies printed and distributed

Hindi – 120,000 copies printed and distributed

Rotuman – 10,000 copies printed and distributed

Chinese – 5,000 copies printed and distributed

Banaban – 3,000 copies printed and distributed



FEO staff, Aseri Baivi [left] handing out an Election Information Booklet to a voter.

The first phase of the KYE ran for six weeks starting March 15, 2018 to April 30, 2018. Special attention was paid to Pre-Poll voting areas with specially designed voter information for these voters. Along with the EIB, the FEO designed flip charts on electoral processes leading to the 2018 General Election as well as informing voters about the voting process. The FEO used flip charts as a tool to conduct voter awareness considering that a large number of rural areas covered did not have proper access to electricity.



Voter Awareness Assistants using a flipchart at the Marist Brothers High School in Suva, Fiji.

Similarly, the teams who were out in the field conducting awareness sessions also carried with them a 3D Model [diorama] of a Polling Station to demonstrate the voting process.



The 3D Model [diorama] of a Polling Station. This was used by the Voter Awareness Assistant during the KYE Awareness Drive.

During the KYE, the FEO deployed 40 Voter Awareness teams using the rural to urban approach, starting from the most remote villages and communities and working their way towards peri-urban and urban areas. The FEO had designed special back-packs for Voter Awareness Assistant's [VAA's] to use when deployed to villages. This bag was designed to be waterproof, compatible and cater for all the resources required.



Supervisor of Elections, Mohammed Saneem shows the special bag to the President of the Republic of Fiji, [Retired] Major General Jioji Konrote, during his visit to the FEO.

During the KYE, the senior management of the FEO as well as the Electoral Commission got involved in the voter outreach program. The Supervisor of Elections, Mohammed Saneem, and the Electoral Commission Chairperson, Suresh Chandra, along with other members of the Commission visited several communities, schools and villages to speak directly with voters. They also held informal “talanoa” (dialogue) sessions with voters.



Electoral Commissioner, Simone Naiduki and the Supervisor of Elections, Mohammed Saneem during the Q & A session at Bua Village [an interior village] in the Northern Division of the country.

The awareness teams visited a total of 1,589 villages around the country and conducted a total of 3,780 voter awareness sessions.



Chairperson of the Electoral Commission Suresh Chandra and Commissioner Ratu Paula Halaiwalu with voters of Baulevu Village, Naitasiri during the KYE Awareness Drive.

To complement the KYE, the FEO ran a mass media campaign to educate voters on the 2018 General Election. These included daily advertising on radio, television, newspapers and billboards.

The FEO also produced two-minute educational videos which aired every night on two of Fiji's prominent television stations, Fiji TV and FBC TV during prime-time viewership. The messages were based on the following themes:

- Key dates
- Registration
- Postal Voting
- Pre-Poll voting
- Election Day voting
- Ballot Paper printing process
- Results – Provisional and Final Results
- Seat Allocation



The Know Your Election Awareness Drive II

A delay in the announcement of the 2018 General Election date, provided an opportunity for the FEO to launch a second voter awareness drive, which ran from September 18, 2018 to October 1, 2018 – targeting maritime areas.

25 teams were deployed to 282 Polling Venues which were under Pre-Polling, as access to FEO Voter Services was not as easy for voters as compared to the mainland. The FEO also deployed another set of 105 teams in all the four Divisions of the country. 70, 000 Pre-Poll voting brochures were distributed, along with 30, 000 Person of Choice brochures and approximately 600, 000 Election Day brochures.

Newspaper publication of the awareness schedules ran for 15 consecutive days during the three weeks' drive to ensure that voters were informed on when the teams would be coming to their communities. The FEO also used radio announcer mentions to disseminate information for voters who do not have access to newspapers or other means of mass communication.

KYE II was also heavily used to encourage eligible Fijians to register to vote in the 2018 General Election. While teams were deployed to maritime areas, the FEO set up mobile registration centres in all major towns and cities. To market these effectively, the FEO booked live Outside Broadcasts with the two main local radio stations.



Voters gather at the FEO tent to utilize FEO's services during the Outdoor Broadcast.

Together with radio and newspaper advertising, the FEO also invested in television advertisements urging eligible Fijians to register.

2018 General Election – Final Report of the Multinational Observer Group

The MOG in its Final Report commended the FEO for its extensive voter information and awareness efforts in advance of the Election.

Its campaigns were highly visible and generally well-targeted to include typically marginalized voters, including women, people with disabilities, young people and those living in remote communities.

CONCLUSION

The FEO believes that voter education is a major contribution to electoral integrity, and thus was an avenue for FEO to disseminate balanced, non-partisan and objective information on what voters need to know in order to exercise their right to vote. The Know Your Election Awareness Drive produced fruitful outcomes as voters contacted the FEO through social media, emails and verbal communication, commending the effectiveness of the publications and educational materials disseminated. The effectiveness was also reported by the Multinational Observer Group in its final report for the 2018 General Election. The voter turnout of 72.5% attests to this commitment as well.

Shivika Mala

Public Relations Officer, Fijian Elections Office



Voter Education – Georgian Experience

Over past decades, Georgia has been striving to build its institutions and bring them in line with good international standards. Ever since restoring its independence in the early 90s, Georgia set a goal to make up for the years lost during the Soviet occupation and catch up with rapidly changing and developing world. In some instances, Georgia has been successful while in others it was lagging behind the developed world. And it does not come as a surprise since country after announcing its independence in 1991 has experienced a number of conflicts slowing down the country's rapid development and moving aside its so-called Western aspirations. And there were some other reasons in play posing threat to Georgia's success story to unfold, however, over the years, country's persistence and efforts paid off and resulted in the leading role of Georgia of the region. No success can be achieved in the democratic world if the legitimacy of elections - the cornerstone of the democratic system is questioned. So, when we speak about Georgia's achievements, elections is first to name. In view of elections, we should keep in mind key players - Election Management Body (EMB), domestic organizations, international organizations, and media, as each of them, has played important role in developing country's electoral culture for good. As simple as it sounds, voter education is a significant part of the electoral culture. It is increasingly important for a young democracy as Georgia is having well-informed and educated

voters who are ready to cast their votes. And that's what falls within our competence as EMB and where we put all our mechanisms and resources in play to respond effectively to voters' needs and make our electoral system more voter-oriented and simple.

In fact, over the years, voter education has been a central aspect for Election Administration (EA) of Georgia. It still remains as one of the main priorities and is envisaged in respective 2015-2019 Strategic Plan as well as in 2019 Action Plan of EA of Georgia.

What We Did and How It Played Out

In recent years, CEC developed and refined its communication and outreach capabilities to effectively engage the wider public in the electoral process. There are a number of educational-learning programs and promotional events EA of Georgia runs to achieve its goal of voter education. What's important, CEC approaches different age groups and individuals from different cultural backgrounds ranging from senior students of public schools to young adults and beyond. In this light, it is important to note that CEC in cooperation with the CEC Training Centre, furthered its goal of voter education by implementing informational-learning course Elections and Young Voter for senior students of public schools in the regions densely populated with ethnic minorities and high mountainous regions of Georgia.

Among other projects, Electoral Development School is worth underlining as it is precisely designed for youth and aims at increasing their civic engagement and boosting their understanding of the electoral process. Speaking of inclusion of different vulnerable groups, CEC made an important decision and in addition to other schools, opened up Electoral Development



Electoral Development School



School in Akhmeta Municipality for the youth from Pankisi Gorge inhabited by ethnic minorities and also, for the youth from Akhlagori Municipality living in Tserovani – the village of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

The CEC Training Centre under the auspices of the CEC implements various educational

programs including one-semester learning course in election law for the students of law faculty as well as political and social science faculty students at 19 Higher Education Institutions. CEC Training Centre also implements Legal Clinic project for law faculty students to deepen their professional knowledge on election law and raise their civic awareness.

Learning Process Studies



After reaching out different to segments of the population through a number of learning courses, social networks, and modern technologies, CEC decided to move beyond theoretical and formal education and initiated project 'Talk to Voters' involving face-to-face interaction with potential voters on electoral issues. By doing it, CEC

created a connection with voters residing in different parts of the country. As part of the project, 450 meetings were held throughout Georgia and 48,174 citizens participated in the activity. In 2018, the scope of the campaign has expanded and considers informing not only voters living in Georgia but also those living abroad.

Promo Event - Akhalkalaki



Contributions and Insights

The key to having educated and informed voters is the continuity and sustainability of educational/ learning programs. In other words, to run projects on a regular basis, consistently, and without disruption, by also applying new goods and innovative methods. Moreover, having well-elaborated courses at different levels, including basic, general, and specialized training courses.

Tamar Zhvania, CEC Chairperson considers that the EA as any other institution should have an educational function within its respective competence. Zhvania, admits that the electoral culture has significantly improved but also singles out the low political culture when members of public know the voting procedure but lack information on political parties' programs, ideology and philosophy. As she put it "on one

hand, we have improved public awareness on the electoral process, and on the other hand, we have political elite unable to pass their programs to voters and this is the area which needs to be improved".

With reference to electoral culture and current situation in Georgia, Natia Zaalishvili, Director of CEC Training Centre, shared that electoral culture has increased in Georgia and cited satisfaction surveys of beneficiaries of CEC Training Centre's projects as well as dramatic rise in voter turnout in recent presidential election of 2018; she also added that significantly increased voter turnout could have been prompted by political views, nonetheless educational/ learning programs have played a role and stereotype that votes don't matter has been destroyed.

Whether it is educational project held at Higher

// *Promo Event -Kaspi* //



Seminars for Studies



Training Project



Education Institution or promotional event carried out at public place, CEC regularly tries to reach out different segments of the population and bring elections to them, inspire and motivate youth to be part of the political process and work on increasing electoral culture. No doubt, EA of Georgia will keep advancing its educational/ learning programs and promotional events in the

future and focus on creating an environment where active citizens from all age groups and cultural backgrounds decide their future and well-being by joining the democratic process and casting their votes.

Kristina Tolordava
CEC of Georgia



SVEEP – Voter Education and Outreach for Lok Sabha Election 2019



Voting is signified by the mark of the indelible ink on the index finger. Hence the 'matra' (line) of Mahatyohar is drawn as a straight line in violet colour, denoting the ink mark. The animation of the logo is a true embodiment of festivity, with the bugle sounding the advent of the Lok Sabha Elections 2019 and colour spreading in all directions. It ends with a hand drawing the violet line signifying the ink mark on the finger.

Lok Sabha Election or the General Election to the Lower House of Parliament of India has been rightly called world's largest democratic exercise. The sheer size of the electorate, the number of officials engaged, the number of Polling Stations set up and the quantity of election material used is humongous, to say the least.

On the eve of the Lok Sabha Election 2019, the electorate stood at a mammoth 909 million spread across 3.287 mnsq km. Ofcourse this electorate included the few thousands of overseas electors who were outside the geographical boundaries of the subcontinent(country).

The Electoral Roll is prepared in 16 languages and more than 12 million officials were engaged in the elections which were conducted in 7 phases running over 39 days from April 11 to May 19, 2019. The election was

kicked off with the announcement on March 10, 2019 and results were declared on the May 23, 2019.

The exercise, like past elections, has its own issues, challenges and complexities which have

been addressed through professionalism, continued innovation, integration of technology, strategic interventions and initiatives and above all, the leadership provided by the Commission to deliver 'Free, Fair and Credible Elections' to the nation as per its constitutional mandate. The Commission has planned meticulously for each and every aspect of electoral process down to the polling station level with a view to maximize participation based on the premise of 'No Voter to be Left Behind'.

Voter's Pledge

"We, the Citizens of India, having abiding faith in democracy, hereby pledge to uphold the democratic traditions of our country and the dignity of free, fair and peaceful elections, and to vote in every election fearlessly and without being influenced by considerations of religion, race, caste, community, language or any other inducement."

Of the various aspects of the election management exercise, one of the unique but crucial aspects is the Voter education and

outreach programme of Election Commission of India, called the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation, the Flagship Voter Education programme of the ECI with the acronym SVEEP.

Essential Components

Built around the principle of **Information, Motivation and Facilitation**, SVEEP utilizes every possible connect with voters to give (empower) them information about the electoral process and services and to motivate them to register and (encourage) them to vote. Facilitation is extended in every possible manner to make the process accessible, pleasant (and memorable).

Specific emphasis on ethical voting is introduced through 'National Voters' Day' celebration annually on January 25 to mark the Foundation Day of ECI. Emphasis on ethical voting is an integral component of this simultaneous celebration across over a million polling station areas of the country besides district, state and the national level.

With the introduction of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) with every Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), it was crucial to familiarize voters with the VVPAT. Accordingly EVM-VVPAT familiarization was a major focus ahead of Lok Sabha election with the machines taken up in Vans for demonstration and hands on experience to cover all hamlets, booths and villages, besides colleges and organizations.

A Voter Guide, prepared in local language that carries all important information is given to all electors ahead of poll day. The Guide is also prepared in Braille for blind electors.

Facilitation of citizens remains the core area of SVEEP interventions with citizens being extended services through IT interventions, house to house outreach and mass media so as to make electoral services accessible to all. Registration facility through online services, offline, volunteers and



through mobile apps have been extended, information is disseminated at every possible outlet including posters in villages, pamphlets, hoardings and mass media besides folk media like street plays, song groups etc.

While Booth Level Officer is the last and the most vital connect of ECI at the Booth Level, both in rural and urban areas, it is the other government field level workers like Health Workers, Literacy Workers, Postal Officials etc., who remain the most effective partner in our connect with the people in villages. Civil Society and NGOs help ECI in reaching out to the niche audience. Volunteers from organizations like National Cadet Corp, and other youth organizations help facilitate voters on poll day and also help election officials in voter awareness. Mobilization activities close to poll day help amplify the message and multiply the reach. These are high visibility events like runs, human chains, competitions, rallies etc and are widely covered in media and help raise interest and awareness.

Celebrities are taken as Election Ambassadors and Icons to reach out to a wider audience. They have played an important role in motivating the people to associate with the electoral process.

Accessible Elections

Accessible Election was the theme for the National Voters' Day 2018 and remained the focus for the Lok Sabha Election 2019. Based on

the inputs from all stakeholders in cascaded consultations held over 2018 on 'Accessibility', the action plan on Accessible Election was drawn up ahead of elections and rolled out to ensure that the services and Polling Station is made accessible to all persons with disabilities besides senior citizens. Concerted efforts were made to make the registration and voting process accessible, besides making voter awareness material and process accessible to all. Electors with disabilities were mapped Polling Station wise to enable election officials to extend specific facilitation on poll day. Voter ID card in Braille, pick and drop facility on poll day, Voter Guide in braille for blind electors, sign language help for deaf voters, ramps and wheel chairs and Volunteers were some of the facilitation measures extended at the Polling Station. Around 6.5 million electors with disabilities were mapped and extended specific assistance on poll day.

National Media Campaign

For the first time, a comprehensive national media campaign was taken up to supplement the media and outreach campaign by the provinces. Broadly all major topics were covered and after discussions and deliberation the theme of 'celebration' was chosen and the election was termed 'Festival of festivals' or 'Desh Ka Mahatyohar'. Based on past years' experience including the KAP survey, messages were created around the 12 identified topics. A separate campaign targeting Persons with Disabilities was also taken up and disseminated in accessible format to cover all disabilities.

With festivity as the theme, it was decided to take children portraying adults as the protagonists in the video campaign, to underline the message in a humorous fashion. The script was prepared using real-life scenarios with rhyming dialogues that were simple and entertaining. Vital issues to be addressed were chalked out and the topics included registration, facilitation, checking the

name in the voter list, informed and ethical voting, service voters, overseas voters, women voters and helpline.

Inspirational creatives were designed for hoardings and placed at popular junctions all over India. With the tag lines 'Ready to vote in Lok Sabha election 2019?' and 'My Vote Matters', these mainly focused on inclusion of the third gender, women, youth, service voters, persons with disabilities, etc.



Advertisements on newspapers with tag line #GoRegister #GoVerify #GoCall #GoVote covered all topics ranging from registration, verification, helpline, locating polling station/ BLO to awareness on EVM/VVPAT and different apps for promoting informed and ethical voting.



The motivational campaign for persons with disabilities provided information regarding various facilities provided for them at the polling stations to make it accessible.



Radio remains a powerful medium in India. Collaboration with the public broadcaster All India Radio (AIR) was undertaken for motivational true election stories in form of story telling session of 3 to 5 minutes. A 30 minute radio series on election related stories called 'Chunav ki Kahaniya', was aired during election period which was a story of a grandfather and NRI granddaughter conducting a research on elections. Grass-root coverage was also undertaken with Community Radio. Workshops were arranged with Community Radios all over India to help them impart important electoral information to their listeners.



Going the extra mile, Indian Railways and Election Commission of India collaborated to wrap trains with the message #GoVote in Lok Sabha election 2019. Identified long distance trains traversing the length and breadth of India were selected. The concept underlying the initiative was to reach out to large number of people across the length and breadth of country through Indian railways in simple and direct message of electoral participation. The trains were flagged off in short ceremonies to publicise and reach out to larger audience through wide media coverage as well.



Social Media

ECI forayed into social media in 2016, specifically for voter education. The experiment was slowly scaled up and in January 2018, ECI formally launched its official Facebook Page. Ahead of Lok Sabha Election, the Commission decided to launch the Twitter handle and Instagram page specifically for voter education and outreach. Over the two month period ECI could garner

more than 73K followers on Twitter besides the close to 300K followers on Facebook.

Posts are planned in a structured manner to include notifications and important information etc. besides anecdotes for inspiration. 'Shout Out' on poll day included different campaigns such as selfie with inked finger #GotInked and placards/ slogans on elections. Quiz #VoterQuotient on @ECISVEEP and Polls on Twitter witnessed remarkable response and all winners were given ECI merchandise with election messages.



Google Doodle carried the inked finger to mark the beginning of Lok Sabha Elections 2019 on April 11, 2019. Moreover, Google has provided numerous features pro bono. Google Posts provides the facility to give a customised response to searches related to Election Commission on Google. Moreover, all questions related to elections on Google were redirected to the Election Commission of India website for authentic answers to these queries. This has helped clear many doubts.

Mx Democracy, a digital game on electoral literacy was developed to engage young and digitally active populace and impart them electoral education in a fun manner. It is seen that smart phones are most popular amongst future and new voters (16-25 years) and hence a mobile app was devised for the same.



Outcome

The Lok Sabha Election 2019 witnessed more than 613 million voters turn up to cast their vote despite the scorching heat of Indian summers. Of these around 292.4 million were women voters. The election witnessed the highest ever voter turnout of 67.47% which was 1.03% higher than the last Lok Sabha election in 2014, which itself was historic in terms of highest ever turnout then. 17 Provinces recorded higher voter turnout over last election and 11 provinces recorded historic turnout ever. The increase in number of voters were 57 million compared to 2014.

With women as primary focus of the entire SVEEP programme, it was expected that the women turnout will increase and the women of India did not disappoint. In 18 provinces women turnout was higher than men turnout percentage and there were 13 provinces where women voters outnumbered men voters. The overall turnout of women stood at 66.79%, an increase of 1.5% over 2014 when it was 65.5%. The Gender Gap on an average, stood reduced to a meagre 0.10 percentage points against the 1.55% in 2014.

It was also heartening to see senior citizens and persons with disabilities coming out in large numbers to exercise their franchise making true ECI's commitment towards "No Voter to be Left Behind".



Umesh Sinha

*Sr. Deputy Election Commissioner, ECI
& Chief Editor, VoICE International*



Social Media: Ethics for Elections

Social Media is no more a new phenomenon in our lives. In fact the impact is so deepening that it has become indispensable media and communication. With the unique advantage of ability to actively and quickly interact, engage, and respond to end number of users at a time or customize as per convenience, without spending much effort, time and money, social media has become the primary channel for engagement today. Soon after emergence of Social Media and taking pace as the new mass media it has started arousing holistic concerns over the need of monitoring its content.

Challenges

The very strength of limitlessness of content sharing nature of these social media platforms is becoming challenging today. The continuous pressure to be first and the demand to produce content to get likes comments and shares sometimes gets users involved in various kinds of illegal and unethical activities. Anyone with an internet connection can be publisher using his handheld device. Checking on authenticity of a news item or any content for that matter and verifying the source of that information has been a real challenge. By the time it gets through authenticity check, damage is already done. The damage caused in the physical world generated

from the virtual space through fake news of late, has made the responsible people think about the possible remedial measures. Indian elections are also no exception in terms of the indispensable positive or adverse impact of social media over it.

Global Scenario

Governments around the world including India are looking at laws to enable law enforcement agencies for national security. US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have demanded access to decrypted data to fight global terrorism, protect national security, and for investigation of serious crimes. Australia's anti-encryption law in the democratic world, UK's Investigatory Powers Act in 2016 and 'equipment interference' US's responsible encryption - effective, secure encryption that resists criminal intrusion but allows lawful access with judicial authorization. It was a recommendation by a parliamentary committee in Canada that Social Media platforms based in Canada should be regulated by a law forcing them to delete manifestly illegal content in a timely fashion including hate speech harassment and disinformation.

ECI's venture into social media

Besides the risk and sensitivity involved with social media platforms, it has its own undeniable advantage of popular public accessibility and mass consumer size. To fulfill Election Commission of India's motto 'No Voter to be Left Behind' and simultaneously to make the electorate more aware about electoral laws, rights and responsibilities, ECI made its introductory presence in social media through its official Facebook Page and Youtube Channel on January 24, 2018. Meanwhile the Commission also decided to have a dedicated, full-fledged in-house set up and accordingly inaugurated Social Media Communication Hub (SMCH) under the aegis of its Media and Communication Division which was the first major step in this regard.



Since then, ECI has been incessantly educating, interacting and sharing all relevant information with 40000 organic followers in Youtube and around 400000 (till date) and using this interactive popular media to convey the message to every category of stakeholders. Election Commission of

India started its Twitter account in February 2018. A dedicated Twitter account for campaign related to the General Election 2019 has been created for voter awareness program connecting with 73K followers till date and on Instagram with 5462 followers.

Election Commission of India
April 9 at 1:11 PM · 🌐

"Greater Participation for a Stronger Democracy"
Get ready to cast your vote this elections and be connected to the democracy.
#MarkTheDate - 11th April 2019 (Phase 1)... See More

108,524 People Reached
7,786 Engagements
658 Reactions (658)
55 Comments
388 Shares

[Boost Post](#)

Performance for Your Post

108,524 People Reached

2,190 Reactions, Comments & Shares

1,640 Like	632 On Post	1,008 On Shares
51 Love	25 On Post	26 On Shares
3 Haha	3 On Post	0 On Shares
8 Wow	6 On Post	2 On Shares
5 Sad	2 On Post	3 On Shares
2 Angry	2 On Post	0 On Shares
89 Comments	74 On Post	15 On Shares
393 Shares	388 On Post	5 On Shares

5,596 Post Clicks

3,312 Photo Views	3 Link Clicks	2,281 Other Clicks
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Facebook page: post before 1st phase of poll

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

LIVE Press Briefing
Phase - 1

#GoVote

www.eci.gov.in www.facebook.com/ECI www.instagram.com/ecisiveep www.twitter.com/ECISIVEEP

YouTube Channel: Before live streaming of Press Conference by the end of 1st phase poll.

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Now on Instagram & Twitter

Follow www.instagram.com/ECISIVEEP

Follow www.twitter.com/ECISIVEEP

Get all the information on [#LokSabhaElection2019](#)

Facebook Page: Post informing about Twitter handle for voter awareness of Lok Sabha Election 2019 and Instagram account.

Indian Provisions and ECI Initiative

Rumours on Social Media have had huge repercussions. During the last few Assembly Elections and the beginning of the General Election to Lok Sabha 2019, many instances were noticed with difficult circumstances. In this connection ECI has been constantly engaging with social media platforms in constructive discussions to protect the integrity of Indian Elections with a healthy democratic environment. As an outcome Social media has been included in the ambit of election rules related to print and electronic media to monitor and regulate the content on social media ensuring the ground for free and fair polls in the country.

- A. In its transition from 'reactive' to 'interactive' role ECI has taken many initiatives, issued several major instructions among which the instruction issued on October 25, 2013 with respect to use of Social Media in Election campaigning was worth mentioning; which includes:
 - i. Information to be given by candidates about their social media accounts email IDs and social media accounts in Form-26 and affidavits.
 - ii. Ensuring Pre-certification of Political advertisements from Media Certification and Monitoring Committees (MCMC) at District and State levels before releasing it through electronic media, social media platforms and websites.
 - iii. Expenditure on campaigning through internet including social media websites during the entire election period from the date of filing his nomination. The expenditure on campaigning, including the expenditure incurred by social media advertisements both for carrying advertisements and also campaign related operational expenditure are asked to be included in the account within 75 days of

Assembly elections and 90 days of Lok Sabha elections (As per Section 77, sub section (1), of the RP Act, 1951)

- iv. Application of MCC provisions and related instructions to the content on internet including social media the same way it is for electronic media.

The matters related to social media were referred to the Committee constituted in January 2018 on Section 126 of RPA, 1951 to review the impact of new media platforms during election process and also its implication in view of the provisions of section 126 and other related matters. Committee gave its report in January 2019, which was accepted by Commission. Based on recommendations, following steps were taken by ECI:

- B. **Reconstruction of MCMC:** Considering the challenges of pro-actively monitoring MCC violations from the vast umbrella of Social Media and the complaint based mechanism, Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) have been reconstituted. A social Media expert has been included at every at district and state MCMCs as per the newly constituted committee to oversee the implementation of regulations of Election Commission of India on social media and also to report any kind of violation/ hate content/ fake news circulating on social media (on complaint basis).
- C. **Grievance Redressal Mechanism:** A priority based grievance redressal mechanism has been developed with the appointment of Nodal officers at Election Commission and on part of the participatory social media platforms so that complaint redressal process can be structured and expedited.

The need to ensure compliance of Electoral Law in the social media, which need to be regulated in the interest of transparency and level playing field in the elections has been a major concern. In this

connection Election Commission of India reiterated its instructions stating that the Legal provisions relating to election campaigning apply to social media in the same manner in which they apply to electronic media. Inclusion of Social Media platforms and contents under the purview of electronic media hence implementing the guidelines applicable for electronic media and provisions of Section 126 of the RP Act 1951 has been the most important measure of ECI in this context. Time and again the Commission has been updating and adapting its guidelines and instructing its concerned mechanism to ensure the mandate of conducting free and fair election.

Election Commission of India in its incessant journey of conducting free fair and ethical election with media being its most important ally has attained at a material stage with the recent phenomena of 'Voluntary Code of Ethics' for the 2019 General Election.

The task of maintaining campaign silence during last 48 hours before the conclusion of polling is becoming increasingly onerous in the light of the increasing influence of digital media. So, apart from the regulation by law and ECI instructions, the resolve, proactive support and sustained effort by all stake holders which include political parties, media, civil society organizations, academia and educational institutions, the youth



Election Commission #DeshKaMa...
@ECISVEEP

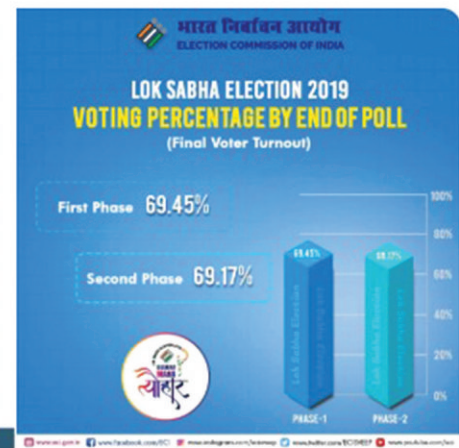
Following

Here's an appraisal of voting across the States/UT which polled in Phase 2 of #LokSabhaElections2019 🇮🇳

End of Poll Comparison- Phase: 2

State	2014 Turnout (in %)	2019 Turnout (in %)
Assam	78.78	81.2
Bihar	62.27	62.94
Chhattisgarh	73.08	74.95
Jammu & Kashmir	50.91	45.66
Karnataka	67.69	68.81
Maharashtra	62.65	62.87
Manipur	75.18	81.16
Odisha	72.43	72.56
Puducherry	81.98	81.19
Tamil nadu	73.66	72.04
Uttar Pradesh	61.86	59.24
West Bengal	81.71	81.72
Total	69.62%	69.17%

Voter Helpline : 1950 | www.nvsp.in | #GoVote



3:30 AM - 21 Apr 2019

90 Retweets 194 Likes



CEO Chhattisgarh, CEO Assam, CEO, Bihar #DeshKaMahaTyohar and 7 others

12

90

194



and citizens at large, will be required to contain the negative impact.

Voluntary Code of Ethics for the General Elections 2019

Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and Social Media Platforms (Google, Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Sharechat, Tiktok) have developed a 'Voluntary Code of Ethics' for all the participating social media platforms to ensure free, fair & ethical usage of their platforms to maintain integrity of electoral process during the General Election to the Lok Sabha 2019 and Legislative Assemblies of four states and the bye-elections being held simultaneously. The Voluntary Code of Ethics came into immediate effect from the day it was presented to the Commission, March 20, 2019:



In the Preamble of the Code the intermediaries mentioned that it has been purely developed to be applicable within the existing legal framework in India only and in case of any conflict between the voluntary framework and the existing legal framework, the legal framework will prevail.

The intermediaries (participating social media platforms) towards their commitment to support the democratic processes by improving the integrity and transparency of the electoral process and keeping in mind the recommendations of the Sinha Committee submitted Voluntary Code of Ethic for the General Elections 2019 to the ECI. It is apparent that access to reliable information and communication platforms via the Internet enables people to make informed choices in exercising their franchise during elections.

The purpose of the voluntary Code is to identify the measures that Participants can put in place to increase confidence in the electoral process. This is to help safeguard the products and/ or services of the Participants against misuse the free and fair character of the 2019 General Elections in India.

The eight point code of ethics submitted by IMAI and other participatory intermediaries comprises of a 'high priority dedicated reporting mechanism' to channelize and expedite through a dedicated team of nodal officers from ECI and the Social Media intermediaries for grievance redressal as

well as taking action where necessary after proper verification. It has been also assured that if needed, the objectionable content violating the model code of conduct to be taken down expediently after getting it reported. The Participants offered and ensured to meet the commitments of the Code, in good faith and to the best of their ability, during the 2019 Lok Sabha General Elections in India.

This Code became effective and entered into force since March 20, 2019 and will be in force for the duration of the 2019 Indian General Elections.

It is suggestive that a constructive engagement on part of the social media platforms in association with ECI should remain not only for the ongoing elections but also for future elections so that a strong time-bound response mechanism can be designed backed by legal provisions to resolve the issue of handling objectionable content, misinformation and content violating the spirit of level playing in the elections. Moreover the self-restraint approach on part of social media users, platform owners and all other stakeholder associated with it will enable us to attain the informed electorate and real intended benefits of social media.

Dhirendra Ojha
Director General
Election Commission of India



THE 100 MINUTE SUCCESS STORY OF cVIGIL



This election, citizens turned out in record numbers to not only decide their government but also to ensure that the elections are conducted fairly, impartially, and in a transparent manner. cVIGIL, an Android mobile application designed by the Election Commission of India, provided Indian voters an opportunity to report election code violations. The Commission's application was widely available, easy to use, and generated legally tenable and prosecutable information to administrators.

The application was so stitched that every actor in the whole process was on either mobile platform or web-based system. Chief Electoral Officers, District Election Officers, Returning Officers, flying squads and Police were all using the ICT application in prompt disposal of Model Code and Expenditure cases. A trinity of factors worked simultaneously to make the platform a success: users captured photos or videos in real-time (and could not upload these), all visual or videographic evidence was geotagged, and a 100-minute countdown for time-bound disposal of

complaints. The result: nearly 142,250 complaints were received in the election period; 99% of which were disposed of, and 80% of which were found correct.

Compare this to previous elections in which citizens were not co-opted in the enforcement of the code, and meagre 20-25% of complaints were found correct. In this article, we describe the election management implications of this innovation; how it fared in the recent general election; and its future prospects.

“cVIGIL was a success story made by those who sought and those who sighted, those who mentored and those who mentioned, those who cared and those who dared.”

Impact

In election management terms, cVIGIL achieved three things: bottom-up enforcement of laws, timely and effective enforcement of those laws, and a preventive rather than reactive enforcement regime. At its core, cVIGIL draws on the idea of community policing. It spurs citizen engagement, and participation in the enforcement process. It assumes officials need citizens, and a trust-based partnership to properly conduct elections. And a mobile application facilitates that partnership by creating awareness, building trust, and confidence. For example, this election saw district election officers publicizing the application, and encouraging its use.

Countless reports suggest that this spurred citizens to rethink their role in the electoral process, stay vigilant, and know about what is permissible as part of a campaign, and what is not. From the Commission's perspective, the application generated invaluable data that draws on embedded actors - people who know their local environment, its most pressing problems and

forms of violations, and can accurately report these to officials. Tapping into 'local wisdom' and 'information pools' has the potential to significantly shape the Commission's activities, particularly drawing up a priority list of violations that can be used in future enforcement.

Moreover, such applications build trust and confidence. As our data suggests, a large proportion of users were willing to file non-anonymous complaints; and re-usage rates indicate they felt their complaints were being acted on. In fact, encouraged by the initial response, the Commission started a "leaderboard" in the app, to identify and reward the most proactive citizens. In a way, this created an incentive for others to also actively use the platform; besides creating reputational benefits for civic-minded users. It is also worth noting that in many cases, ordinary voters raised their voice against local strongmen, or influential persons who were flouting the law.

Put together, citizens were more aware, had greater trust in institutions, and self-confident.

“

At its core, cVIGIL draws on the idea of community policing. It spurs citizen engagement, and participation in the enforcement process.

”



cVIGIL

is new Civil..



“Technology made the common man believe the power of the cVIGIL too when they saw field units reaching the spot within 15 minutes.”

A second part of the public policy story is timely and effective enforcement. C-Vigil was built on a back-end platform that prioritized speedy and effective action by authorities. To this end, the app promised users status report within 100 minutes. This 100-minute rule made the app a reliable way to report violations. To illustrate the point, consider a complaint that enters the C-Vigil system. A 100-minute countdown starts, with several in-built checks: the nearest “flying squad” of the Commission had to accept or acknowledge the complaint within 15 minutes; complete a preliminary inquiry in the next 30 minutes; and the returning officer decides the case in the next 50 minutes. The 100 minute time-lines infused the energy into the enforcement staff and a sense of urgency prevailed. Though the time was indicative, it brought almost 60% of the cases i.e. over 85,000 cases that were resolved in 100 minutes or less. A robust case allocation and monitoring system allowed the Chief Electoral Officers, Returning Officers and the Commission to investigate delays, incorrect decisions, and recurring instances of lethargy.

The cVIGIL Mobile Technology also empowered the enforcement agencies, especially field units, which included Flying Squads, Static Surveillance Team, Video Surveillance Team etc. in identifying the location of incidence on-the-fly, getting the cVIGIL case along with the photograph or video

on the mobile, and the best of all they need not create any paper work for cVIGIL cases, as they simply had to file the report through the application itself. There were a total of 45892 field units, which were formed and 78782 flying squads staff were there. One of the biggest challenges is to prevent slack in the system especially when it is such huge to manage.

For the first time, the technology was used as a monitor too. The cVIGIL Investigator enforced the time-bound pressure on Flying Squads, but on the other hand, making sure that they actually reach to the location of incidence. The application forced the field unit to reach the spot of the incidence and only then they could upload their report. This way, technology made the common man believe the power of the cVIGIL too when they saw field units reaching the spot within 15 minutes.

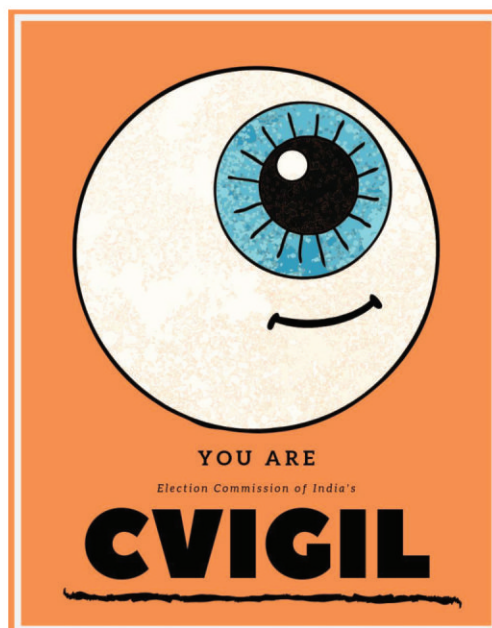
One of the fundamental shifts the cVIGIL brought in its 77% success was the GIS based location tagging. For example, the app automatically enabled a geo-tagging feature when users switched on their camera in the cVIGIL to report a violation. This meant that flying squads could know the precise location of a reported violation, and the image could be used as evidence in a court of law. Here then is a case where the first information report also becomes critical evidence, should a legal process unfold. And, technology-enabled enforcement mechanisms ensured that



flying squads were at the site of a reported transgression. Finally, a delivery-oriented culture was promoted among ECI officials by rewarding speedy and effective action. Officials could see a leaderboard, on which the names of the most effective officers were displayed. This encouraged colleagues to act with greater speed, and take complaints more seriously when their own turn came.

One of the important byproducts of the cVIGIL was the use of cVIGIL by Field units themselves to file suo-moto cases. The Model Code of Conduct or expenditure violation cases noticed by Field units are those suo moto cases. The cases were reported and investigated by Field units and sent via cVIGIL to Returning Officer for decision. This greatly facilitated enforcement.

cVIGIL redefined the approach to election management by making it more proactive rather than reactive. It is true that officials could only act on reports submitted to them using this portal. But the knowledge that citizens can report violations securely, and



easily; and that the Commission acts on those complaints speedily and effectively; is bound to deter violators. The criminology literature calls this the “broken windows” theory: effective policing of minor crimes can prevent more serious types of law-breaking. cVIGIL did something of this kind: citizens reported quotidian transgressions, and the Commission promptly dealt with them. But in doing so, we created a culture of deterrence. Political actors

and potential code violators knew that a vigilant citizenry and determined election machinery was watching their every step. This is bound to have a salutary effect on violators.



Performance

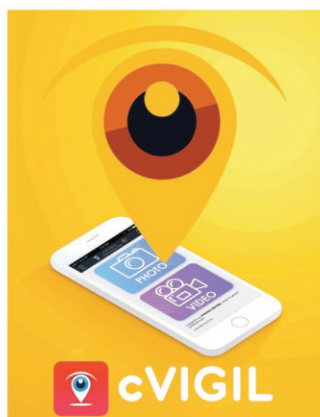
So how did the application fare in these elections? Preliminary data suggests that 142,250 cases were reported using this platform; 99% of which were ‘disposed of’. This means 141,618 cases were meaningfully acted upon - either they were closed after the action was taken, or forwarded for further investigation, or closed because the report

was incorrect. Nearly 80% of the cases were found to be correct. That is, 110,029 cases were legitimate complaints that were acted upon. The maximum cases were filed in **Kerala (64,114)**, followed by **Madhya Pradesh (16,472)**, and **West Bengal (13116)**.

The platform also created 6 categories or 'buckets' into which complaints could fall.

Complainants could identify the type of complaint, and officials cross-checked to make sure that the complaints had the correct label. In recent times, criminal activity and the role of money have been highlighted by the media. cVIGIL contributed to a cleaner election in these respects as well. In the table below, we report successful instances of such cases being brought to the Commission's notice using the cVIGIL application:

Sr. No	Nature of Complaint	Found Correct cases
1	Liquor Distribution	482
2	Money Distribution	484
3	Gifts/Coupons Distribution	310
4	Paid News	218
5	Religious or Communal speeches/messages	538
6	Display of Firearms, Intimidation	648

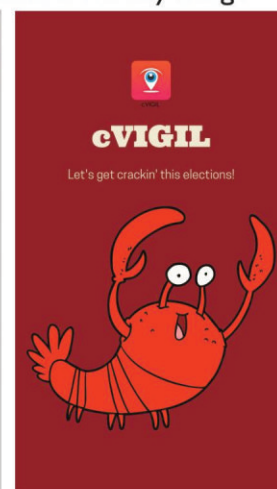


In all, nearly 1494 cases pertaining to cash, liquor and gift distribution (or paid news) were reported using this portal. A further 538 cases of communal or hate speeches were successfully reported; and 648 cases of criminal intimidation. A bulk of the cases were about election posters, campaign after permissible hours, and defacement of property. Though minor offences compared to some of the more serious ones mentioned in the table, reporting of such cases created a deterrence culture (something we elaborated earlier in this piece). Put another way, cVIGIL is not about the number of serious complaints but about citizen awareness, involvement, and the creation of a culture in which violators find it increasingly difficult to compromise the electoral process.

Next Steps

cVIGIL has firmly taken root in the Electoral System of India. The initiative of the Election Commission of India will go a long way in engaging Citizens in the electoral process but also bringing in the level playing field. In coming times, cVIGIL will become the linchpin of democracy. However, there are many things that need to be done. The first thing is about its reach. A lot of efforts need to be done for its availability to the common man. In a country where the total voters are 6.1 billion, the total downloads for the application were only 837650. Secondly, there are a lot of cases being registered which are not the model code of conduct violations. An intensive education system for the common man to correctly target the cases and knowledge of the type of violations will be required.

The biggest democracy has shown the way as to how to involve the common man in the electoral process. The use of ICT in elections now has a new meaning and a new beginning.



Dr. Kushal Kumar Pathak
Director ICT and CISO, ECI



Voter Education for Informed & Ethical Voting

“Being able to cast my first vote in the 21st century is a privilege. My generation needs to accept their patriotic responsibility and vote since plentiful reforms are obligatory in order to carry us into the new millennium. However, at the age of 18, when I was at the very beginning stage of understanding what democracy is and how I believed that I had the right to speak lawfully, to the fundamental aspects of the reforms of the country through voting, I was offered by countless figures to sell my vote. Is this the new reality or is this how democracy always soared?” says a confused young voter.

This is where; role of Election Management Body’s public awareness component plays a huge role, as the numbers of young voters are increasing given the fact that many young voters have a no interest in practicing their voting right. The general public needs to be educated about the importance of voting and the fundamental aspects of ‘Informed and Ethical Voting’. Nothing is more integral to democracy than voting. Most people believe that every citizen has the civic duty or moral obligation to vote, that any sincere vote is morally acceptable, and that buying, selling, or trading votes is inherently wrong.

Who is an informed voter? Being an informed voter means to be conversant about the issues and positions of candidates when voting. It also means being able to make decisions refrained from external factors intended to persuade those who may not fully understand a candidate’s platform or ideas.

Voter education is integral to reinforcing the general public’s faith in cleaning up the corruption regarding vote buying and selling. Another factor that often disillusiones potential voters is the inseparable link between politics and special interest groups, most namely influential candidates who donate immense quantities of soft money to general public who would be willing to support their interests. It is difficult to find a practical solution to aid this problem, but something has to be done to address it. If politics becomes synonymous with corporate sharks, illegal and immoral activities, it is only rational that people will lose faith and subsequently interest in their voting system. Each and every voter needs to be and has to be made to feel as an important element in voting. The public needs to interact with their elected representatives and candidates

In this regard, with the increasing role of technology, it would be possible to hold online web-chats with candidates. With free admission this platform must facilitate constructive dialogue between the candidate and his constituents. The candidates need to make a special effort, especially for upholding general public’s trust, by conducting public forums exclusively and helping the general public to voice their concerns. The course of action outlined above is a good beginning, but more needs to be done within the legal jurisdiction. At the same time, the general public must embrace themselves to involve in this effort to reclaim their own government which can be only done by as Joel Feinberg writes that rights are a kind of moral furniture. They allow you to stand up and look at others in the eyes as equals. To have rights is to have a kind of dignity. There is a fine line between the rights to vote versus the righteous voting.

Vote buying, selling, and trading are illegal, what makes them lawfully wrong is that they prime to the violations of the duties of a voter. Citizens as a rule have no standing obligation to vote. They can abstain if they prefer. Nevertheless, strict duties

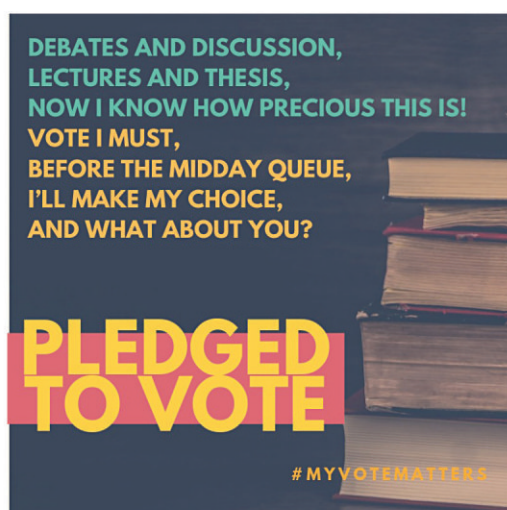
regarding voting are nurtured throughout the time in every society. They must vote well or may abstain. But never sell or buy the vote. Voting healthy is apt to be challenging, but discharging one's duties regarding voting is easy, for the very reason that one may abstain instead. Therefore, Election Management Bodies and Election stakeholder's utmost duty must be on educating the voters that they shouldn't be voting for whatever they believe promotes the common good with the amount of plenty's they receive. Instead, voter education should advocate the voters that they ought to vote for what they

justifiably believe promotes the common good.

We argue about the best vote to cast, but not about the best flavor of ice cream to choose. Each citizen has the duty to vote. In moderate circumstances, one can be excused from voting, but otherwise, one should always vote. While it is true that there can be better or worse candidates, in general any good faith vote is morally acceptable. At the very least, it is better to vote than to abstain. Thus, in any of these conditions it is inherently wrong to buy or sell one's vote.

Election Commission of Maldives

Indian Elections 2019 - Creatives





The Informed and Ethical Voter – Whose Responsibility?

Today, electoral democracy is the global norm rather than the exception. It thus becomes incumbent that voters are aware of key facts: to make a well-informed decision on voting, as well as to follow steps that guarantee a valid vote. Thanks to wider access to media, informed voting has never been more possible, yet today we see it is in peril. Most voters can freely access information online but are subjected to intense and organized campaigns aiming to manipulate public opinion. At its core, democracy is anchored in the capacity of citizens to obtain equal access to information about political issues. And so, any attempts to steer the public from accurate information to guide voting choices represents an attack on the very foundation of democracy.

This background leads to a critical question: who has the responsibility to ensure that this information is available, accessed and correct?

A view at one end of the spectrum is that this responsibility falls directly to the citizen. The notion of elections as a civic duty gives power to the elector – to inform herself or himself, to register to vote. The United States is one example of where this view prevails. Conversely, on the other end of the spectrum, such as in Australia, the thinking is that because voting is compulsory for every registered citizen, this gives the state the mandate and the duty to ensure that voting is possible for every registered citizen. This mandate puts onus on the state. Using human rights terminology, the citizen is the 'rights holder' of

the political right to vote, and the state is the 'duty bearer' to make it happen.

In practical terms, however, we typically see a more blended set of responsibilities falling between these two extremes. Political parties use public outreach that seeks to 'inform' the voter with sets of arguments about their unique ability to govern with sensible policies, while providing arguments against their political opponents. Depending on media and campaign laws, norms and culture in various countries, the media normally has a mandate to inform electors not only about the electoral event itself, but also about the choices at hand and the issues at stake. Electors are meant to seek information on how to cast their votes, and make the 'best match' choices of who they vote for. Elsewhere, civil society organisations (CSOs) take on a voter or civic education role in their communities of interest.

For International IDEA, a particular area of interest is what degree of responsibility for voter information falls to the Electoral Management Body (EMB)? Often called electoral commissions, these are the bodies who are entrusted to organize the elections in any given country. International IDEA has been working to support the work of these institutions globally for over two decades. India, as one of our founding member states, has been a leading partner in this work.

Universal to all EMBs is the mandate to inform the voter of the basics of the voting process: how and where to register to vote, where and when to vote, and the basic steps in the voting process. This voter information mandate can be operationalized in many ways: through cooperation with media channels or through direct contact with voters through various means. The most marginalized electorate in any society may need intensified campaigns or customized

information such as simpler for mats and alternative languages. These campaigns are often designed in cooperation with other public institutions or with CSOs who represent these various groups.

Some EMBs, such as those in the Southern Africa region, have a long tradition of grassroots-focused voter education and civic education. These campaigns go 'beyond' purely information about when and where to vote, but address key issues around the 'why' of voting. Such motivational campaigns are meant to inspire in citizens a sense of civic duty and political influence. Often developed in cooperation with other societal organisations (whether government ministries or civil society organisations) these motivational campaigns can incorporate both traditional and innovative approaches, including but not limited to plays, online games, television drama shows, school curricula, art activities, concerts and other means of communication that go 'deeper' than traditional voter information campaigns. Basic guidelines around good voter education practices are that the methodologies, materials and media should meet the different needs of all the numerous stakeholders in the process and, whenever possible, such practices should be conducted on a continuous basis, between elections.

Voter education can also include information on electoral offences - that is, the 'do's and don'ts' of election behavior. Civic education has the potential for exploring the civic responsibility or the 'ethical' side of being a voter. In practical terms, ethical voting consists of not being influenced by money, not using populist-style methods to influence people along caste, ethnic, religious lines, and not committing electoral offences such as giving and taking bribes. Beyond the legal expectations, ethical voting can be seen almost as a 'sacred' feeling with regard to the integrity, sanctity, and power of an individual's own vote, shielding it from any possible undue interference.

In recent years with the spread of online influence on citizen views, the matter of the informed voter has been darkened by the specter of disinformation and fake news, alongside rising polarization where voters often restrict themselves in a political echo chamber. The very real, widespread and tangible threat of misinformed voters through the actions of unethical actors necessitates a radical rethinking of the roles and responsibilities around voter information with particular regard to how the integrity, sanctity, and power of an individual's ethical vote could be more effectively protected.

Democracy actors should, above all, invest heavily and with a long-term view in civic education campaigns that focus on enhancing societies' critical thinking and understanding of the information ecosystem, not only limiting their focus on fighting the means and tools utilized to manipulate public opinion online, such as astroturfing, micro-targeting, disinformation etc. Australia dedicates considerable resources to civic education to foster educated and informed voters, not just warm bodies checking a box. Civic education perhaps also explains why a majority of Australians self-report that they would exercise their civic duties regardless, no law required, as education has successfully promoted a deeply entrenched participation culture.

As challenges to electoral processes continue their advance, and become more sophisticated, fast-paced, and nuanced, EMBs and other democracy-focused institutions must keep pace with these rapidly evolving (mal)practices and needs, while always remaining forward-looking and increasingly creative. Innovative regulatory instruments, utilizing 'counter' technologies such as news verification artificial intelligence, and broad collaboration with other agencies – including social media service providers – is not merely optional, but rather an imperative.

Therese Pearce Laanela & Alyssa Bittner-Gibbs
Electoral Processes Programme Team, International IDEA

The Informed Voter: Empowered Voter

One of the key goals of society is to have an active and informed citizenry enabled for ethical electoral participation. Investments, focused on empowering people by educating and engaging them through well designed strategic interventions in voter education, would help in enabling larger elector populations in exercising franchise based on informed and ethical ballot decisions.

Voter Education-the Key Connect

Voter education, one of the critical mandates of EMBs world over, is the key connect between citizens and electoral processes. It must in simple and straight terms address where, when and how to register and vote, as well as why voting is important. It has to ensure that citizens are well informed, ready, willing and motivated to join participation. It needs to be aimed at enhancing elector confidence in exercise of their electoral right with ease and the sense and conviction that they have made a contribution in nurturing of democracy. Voter education in the right perspective, has a significant impact on empowering the electors for participation and encouragement for ethical voting. Well planned and well designed programmes do motivate and

encourage electorate to participate in the electoral process in an enlightened manner and in larger numbers. If voters are not prepared or motivated to participate in the electoral process, questions about the responsiveness, representativeness, legitimacy of elected representatives and institutions may arise.

Nature of Voter Education

Essentially objective, non-partisan and universal in nature VE programmes have to be designed and targeted for all categories of citizenry in terms of universal suffrage; free and equal, devoid of any discrimination whatsoever. It must address the information, motivation, facilitation and empowerment needs based on inclusion of women, PwDs, new and future voters, senior citizens, service voters, overseas voters, literate or illiterate and all other stakeholders besides factors like voter apathy or indifference. Voter Education may be supplemented by civic education to emphasize the relationship between active citizenship and a democratic society so that citizens engage in the political process in a sustained manner and not just at the time of elections.

UNCHR Guidance and International Experience

Let us look at the guidance provided by the UNCHR guidance on voter education, information campaigns and as to how different countries have shaped up their voter education, information and motivational programmes besides engaging future voters as an investment in future of democracy and participation.

UN Center for Human Rights on Voter Education: Guidance

The United Nations Centre for Human Rights in its Handbook on Human Rights and Elections (1994) has spelt out the following guiding principles for voter education:

Public Information and Voter Education

- I 24. Funding and administration should be provided for objective, non-partisan voter education and information campaigns. Such education is especially critical for populations with little or no experience with democratic elections. The public should be well informed as to where, when and how to vote, as well as why voting is important. They must be confident in the integrity of the process and their right to participate in it.
- I 25. Literature should be widely available and should be published in the various national languages to help ensure the meaningful participation of all eligible voters. Multimedia methods should be employed to provide effective civic education to people with various levels of literacy. Voter education campaigns should extend

throughout the territory of the country, including to rural and outlying areas.”

Shaping up of Information and Outreach for Elector Connect

EMB's in different countries, keeping in view their roles, responsibilities and obligations emanating from the respective Statutes, legislative instruments, guidance from the UN documents and compelling needs for social inclusion, have developed voter education systems with accessible and user friendly information on when, where and how to vote. The outreach comprises of motivational campaigns exhorting people to vote, campaigns for ethical voting, multimedia campaigns including electronic and digital campaigns. Electoral literacy for future and new voters is addressed through initiatives focusing on curricular/ extracurricular interventions; the latter utilizes engaging activities with hands on experience for faster learning. Customized voter education is used on the premise of 'Every Vote Counts' for enhancing participation from gender, PwDs, senior citizens, overseas citizens, service personnel and marginalized sections of society. Let us visit the international experiences on the subject from some of the leading democracies in the world.





Australian Electoral Commission

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is charged with the responsibility of all matters relating to conducting federal elections, referendums and maintaining the Commonwealth electoral roll. The AEC is also responsible for educating and informing the community about participating in the electoral process. While the AEC resources provide information and guidance to voters on all election related matters including enrolling and voting, the AEC schools provides free educational resources and programmes for teachers and students.

It is compulsory by law for all eligible Australian citizens to enroll and vote in federal elections, by-elections and referendums. AEC voter education resources provide information that explains in simple and unambiguous terms, all what a citizen needs to understand for a convenient interaction with the electoral process. The information empowers and enables citizens about when, where, how and why of steps in electoral process including an option for 'Practise' at places and inter alia covers the following topics:

Enrollment for vote

- › Information on Eligibility basics
- › Documentary Requirements

Special Enrolment Options along with forms and the detailed user friendly information

- › Silent electors
- › General postal voters
- › People with no fixed address (homeless, seasonal workers, travelers with no address to return to)
- › Long term travelers within Australia
- › Overseas residents or going overseas; all options along with how to vote while overseas.

- › Persons with Disabilities
- › Prisoners
- › Norfolk Islands electors
- › Workers in Antarctica
- › Senior Citizens

Other information

Change of Address, Voting by overseas residents or going overseas; all options along with how to vote while overseas, Procedure, forms and how to do it templates.

Find your electorate with e search options.

Frequently asked questions.

Electoral Disinformation.

Securing of polling places.

Postal Vote.

Non Voting and its implications.

Use of Technology for Empowering Voters

The AEC has traditionally been implementing use of technology effectively while maintaining integrity of the electoral system. The AEC carried out trials for electronic voting for identified groups, including blind and low vision voters at the 2007 federal elections. This evolved into the current method of telephone voting for blind and low vision voters. At the 2013 federal election, the AEC piloted the use of electronic certified lists (ECLs) in selected locations to introduce efficiencies into the process of finding and marking voters off the electoral roll.

At the Polling Place

The AEC information provides guidance on what to do if an electors name is not found or there are other mistakes in the roll and action to be taken. Assisted voting, how to vote. Interestingly, guidance is also provided on if you may advise a polling official of the illness, death or other circumstances of another person. Although the polling official will record all the information you have given them, they are unable to tell you whether that person will be fined for not voting.

This decision can only be made by the returning officer for that division. Information also provides guidance on procedure for marking the ballot paper.

Voting on election day if a voter is travelling in Australia?

One can vote at any election day at polling place in the state or territory where an elector is enrolled while travelling within the state. This is called an absent vote. One may vote at an interstate voting center if an elector is travelling in another state.

AEC's Voter Education for Future Voters: Resources and Programmes

AEC's educational resources and programmes are structured and well designed to suit the needs of students at different levels. Some of these resources are briefly discussed in the following:

'Get Voting'

'Get voting' provides all what is required to run a free and fair election for school level students. The salient features of the programme are as follows:

- It helps to organise a school election conveniently spread over 2-4 weeks.
- It addresses Civics and Citizenship curriculum outcomes by providing students hands on experience of voting.
- It helps in electing suitable student leaders while modelling good democratic practice.

'Get Voting' programme encourages the school community to value voting, develops students' trust, confidence and motivation to participate in democratic process. The exercise for an election can be run through the AEC guidance on the subject 'Order election equipment pack; Ballot Paper Generator and the 'Download Resources'.

National Electoral Education Centre (NEEC)

The National Electoral Education Centre in Canberra offers education programs about the federal electoral system. It is an important institution for imparting Civics and Citizenship education and provides the programmes free. The programme involves experiential learning to

engage and inform. AEC's educators guide the participants through a 90 minute programme which includes:

- A multi-media presentation that explores the history of Australian democracy,
- Hands-on activities which help students to understand enrolment, voting and representation; and
- Voting in a simulated election followed by counting of votes to generate a result.

'Democracy Rules'

AEC and the Education Systems have identified civics and citizenship education as an important priority for all the students in Australia. The AEC believes it has a significant role to play in the advocacy and practical advancement of this cause with a particular focus on building electoral literacy and encouraging future participation in Australian electoral processes. In this context, AEC has worked with Curriculum Corporation to develop a new and exciting classroom-based electoral teaching and learning package called Democracy Rules: An electoral education resource. Democracy Rules has been provided to all schools in the country, it can be downloaded from AEC links also.

Further Resources for Classroom Elections from the AEC

Australia Votes DVD

This DVD contains 'mock-up polling place' footage showing the stages and procedures of voting in a federal election.

Down for the Count DVD

This DVD explains in straightforward language and clear graphics on how votes are counted for elections in the House of Representatives, the Senate and in referendums. Presented in three individual sections this product is designed for education purposes.

Every Vote Counts video

This video is set against the background of the 2004 federal election and has been designed as an educational resource to explain how an election is organized and conducted. It is suitable for upper primary level onwards.



Elections Canada

Elections Canada's voter education and information resources essentially include educating all categories of voters and as such the public about voter registration, where to vote, when and how to vote, the identification required to vote and the entire electoral process to make them ready to exercise the right to vote. Voter education encompasses civic education for primary and secondary level students and the teachers, youth engagement, community involvement and through various other means including online services, partnership building etc.

Empowering Voters

EC has developed and provided, at its website, inter alia a series of shareable resources called Federal Election resources that help all categories of voters to become well informed of various steps in connecting themselves with electoral process and enable them to exercise their right to vote. These resources covering all information that a voter needs to exercise his voting right, may be categorized as below:

- › Voter Information Service
- › Voter Identification
- › Ways to Vote
- › Voter Registration
- › FAQ's for Electors
- › Backgrounders on Electoral Process
- › Aboriginal Voters
- › Voters from Ethno-cultural Communities (in 31 languages)
- › Voting by Special Ballot by Canadian Forces
- › Information for People with Disabilities
- › Information for New Voters
- › Civic Education for Elementary and secondary Students, Teachers
- › Youth Engagement
- › Partnership with National and Regional

Organizations for Voter Education, Civic education and Youth Engagement

Sub categories under each of these categories provide comprehensive online information to voters and as such for the public for gaining awareness and education on the electoral process.

Social Media and Outreach

EC's outreach programmes, special programmes, blogs, research studies, social media connect on Facebook, Twitter etc further contribute to the information, awareness and knowledge on election process and participation. (See Annex I)

Statutory Mandate

EC's mandate under the Canada Elections Act inter alia covers the following responsibilities :

- › implementation of public education and information programmes for the purpose of making the electoral process better known to students at the primary and secondary levels, and
- › by advertising for informing electors about the exercise of their democratic rights.

EC Strategy

EC identifies groups for targeted outreach on the basis of electoral participation barriers faced by them especially the barrier of lack of information about when, where and how to register and vote. The identified groups include youth and students, aboriginals, senior citizens in long-term care facilities, ethno cultural communities, and electors with disabilities and electors who are homeless. EC collaborates with national and regional organizations that are able to reach members of these groups for further steps as follow:

- › shares information about the electoral process, for distribution by partner organizations to their stakeholders;
- › informs groups about EC programmes, its online services and field outreach during an election;

- › actively solicits the groups' collaboration to share official voting information and promote EC's initiatives.

EC's Educational Resources: Civic education

Teachers would require:

- › Lesson plans and resources to teach about democracy, elections, voting, government and citizenship.
- › Conduct an election simulation in classroom.
- › Way to make the federal election relevant to students.

EC offers educational resources that are

- › free and easy to order,
- › delivered directly to the targeted school,
- › created to meet your curriculum needs,
- › designed to make your work a little easier.

Students

EC online provides all kinds of resources for students class projects on democracy, elections and voting. EC resources help students increase political knowledge and interest, encourage them to develop a sense of civic duty, connect them to the world and issues that surround them make democracy, elections and voting relevant to students' daily lives at home and in their community

Parents

EC's website is the authentic source of information on Canadian democracy, elections, voting and citizenship. This helps parents to guide their children on the subject.

Youth-serving Organizations

EC's resources provide guidance for youth programmes and resources focused on democratic and civic leadership and engagement. It also provides programming ideas and hands-on resources that make young Canadians aware, informed and engaged in civic and democratic education.

Background Resources

EC also provides students with more information on how democracy, elections and voting work in

Canada through brief papers called Background Resources. They include Electoral System of Canada (an e-booklet), Political Parties, Ridings and Members of Parliament, Becoming a candidate, Research, Events, Youth Organizations and FAQ's etc.

EC participates in a variety of activities with Youth organizations and maintains a list of such organizations. EC offers a variety of ways for students to engage as active citizens and different civic engagement programmes.

Annex I

Featured Program: Student Vote Getting Young Canadians Ready for the Federal Election with Student Vote

Since 2003, the Student Vote program has been giving students under the voting age the opportunity to experience the voting process and have a voice in the election.

Student Vote

Bring the 2015 federal election to your classroom. Student Vote is a parallel election for students under the voting age, coinciding with official election periods. The program combines in-class learning, family dialogue, media consumption and an authentic voting experience. Approximately 560,000 students in over 3,800 schools participated in the Student Vote program during the 2011 federal election.

The goal of Student Vote is to create life-long voters who are ready, willing and able to participate in their democracy.

Schools can sign up now at www.studentvote.ca or by calling our team toll-free at 1-866-488-8775.

Student Vote is the flagship program of CIVIX, Canada's leading civic education charity. Visit civix.ca to learn more.



Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, Kenya

Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, Kenya

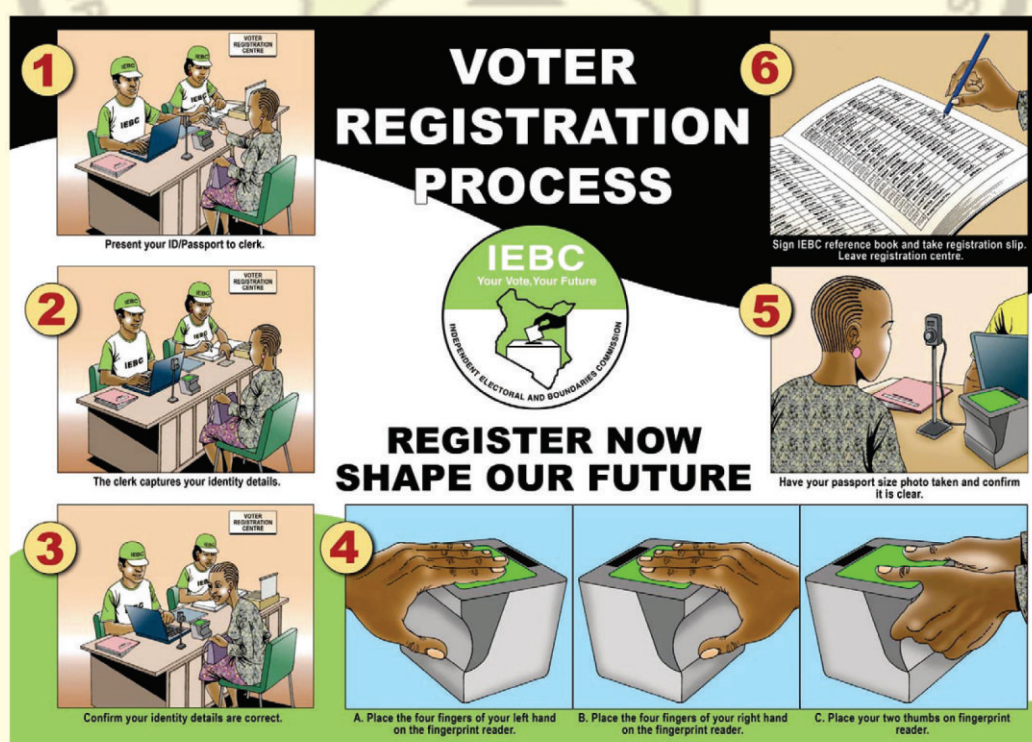
Voter Education, information dissemination and awareness to citizens constitute an important part of the mandate of the IEBC. It is intended to ensure that voters are ready, willing, enabled and empowered to confidently participate in the electoral process. The ideal outcome entails electoral literacy and confidence that the electoral process is appropriate and effective in electing government and promoting policies that will benefit the individual voter. Laudable features in Kenya's Voter Education program include easily accessible voter information, voter education curriculum that effectively and efficiently engage

voters on where, when and how of the elections so that they can exercise their voting rights conveniently and confidently. School Education Project along with above said resources guide new and future voters and as such an investment in future of democracy.

IEBC's Information to Citizens for Enrollment

IEBC voter education and information resources explain to citizens in easy terms, the process of registration along with pictorial representation. It covers information on how to register, why register and addresses the questions that a common citizen is likely to ask and seek answers. This design of addressing the questions, that may arise with any citizen, is very engaging and the answers encourage a citizen to go for registration. Pictorial representation given below is sure to help any person going for enrollment and taking a first step in connect with the electoral process

IEBC deploys Biometric Voter Registration System (BVR) that facilitates registration.



IEBC's Information on Polling and Related Processes

IEBC provides user friendly information on different steps of electoral process for educating electors to enable and empower them in exercising their franchise conveniently.

Strategic Plan 2015-20

One of the important goals under the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 of the IEBC relates to fostering the trust and participation of citizens and stakeholders in the electoral process. It envisages IEBC to empower Kenyans for effective participation. At least 20 million Kenyans were directly or indirectly reached with voter education information undertaken by IEBC or partners prior to a major electoral event. IEBC monitors reports from implementing partners and participates in provision of voter education.

Voter Education Curriculum

IEBC has developed a holistic and comprehensive Voter Education Curriculum. This curriculum provides standardized voter education objectives. It has also suggested training methods, training resources, and methods of assessment during voter education. This is aimed at ensuring standardization of voter education to attain the strategic objectives and mandate of the Commission.

Development of the VE Curriculum is driven by the need to enhance voter information and voter education in Kenya. Effective voter education raises awareness among voters thereby enhancing their participation and confidence in the electoral process. The curriculum has been developed by IEBC through the technical support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the expertise of the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) besides Stakeholder consultation with media, academic institutions of repute, nongovernmental organizations, and representatives of Kenya Society for Physically and Mentally Handicapped, National Cohesion and Integration Commission, representatives of different ethnic and religious groups etc.

Objectives

The voter education curriculum is geared towards:

- Arousing public interest in the electoral process and their involvement in the process of electing political leaders.
- Making the public aware of the relationship between elections and democracy.
- Enlightening the public on the importance of voting and its impact on transparency and accountability.
- Educating the public on the electoral process, role, responsibilities and rights of voters.
- Undertaking voter registration, polling and counting procedures.
- Managing conflicts during elections.
- Understanding the role and importance of political parties, candidates and observers in elections.
- Enhancing voter's participation in the electoral process in an objective and issue based platform
- Ensuring that voter apathy is minimized.

Collaborations and Partnerships

IEBC has collaborated with IFES through the Kenya Electoral Assistance Program (KEAP) to improve outreach and voter education efforts for meaningful electoral participation. As a result of this, collaboration was established with Youth Vote (YVOTE) activation campaign, digital outreach, and motivational and educational voter ads.

IEBC has partnerships with voter education service providers, social media platforms including digital platforms for information dissemination and connecting with the electors.

The voter education is provided through formal and informal channels. Formal channels include the schools and the universities where the voter education programme has been launched. A Directorate of Voter Education and Partnerships has been set up in the IEBC. Voter Education Providers have been accredited by the IEBC in each of the constituencies in sufficient numbers. The list includes a sizeable number of the education providers for women, PwDs, different ethnic groups and communities to ensure that all sections of the society are involved and engaged.



U.S. Election Assistance Commission

The United States of America

Voter education in the US is characterized by robust voter information system, vast voter resources, voter guides, voluntary guidelines, campus engagement programmes for universities and colleges, schools and involving students into the electoral process, mock election programme and achieving desired objectives through partnership building with non partisan, non profit organizations. Its strengths lie in strong technological base, support from legislative framework and integration with each of the steps in electoral process.

Help America Vote Act

Help America Vote Act, 2002 established the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to inter alia generate new mandatory minimum standards for states to follow in several key areas of election administration including voter education. HAVA inter alia provides that the States shall utilize funds provided by the EAC for educating and informing voters concerning voting procedures, voting rights, and voting technology.

Interventions for Voter Education

Backed by the HAVA legislative provisions, EAC's strategic interventions for voter information and education focus broadly on the following thrust areas:

- Comprehensive Voter Resources and Library
- Comprehensive and easy to access Voter Information for all categories of voters
- User friendly informative and web based voter registration, National Mail Voter Registration Form
- Voluntary voter education Guidelines prepared through consultative process

- Voter Education Guides in different languages
- Engage students through Help America Vote College Programme for campus engagement in universities and colleges
- National Student and Parent Mock Election.
- Help America Vote Foundation
- Partnerships with non-partisans and non-profits for achieving the desired objectives
- Media including Social media
- Powerful Technology driven base and tools for entire electoral process including voter education

A brief discussion on these areas follows:

EAC Voter Resources

One of EAC's primary mandates is to serve as a central resource for information about elections. Through EAC's national clearinghouse, public can conveniently access necessary information about topics such as registering to vote, serving as a poll worker along with studies on how, where and when to vote and related subjects on elections and electoral processes. EAC maintains the National Mail Voter Registration Form (in seven languages), which can be used in any state to register to vote and update their registration information for a federal election. EAC also provides all contact information for the state election offices. Resources for voters may be listed as follows

- Register and Vote in Your State
- National Mail Voter Registration Form
- Become a Poll Worker
- Overseas and Military Voters
- Voting Accessibility
- Election Calendar
- Election Resource Library
- Helpful Links
- Voter Guides

- › Social Media Sites of Election offices
- › The Electoral College

Voter Information

EAC is mandated to establish and maintain a clearinghouse of inter alia the following information to be available to the public on:

- › Voluntary guidance adopted by EAC on its statutory mandates such as voting system standards, provisional voting and voting information requirements, computerized statewide voter registration list and requirements for voters who register by mail.
- › Information on the experiences of state and local governments in implementing the voluntary Voting System Guidelines and in operating voting systems in general.
- › The Help America Vote College Program.
- › EAC's responsibilities under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) which includes the development and maintenance of the national voter registration form.
- › Compilation of federal and state laws and procedures regarding election administration and voting.

Easy access to the relevant electoral information enhances educative value to the voter and facilitates in making informed choices.

e-Spatial: A Tool for Voter Empowerment

EAC provides an interactive map on its webpage to facilitate voters to quickly access requisite information in their respective state about registering to vote, where to vote, what is on the ballot and all other relevant information. This webpage is created with e- Spatial mapping software and is helpful to the voters both as an educative and an informative tool in the electoral process.

Voter Guides on Federal Elections

Voter Guides are highly informative voter education resources. Simple to read they cover all aspects of electoral process and are available on EAC website. The guides help voters to successfully navigate the federal election process

from registering to vote through casting a ballot on Election Day. In addition to providing the basics of casting a ballot, the guides present up to date information on voter eligibility, early voting, alternative registration and voting processes for uniformed and overseas citizens, and polling place accommodation that make voting more accessible to all sections of voters.

The voter guide is available in eleven languages: Cherokee, Chinese, Dakota, English, Japanese, Korean, Navajo, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Yupik so as to maximize the voter connect. The Guides provide relevant links for helpful resources to voters on registration, military and overseas voting, accessibility, and volunteering as a poll worker. The EAC Voter Guides are available in the Election resource Library (e- library) of the EAC on its website. Different states also publish Voter Guides for the elections in their respective domain.

Voluntary Guidance on Voter Education for Electoral Process

The EAC has developed and adopted a series of voluntary guidelines for voter information and education in collaboration with local election officials and consultative process. These guidelines provide guidance on best practices in strengthening the voter education programmes.

EAC has suggested seven tips to help strengthen the voter education programmes. The guidelines covered under the caption '7 Tips' have exhaustive lists of the areas to be covered for voter education. The '7 Tips' are listed as below:

'7 Tips to Strengthen Voter Education Programs'

- 1 Understand your voters.
- 2 Keep your Web Site current.
- 3 Try Social Media as an educational tool.
- 4 Rely on a variety of media.
- 5 Give voters personal attention.
- 6 Create a voter toolkit.
- 7 Coordinate education across platforms.

EAC's '14 Facts About Voting in Federal Elections'

The EAC document provides answers to 14 common questions from citizens about voting in Federal elections. The questions range from registering to vote through casting a ballot on Election Day.

EAC's '10 Tips To Enhance Your Voting Experience'

The EAC document titled 'Know the voting process in your State before you vote in the next election' provides 10 tips from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and is intended to enhance voting experience.

EAC's '6 Tips for Helping UOCAVA Voters and their Families'

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) collaborated with the U.S. Department of Defense's Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) to develop these tips for working with Service members, their families and citizens residing overseas. They face unique challenge in registering to vote and in requesting, receiving and returning their ballots. These six tips can help in efficiently navigating the process for this special group of absentee voters. Some of these documents fall under the category of Quick Start Management Guides

Accessible Voting

EAC Commemorated the 25th Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by hearing 'How to Make Voting More Accessible for Individuals with Disabilities' The event was intended to explore ways to make voting more accessible for individuals with disability. Commissioners heard testimony from accessibility advocates, experts, and individuals with disabilities regarding the progress made to ensure HAVA's requirement that individuals with disability be given the same opportunity to vote freely and independently as other voters.

Accessible Voting Technology Initiative

The EAC's Accessible Voting Technology Initiative

(AVTI) supports accessibility research on transformative technologies and approaches. Through the AVTI, the EAC has produced over 45 solutions for assisting voters with disabilities. The initiatives include the EAC's Military Heroes grant to provide assistance needed for recently injured military personnel to participate in elections.

Quick Start Series

EAC's '6 Tips for Making Voting Accessible'

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission has collaborated with local election officials to develop a series of helpful tips for election management. This series provides ideas and suggests best practices to help run efficient and effective elections. These tips and examples can help make voting accessible to the PwD voters.

EAC's '10 Tips for Voters with Disabilities'

Before you vote in the next election, know the voting process in your State. The following tips from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission examine the options available to help voters with disabilities vote privately and independently.

Help America Vote College Program (HAVCP)

HAVCP was established by the EAC in the year 2004 under express provisions of HAVA for student engagement in the electoral process. The programme is supported through grants from EAC to encourage student participation as poll workers or assistants, to foster student interest and education in the election process, and to encourage state and local governments to use students as poll workers. The grants also aim to relieve poll worker shortages by engaging students as poll workers. The programme leverages technology skills of a tech-savvy generation as well as recruits the next generation of poll workers

College Poll Worker Program

The purpose of the HAVA College Poll Worker Program is to encourage students enrolled at institutions of higher education to assist State and

local governments in the administration of elections by serving as poll workers or assistants. It also intends to encourage college students to become cognizant of the elections process and civic education.

National Student and Parent Mock Election

National Student and Parent Mock Election is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to promote voter participation in American elections to enable it to carry out voter education activities for students and their parents. Such activities may include simulated national elections before the actual election that permit participation by students and parents in the United States and US schools overseas. These elections include

- School forums and local cable call-in shows on the national issues to be voted upon in an 'issues forum';
- Speeches and debates before students and parents by local candidates or stand-ins for such candidates;
- Quiz team competitions, mock press conferences, and speech writing competitions;
- Weekly meetings to follow the course of the campaign;
- School and neighborhood campaigns to increase voter turnout, including newsletters, posters, telephone chains, and transportation.

The National Student and Parent Mock Election present awards to outstanding student and parent mock election projects.

Help America Vote Foundation

HAVA provides for establishing the Help America Vote Foundation as a charitable and nonprofit corporation. The aims and objects of the foundation are to:

- mobilize secondary school students in the US to participate in the election process in a nonpartisan manner as poll workers or assistants

- help and place secondary school students as nonpartisan poll workers or assistants to local election officials in polling places across the US

Partnerships with non-partisans and non-profits

EAC encourages partnerships with non-partisans and non-profits for implementation of its voter education programmes. Necessary funds are also provided. A large number of such organizations are working for voter education and collaborate with educational institutions, election offices. Standards and the guidelines of EAC and use of technology tools are vital to the partnerships besides non partisan approach. Some illustration of such partnerships are voter education programme of National Education Association of America for school children, Campus Election Engagement Project, League of Women Voters, New America Foundation and like that a large number of organizations.

Informed Voter is Empowered Voter

Informed Voter is Empowered voter and the empowerment supplemented by appropriate voter education is bound to help in confident ethical participation. The discussion in the foregoing explains the approach taken by Australia, Canada, Kenya and the US in connecting citizens with the different stages of electoral process through well designed information and voter education. Significant, substantive and notable good work has been done on the subject by different countries through strategic initiatives for empowering voters. Yet, lots more needs to be done. In this pursuit, visiting these initiatives, sharing experiences and enriching knowledge in this area of significance and appropriately bringing these practices to democracies on a continued manner through knowledge sharing VoICE.NET Platform is bound to help.

S.D. Sharma
Senior Fellow
Election Commission of India



Electing the next European Parliament: 40 years since first direct elections

The 28 member states, which constitute the European Union (EU), will go in for polls from May 23 - 26, 2019 to elect a new European Parliament. The European Parliament comprises 751 members (MEP) who are elected directly every five years. They represent the choice of over 500 million citizens.

The European Parliament, jointly with the Council of European Union (EU), decides on laws that affect the daily lives of the European Union's citizens. They relate to subjects of freedom of travel, food safety, consumer protection, the environment and various sectors of the economy. Member states, being sovereign, still possess the veto right in areas taxation, foreign affairs and defence. The Parliament has 20 standing committees to undertake research, holding public hearing on key issues, drafting legislation.

The European Parliament (estd 1958) under the name of European Parliamentary Assembly has its origin in the Treaty of Rome solemnized between European Community and the European Atomic Energy Community. The Treaty came into enforcement on January 1, 1958. The European Parliament has a forerunner in form of six-member European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) formed in 1952.

The Treaty of Rome contained the provision for direct election of European Parliament. The founding fathers were convinced of the necessity for direct suffrage for a strong parliament. But given the emphasis of Treaty of Rome on economic integration, holding direct elections were not considered a priority. In 1962, the European Parliamentary Assembly began to be called European Parliament. Its members were designated by respective national parliaments and provisionally came from the ranks of national representatives.

A change in attitude came over after Valéry Giscard D'Estaing became the French President in March, 1974. It was through his diplomatic efforts that heads of European states agreed to time bound plan for direct elections. It was between June 7 and 10, 1979 that nine member countries of the erstwhile European Community had elected 410 members of European Parliament. This year marks the 40th anniversary of direct elections to European Parliament.

Over the last forty years there has been successive increase in the number of member states and number of MEPs. But it has been outpaced by the growth of number of national parties represented in European Parliament.

The allocation of seats is laid down in the European treaties. It takes into account the size of population of each member state. The smaller countries get more seats that strict proportions would imply. At present Malta, Luxembourg and Cyprus has six each, whereas Germany the largest constituent has 96.

Grouping in the European Parliament is, however, not on national but ideological lines. The parties form political groups according to ideas, plans and

programmes. The eight political groups in the outgoing European Parliament are as below:

1. Group of European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
2. Group of Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in Europe
3. European Conservatives and Reformist Group
4. Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
5. Confederal Group of the European United Left- Nordic Green Left
6. Group of Greens/European Free Alliance
7. Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group
8. Europe of Nations and Freedom.

In addition there are some non-attached Members.

European Parliament Elections Act, 1997 as amended from time to time governs the European Parliamentary Election. The 2014 elections were the first to be undertaken after Treaty of Lisbon which was enforced on

December 1, 2009. It established a relation between the outcome of the elections and appointment of European Commission President.

Several aspects of the election, such as voting age, and overseas voting, can differ from member state to state. The voting age is 18 in all member states except Austria where it is 16 and Greece where it is 17.

Almost all member state allow of voting from abroad in these elections. In Belgium, Bulgaria and Greece, only non-resident nationals living in another member state can vote, while Denmark and Italy restrict the right to vote of non-resident nationals living in a third country to specific categories (diplomats and military personnel) Germany grants the right to vote in elections to the European Parliament to citizens who have been living in another EU country for at least three months, provided that they are enrolled on the German electoral register. In Malta, Ireland and Slovakia the right to vote is confined to EU citizens domiciled on their national territory.

Priyadarshi Dutta
Consultant, ECI





About The Pilot Project 'Elections of the School President'

The process of social modernization initiated by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan depends on the legal competent implementation by voters of their rights, conscious choice of their own position during the election campaign.

Today, mechanisms are needed to improve the legal culture of **young and future voters**.

Legal education is aimed at solving the problem of conscious involvement and participation of young voters in the electoral process.

In this regard, the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan (hereinafter - CEC) focused its own attention on organizing various forms of electoral education for young generation, including the introduction of mechanisms of electoral education of potential voters through **the development of student self-government**.

In order to inculcate practice-oriented knowledge, skills and experience in electoral activities for school students, the CEC developed a pilot project "Elections of the President of the school".

The main concept of the pilot project is to organize the election of the President of the school as close as possible to the procedure of election of the President of country, and thereby inculcate the electoral skills for school students.

A working group was created in the CEC, which included representatives of the pedagogical community of Astana city – Directors, deputy directors for educational work, teachers of history and discipline "Human. Society. Law", as well as representatives of JSC National center for professional development "Orleu" - Institute for professional development of pedagogical staff at Astana.

For realizing the project, a package of organizational and methodological materials necessary for the elections of the President of the school was developed, including:

- **Regulation on election of the President of the school,**
- **Calendar plan of activities for the preparation and conduct of election of the President of the school,**
- **Annex-samples of all documents required for holding the elections.**

The package of developed documents has been discussed many times at the meetings of the CEC members, sessions of the Working group and after taking into account all the proposals was recommended for implementation in the pilot schools.

The purpose of the project: development and implementation of mechanisms of electoral education of potential voters through the development of school self-government.

Project objectives:

Informative: To provide students with knowledge about the electoral rights and electoral procedures, basic principles and stages on holding of the elections of the President. To form practical skills for school students necessary for participate in the electoral procedure.

Educational: Formation of students' active civil position, education of respect for democratic

values, improving the legal culture of the younger generation as future participants in the electoral process.

Developing: Awareness by students the necessity of the importance of elections and responsibility for their choice, instilling skills of active participation in the electoral process. Development of leadership and communicational skills.

Key points of the project:

The basic principles of electoral right, the system of counting votes, the stages of electoral procedures in the election of the President of the school are similar to the principles laid in the Law "On elections in the Republic of Kazakhstan".

The categories of election participants, age criteria and the timing of electoral procedures are adapted to the age categories of school students.

The algorithm of electoral events with specific activities, deadlines and executives are fully reflected in the developed calendar plan of activities for the preparation and conduct of the election of the President of the school.

Partners of the project:

- › Akimats (administration body of the city) of Astana city, and its three districts;
- › Department of education of Astana city;
- › Department of internal policy of Astana city;
- › Joint-Stock Company National center for professional development "Orleu";
- › City and district election commissions (Astana);
- › Certified trainers for electoral education.

The pilot project was implemented on the basis of three leading secondary schools in Astana.

Permanent methodological support of the project in pilot schools was carried out by the Department on organization of electoral

education of the CEC of the Republic of Kazakhstan and regional inspectors of apparatus of the CEC.

In addition, the city election commission of Astana identified representatives of territorial election commissions to participate in the project and assist in its support.

The branch of JSC National Center for professional development "Orleu" - Institute for professional development of pedagogical staff in Astana published in September a package of organizational and methodological documents on the election of the President of the school in a special edition of the Republican informational and methodological journal "Bilimdegi zhanalyktar", which is monthly published and distributed to all educational organizations of Astana.

The big election campaign started in Astana on September 20.

The General voting day was scheduled for October 22, 2017.

In total, 6,026 school students of 2-11 classes' of three schools in Astana took part in the project.

In accordance with the Regulation on election of the President of the school, students of 8-10 classes' were members of the School Election Commission as well as the staff of school, as a rule, it is a current members of the precinct election commissions, who helped in organizing of the election process.

The nominated candidates met with voters, distributed campaign materials, told about their election programs and, of course, participated in debates. As in real election campaign, authorized representatives of candidates for the Presidency of the school, one from each class parallel from 2 to 11 classes', assisted the candidates in the conduct of the election campaign, pre-election campaign, and represented the interests of the candidates.

The participation of pupils in the elections was voluntary. No one has the right to coerce a student to participate or not to participate in elections, as well as to restrict his will. Voters, and these are students of 2-11 classes, participated in the election of the President of the school on an equal basis, and each of them had, respectively, one vote. Voting ballot papers were issued only upon presentation of the document – a personal sheet of the student. More than 6 thousand students participated in secret voting. Also the organizers didn't forget those who couldn't come to the polling station according to the health reasons, for them were organized voting at home. School students approached with a creative spark to such a serious claim as the exclusion of the possibility of any control over the expression of the will of the voters. On the day before the E-day, there was a competition for the best design of the polling booths. Cabins were made of cardboard materials and did not require large financial costs.

Public control during the election campaign and on the E-day was carried out by observers, who were represented by students of 5-11 classes. As well as the election was also observed by the representatives of the parents community, board of the school and school administration, current election commissions, education authorities, other schools of the city, public organizations and the media.

Each school has chosen one leader. For the presidency in the three schools there 22 candidates - 9 and 10 classes students.

And if the school-lyceum N° 76 winner was determined immediately by the results of the first round, having more than 50% of the votes, the school-gymnasium N° 6 and secondary school N° 37 organized the second round of election, where the leader was elected among the two candidates with the highest number of votes got in the first round.

On October 24 of this year in number 6 and number 37 schools was passed a **second vote** because of the clause 32 of the Regulation on election of the President of the school, a candidate is considered to be elected who received **more than 50 %** of the votes:

School-gymnasium N° 6

Voter turnout on the second round was **96 %**.

Student of 10B class, **Nechaev Ivan**, who received **51.8 %** of the votes, was elected as the President of the school-gymnasium N°6.

Secondary school N° 37

Voter turnout on the second round was **91.7 %**.

Student of 9A class, **Kulmaeva Tomiris**, who received **57.8 %** of the votes, was elected as the President of secondary school N°37.

On November 20, 2017 the CEC held a meeting on the results of the pilot project 'Election of the President of the School'.

Secretary of the CEC Sabila Mustafina congratulated the elected Presidents of the schools: a student of 9A class Kulmaeva Tomiris at secondary school N°37, a student of 10B class Nechaev Ivan at school-gymnasium N°6, a student of 10A class Skendr Miras of school-lyceum N°76, as also chairmen of School Electoral Commissions.

All participants of the event were awarded with letters of thanks on behalf of the Chairman of the CEC and given gifts.

Today, when the most acute problems are a sense of patriotism, moral traits and ability in social creativity arise in education of children, the pilot project 'Election of the President of the school' is one of the forms of socialization of children. Participation of school students in the development of student self-government is the basis for the creating of their active citizenship and leadership character.

In this regard, the initiative of the CEC on electoral education of young generation and

improving the legal culture of future voters is in the same context with the ideas of developing patriotic education for young people, set out in the governmental program “**Ruhani Zhangyru**”.

The National Academy of Education named after Y. Altynsarin concluded that the value of a pilot project, tested on the basis of three schools in Astana, is that the basic principles of electoral law, the vote counting system, the staging of electoral procedure.

The Ministry of Education and Science on the basis of the expert opinion of the National Academy of Education named after Y. Altynsarin recommended the practice and experience of taking the election of the President of the school according to the organizational and methodological materials developed by the CEC of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

S. Mustafina
Secretary Central Election Commission
of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Indian Elections 2019 - Creatives





Implementation of the electoral rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Russian Federation

According to the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, about 11% of citizens with active suffrage have a disability (total 12.5 million). More than a million of them require special conditions to exercise their electoral rights. Electoral law is one of the key political rights of a modern democratic state, so it is crucial to create accessible and comfortable conditions for everyone to be able to exercise their constitutional right to elect and be elected. As of today, the electoral legislation of the Russian Federation contains a fairly wide range of legal guarantees to ensure the implementation of the electoral rights of citizens with disabilities. There are also special, largely unique rules that contribute to the full integration of this social group into the political and social life of the country. In total, the Federal law "On basic guarantees of electoral rights and the right to participate in the referendum of citizens of the Russian Federation" contains 11 special provisions that guarantee and ensure the implementation of passive and active electoral rights. For example, the law provides for a norm that allows people with health restrictions to vote outside the voting premises - at home, in the hospital or any other

specialized institution. In addition, a voter who is unable to exercise his/her right to vote by him/herself may use the help of another person (friend, relative, volunteer, etc.), when receiving or filling out a ballot paper, as well as during the filling out of electoral documentation.

The system of election commissions of the Russian Federation during the preparation of elections in cooperation with state organs, local self-government bodies, public organizations of Persons with Disabilities and other civil society associations pays close attention to the issues of ensuring electoral rights of Persons with Disabilities. In this regard, it is important to note that, in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation, in 2018 a new composition of precinct election commissions was formed for 5 years. Notably, the precinct commissions include representatives of public organizations of disabled people, employees of social services, citizens with disabilities & sign language interpreters.

Considerable work is being done to collect and systematize information about voters with disabilities, taking into account specifics of the various categories (blind and visually impaired, deaf and hearing impaired, with impaired functions of the loco-motor system), to clarify information about the place, time and order of voting, as well as the need to have assistance in voting. This collected and systematized information allows targeted provision of special equipment for voting facilities and use of new assistive technologies for the needs of Persons with Disabilities.

The system of election commissions aims at the comprehensive development of public and state partnership in the sphere of ensuring implementation of citizens' electoral rights. In this regard, special attention is paid to the provision of appropriate equipment in polling stations, taking into account requirements of the Federal

Legislation which established the obligation of state authorities, local self-government and election commissions, in relation to their competence to create the most favorable conditions for unhindered access to the polling station for citizens with disabilities, to assist such persons in the implementation of their active electoral right.

In addition, the CEC of Russia, election commissions of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and a number of territorial election commissions have set up working groups to interact with public organizations of Persons with Disabilities, which make it possible to 'feel' the current problems of voters with disabilities from the inside, jointly find the most convenient ways to resolve them, if engage in dialogue with state and municipal authorities, and develop proposals for introducing amendments to the electoral legislation.

As a result of their joint work, significant results were achieved. In particular, 89% of the polling stations are located on the first floors of the buildings and, if possible, are equipped with ramps, lifting devices, tactile signs, and help call

buttons. However, currently the accessibility conditions are met only in 61% of the facilities. In a number of constituent entities of the Russian Federation, exceptional results have been achieved to date in terms of accessibility. For example, in the Republic of Kalmykia, all polling stations are located on the first floor and fully comply with the conditions of accessibility. Almost all polling stations (more than 95%) are located on the first floors in the Republics of Buryatia and Khakassia, as well as Ivanovo, Orel, Rostov, Samara regions and Nenets Autonomous district. For disabled persons with impaired functions of the loco-motor system, including wheelchair users, in accordance with the standards of technological equipment approved by the CEC of Russia for precinct election commissions, special voting booths for secret ballot are installed at polling stations and the premises are equipped with ramps, railings, floor mats, wide doorways and elevators, wherever possible.

For visually impaired citizens, optical correction means are used in the voting booths, and additional lighting and tactile pointers are provided. A number of polling stations are



Adapted voting booth

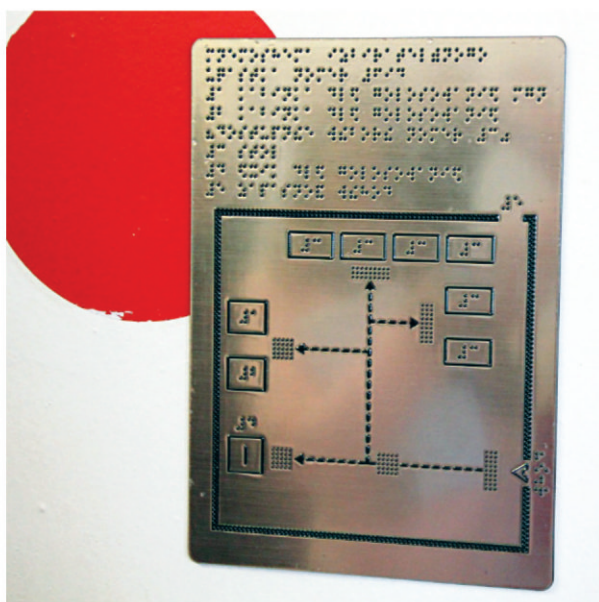


Wireless call button

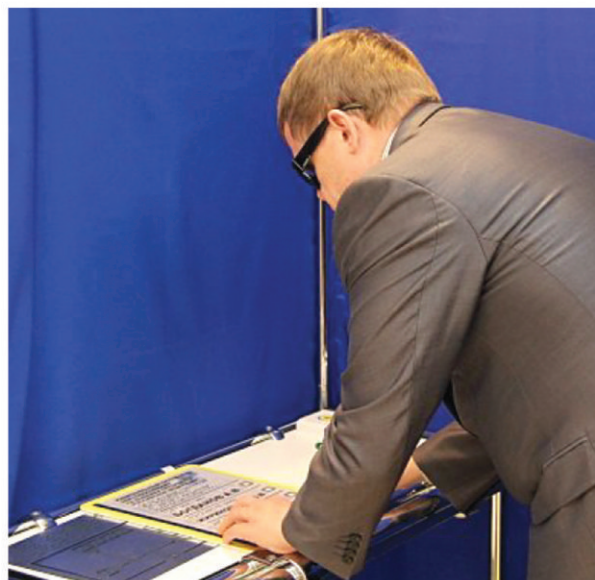
equipped with 'Accessible elections' voting kits, which include an adapted voting booth and a special table for wheelchair users with a wireless call button, and for the visually impaired voters - an overhead tactile tile for marking access paths, a tactile lens, and a stencil for filling out the ballot.

Voters with hearing problems are provided with services of sign language interpreters at the polling stations.

In places of compact residence of Persons with



Tactile tile for marking access paths

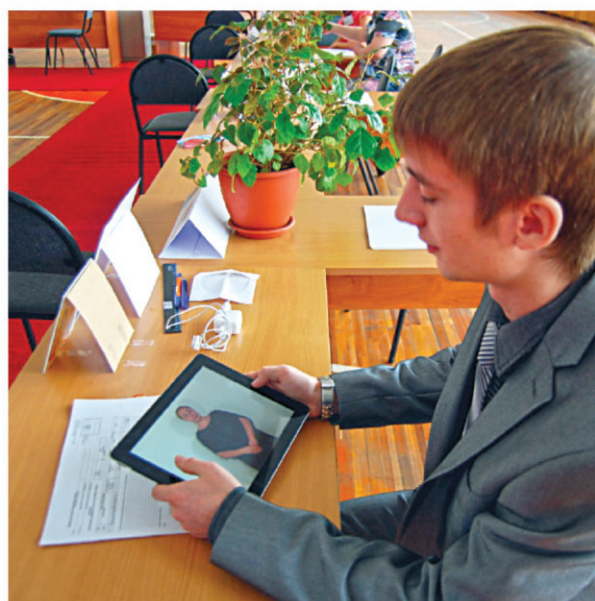


Stencil for filling out ballot

Disabilities (residential homes, apartment houses adjacent to specialized enterprises) specialized polling stations are created.



Tactile lens



Sign language interpretation

During the preparation and conduct of the elections, the election commissions pay great attention to awareness-raising among citizens with disabilities. A lot of work has been done on the website of the CEC of Russia to modernize the "Resource for visually impaired users" (<http://www.cikrf.ru/eng/>). During the preparation for the 2018 election of the President of the Russian Federation special materials on the registered candidates and the new voting procedure were prepared to provide maximum information to citizens with disabilities.

Work in this direction is also actively carried out in the regions of the Russian Federation. To inform citizens with disabilities, election commissions of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation produced videos with a running line or sign language translation for broadcasting on television channels. Organizers of the elections also produced additional necessary information and explanatory materials. For example, during regional and municipal elections on September 9, 2018 materials printed in large fonts and Braille fonts were placed at 65% of the polling stations. In addition, such materials were placed on the information stands of all polling stations of the Republics of Buryatia and Kalmykia, in the Altai, Transbaikal, Krasnoyarsk Regions, as well as the Arkhangelsk, Voronezh, Kemerovo, Orel, Samara, Yaroslavl Regions.

Cooperation between election commissions and social protection of the population bodies appears to be very effective. Work was carried out together with the social protection bodies to clarify information about voters with disabilities, to provide elections-related information to voters with disabilities, to participate in the transmission of voter applications for voting outside the polling station as well as at the location & to provide vehicles for transportation of Persons with Disabilities to polling stations.

The CEC of Russia pays close attention to the implementation of the "Road to the polling

station" project. The aim of the project is to identify the problems faced by a disabled person in the process of independently moving from the place of residence to the polling station, and further transfer of this information to the state authorities and local self-government bodies for swift correction. According to the election commissions of the subjects of the Russian Federation, during the period from 2010 to 2018, significant improvements in the availability of premises for voting and routes to the polling stations were made.

The Russian Federation election commission system is also actively working to attract volunteers to assist voters with disabilities. On May 1, 2018 the provisions of the Federal law came into force which allow election commissions to involve volunteers to assist voters with disabilities.

At the regional and municipal elections on September 9, 2018, volunteers worked in almost all regions of the Russian Federation to assist voters with disabilities. About 14000 volunteers worked at 8500 polling stations (about 20% of the total number of polling stations). In Moscow more than 4000 volunteers worked at 65% of polling stations, and in the Kemerovo Region, more than 2000 volunteers assisted people with limited mobility at 87% of polling stations.

At the 2018 Presidential elections in the Russian Federation a new procedure for the submission of application's for inclusion in the voter list at the location named 'Mobile Voter' was implemented. It was used by 5.69 million voters who applied for voting outside their legal place of residence. This is 4.7 times more citizens than in the previous similar elections. The number of voters who cast their ballots at the place of their actual location constituted 6.5% of all citizens who took part in the voting.

These applications were processed in the information system of the CEC of Russia "Vybory", and citizens were included in the lists of



Volunteers assisting a disabled voter

voters at the polling stations convenient for them. A citizen could submit an application only in person to the nearest election commission or to the multifunctional center for the provision of state and municipal services. An alternative method of filing an application on the Internet using a Single portal of state and municipal services for verified users of the portal was created.

The new voting procedure 'Mobile voter' turned out extremely relevant for the needs of disabled and citizens with restricted mobility as it allowed to choose a convenient polling station, which is best suited for voting, taking into account a particular type of disability.

The complex work carried out by the Russian system of election commissions together with the state and local authorities, public organizations aimed at equipping polling stations, ensuring their accessibility, creating the most comfortable conditions for voting, taken in conjunction with the use of the 'Mobile Voter' system, creates a situation where older and disabled people express their desire to independently come to the polling stations.

In spite of these achievements in ensuring the electoral rights of citizens with disabilities, a lot remains to be done in this respect, both legislatively and practically. Therefore, we are certainly aiming at the further development of a comprehensive public-state partnership in the sphere of ensuring the implementation of electoral rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Nikolay V. LEVICHEV
Member Central Election Commission
of the Russian Federation

Indian Elections 2019 - Creatives

READY TO VOTE IN THE LOK SABHA ELECTION 2019?

**WHEN OUR COURAGE
IS BORN OUT OF CONVICTION
THEN YES, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE**

Devender Jhajharia
Khel Ratna, Gold Medal, Paralympic Games

**NO VOTER
TO BE LEFT
BEHIND**

Election Commission of India
Helpline 1950 | <https://eci.gov.in/> | www.nvsp.in

My Vote Matters

- Ramp & Wheel chair
- EVM with Braille
- Sign Language
- Special Volunteers
- Transport Facility
- Voter Helpline



Use of the 'Mobile Voter' system in elections in the Russian Federation

For many decades, the Russian Federation used a procedure for the inclusion of citizens in voter lists, which provides for the automatic inclusion of a citizen in the voter list at the address where he was registered by an authorized state body overseeing the field of migration. At this address, the citizen, who resides there, receives various public services, but is not obliged to actually reside there.

Due to structural changes in the Russian economy

in the last two decades, the migration of voters across the territory of Russia has increased. However, the place of migration is not considered as the place of the legal registration.

Until 2017, resolution of this problem was insured by the possibility for voters to receive an absentee ballot during the elections. Issuance of the absentee ballot was possible only at the legal place of residence, which was not convenient for migrating voters, because the citizen may not be actually living in his legal place of residence.

This procedure required the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Russia to forecast a possible number of applications for absentee ballots and envisage a sufficiently large margin before each election. Also, over time more and more citizens asked to simplify the procedure for consideration of the place of their actual stay when compiling voter lists. There was a need for new legislative and organizational decisions to ensure the electoral rights of millions of voters.

Before the 2018 Presidential elections in the



Using Absentee Certificates

Presidential Elections in Russian Federation in 2012		State Duma Deputies Elections in 2016	
Absentee Certificates Produced	2,6 mln	Absentee Certificates Produced	3,5 mln
Absentee Certificates Issued to Voters	2,16 mln (83% of total produced)	Absentee Certificates Issued to Voters	1,2 mln (35% of total produced)
Voted Using Absentee Certificates	1,6 mln Voters (74% of total issued)	Voted Using Absentee Certificates	809 000 Voters (65% of total issued)

Russian Federation, it was decided to solve this challenge.

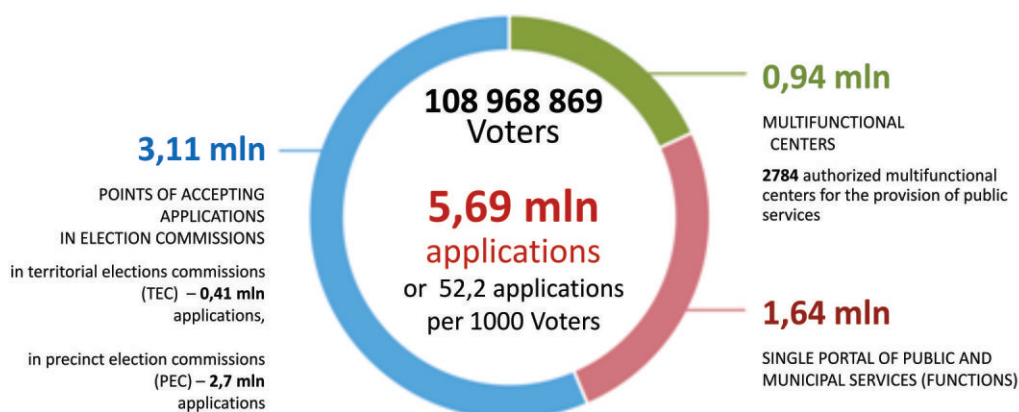
To address this task, a new procedure was developed for submitting applications for inclusion in the voter list at the actual location of the voter,

which we called 'Mobile Voter'.

Using this system, nearly 5.7 million voters applied for voting outside their legal place of residence, which is 4.7 times more than in the previous similar elections.



Number of applications submitted for inclusion in the voter list at the location in the Presidential Elections in the Russian Federation on March 18, 2018



The deadlines for submitting applications allowed everyone to use the service without waiting in queues: the Portal of State and Municipal Services and district centers could be contacted forty-five

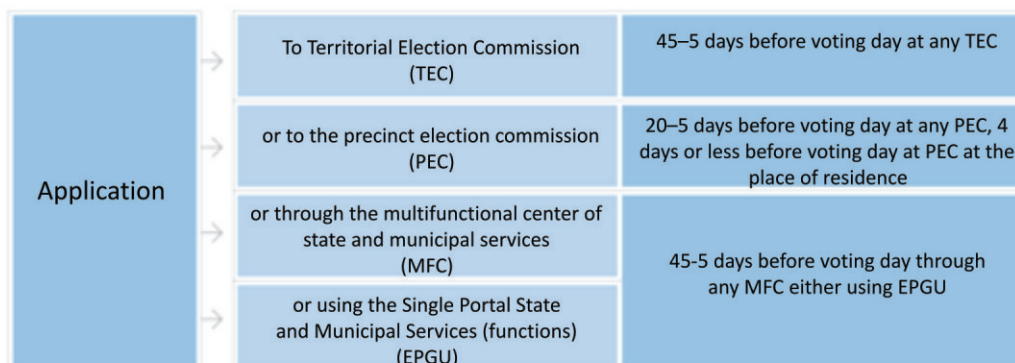
days before the voting day, the precinct commissions - twenty days before the voting day.

The deadline for accepting applications was five days before the voting day, due to the need to



Deadlines for submission of applications for the election of the President of the Russian Federation

Resolution of the Central Election Commission of Russia
No. 108/900-7 of 01.11.2017



process applications in the system. CEC of Russia strives to further reduce the processing time, and by now the deadline for the voter has been shortened country-wide to three days before the voting day, and in Moscow – to just one day.

Applications were processed in the Information system of the CEC of Russia, and citizens were included in the voter lists at polling stations convenient for them.

A citizen could submit an application only in person to the closest territorial or precinct

election commission or to a multifunctional center of state and municipal services, or via Internet using the Unified Portal of State and Municipal Services.

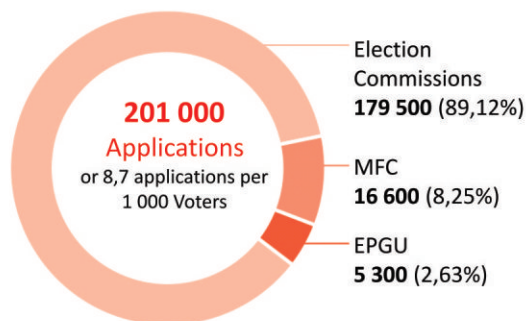
Prior to the implementation of the 'Mobile Voter' system by the 2018 Presidential election in Russia, it was successfully tested in elections in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in 2017, when 8.1 applications were submitted per one thousand voters.



Number of applications submitted for inclusion in the voter list at the location during the election campaign of 2017-2018

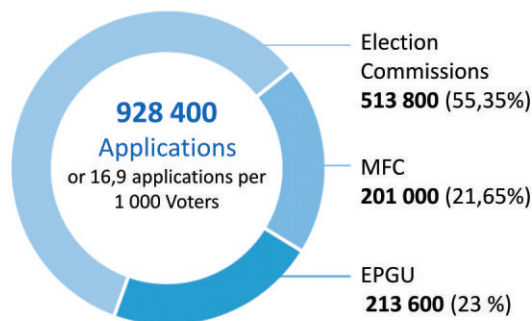
ELECTION IN SINGLE VOTING DAY
10 SEPTEMBER 2017

20 Subjects of the Russian Federation
Over 23 mln Voters



ELECTION IN SINGLE VOTING DAY
9 September 2018
(taking into account repeat vote)

37 Subjects of the Russian Federation
Over 55 mln Voters



After successful utilization in the 2018 Presidential election the 'Mobile Voter' gained popularity among voters and was developed further. The system was effectively applied in the regional elections in Russia in September 2018, when the number of filed applications per one thousand

voters nearly doubled.

In September 2018, during the election of the Mayor of Moscow, the 'Mobile Voter' system allowed people to vote at polling stations outside the capital constituency - in four neighboring regions.



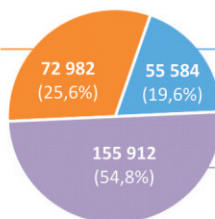
Number of applications for inclusion in the list of voters submitted
in the election of the Mayor of Moscow

7,1 mln
voters

Total Number of
Submitted Applications
284 478

from which
125 462 (44,1%)
on voting at 200 polling stations
formed outside of Moscow

SINGLE PORTAL STATE
and MUNICIPAL
SERVICES (FUNCTIONS)
(EPGU)



POINTS of RECEIPT of
APPLICATION
in ELECTION COMMISSIONS
(TEC, PEC)

MULTIFUNCTIONAL CENTERS
of STATE and MUNICIPAL
SERVICES (MFC)

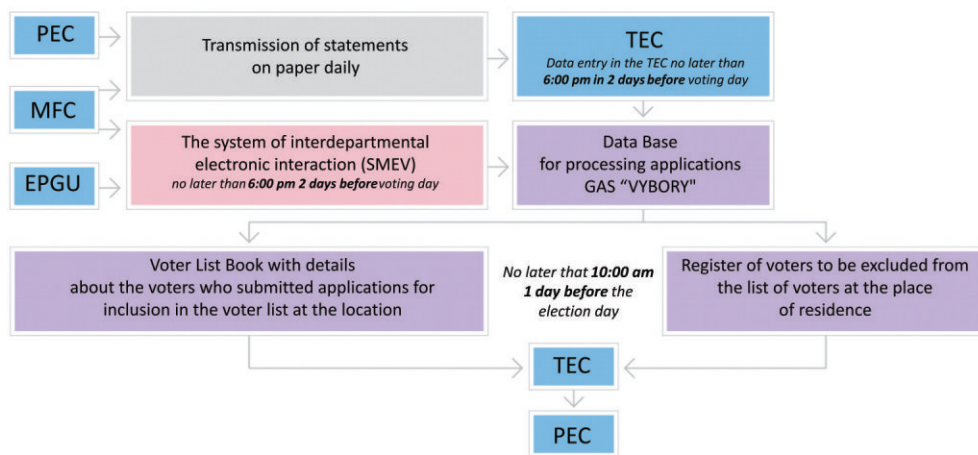
Part 5 of Article 14 of the Electoral Code of Moscow

... During the elections of the Mayor of Moscow, by decision of the City Commission and in accordance with the procedure established by it, territorial commissions may form polling stations for voting of voters included in voter lists at the location in accordance with part 17 of article 68 of this Code, outside the territory of the city of Moscow.

The picture below shows the procedure of processing voter applications in the information system.



Processing of applications for inclusion in the list of voters by location
at the election on 9 September 2018



- PEC – Precinct Election Commission
- TEC – Territorial Election Commission
- MFC – Multifunctional Center of State and Municipal Services
- EPGU – Single Portal State and Municipal Services (functions)

The information contained in the voters' applications is entered at the district level into the

computer data base and then sent to the centralized data base of the CEC of Russia.

After processing all data in the system, a book of the list of voters is entered for each polling station in which the data of voters who have expressed their desire to vote at this polling station is entered.

Also, a register is sent to the polling station

containing data on voters who should be excluded from the list due to the fact that they applied for voting in other polling stations.

A voter can submit only one application. In the

case of multiple applications, the first one will be valid according to the date and time of submission.

The fact of submitting an application can be checked on the CEC of Russia website.



Service of verification of applications for inclusion in the voter list at the location on the [official website of the CEC of Russia](#)



Each voter who submitted the application is sent an SMS/text message to his mobile phone, containing information on his application, the number of the polling station chosen, and the date

of application.

This tool provided effective control over the 'Mobile Voter' system in strict accordance with the principles of electoral law.



Information (text messages) for citizens, who submitted applicants for inclusion in the voter list at the location

INFORMATION CENTER CEC OF RUSSIA

- notification of registered voters in application points TEC, PEC, MFC (except for Moscow)



ISC_CIK_RF

In the 09/09/18 election of the deputy of the State Duma №1234 in the Kaliningrad region.
Statement of 08/08/18

SINGLE PORTAL STATE AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES (FUNCTIONS) (EPGU)

- notification of voters who submitted recorded applications on the UPGU portal;
- notification of voters registered at the EPGU portal and applicants at the application points (TEC, PEC, MFC)



gosuslugi

On September 9, 2018, come to your selected polling station No. 0016 at the address: Moscow, Bolshoy Kazenny Pereulok, 9, GBOU School "Pokrovsky Quarter" from 8:00 to 22:00 (!) Do not forget to bring your passport and a printout part of your application.

Thus, the 'Mobile Voter' system provides the maximum conducive conditions for voters to cast their ballots at their actual location. The positive experience of the application of this new system and growing voters' trust toward it

confirm the need for the further development of the 'Mobile Voter'.

Mayya GRISHINA
Secretary Central Election Commission
of the Russian Federation



El Salvador elects a new President

El Salvador, the smallest and densely populated nation in Central America, has a republican form of government under the Constitution adopted in 1983. The President, who is head of the state and the government, is elected by popular votes and holds office for a term of five years non-renewably. El Salvador

recently held its Presidential elections on February 3, 2019. The elections were held through paper ballot, Nayib Armando Bukele Ortiz representing Great Alliance for National Unity (GANU) secured 53.1 percent votes to register an emphatic victory against Carlos Calleja Hakker and Hugo Martinez who secured 31.72 percent and 14.41 percent votes. This obviated the need for a run off mandated under Article 80 of El Salvador's Constitution. Of the 5,268,411 registered voters a total of 2,773,178 persons exercised their franchise, implying a turnout 51.88 percent. Ortiz will take office on June 1, 2019.



REFERENCE

1. Elections in El Salvador: 2019 Presidential Elections (FAQ), International Foundation for Electoral System, 2019.
2. Constitution of El Salvador, 1983 as subsequently amended.





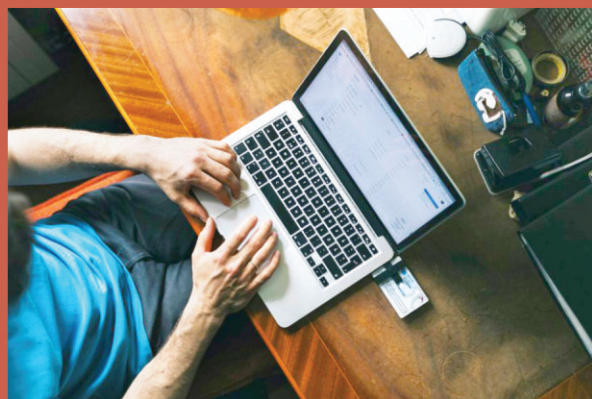
Electronic voting surge in Estonian election

Estonia conducted the elections of its legislative chamber viz. Riigikoju on March 3, 2019. Under Article 60 of the Estonian constitution, elections are held on the first Sunday of March, after every four years. A small nation comprising 1.3 million people, it has 8.87 lac registered voters. Riigikoju comprises 101 members, who shall be elected “in free elections on the principle of proportionality”.

The proportional representation (PR) implies individual members enter Riigikoju, in order their names are mentioned on party lists. The actual elections are complex three-round process. Estonia has 12 electoral districts, and in the first and second rounds personal and district mandates, are allocated to each district. Here open party lists are used, and elected candidate must gain at least ten percent of district quota votes. In the third round compensation mandates are divided at the national level based on closed party list.

The voters turnout in March 3 elections was 63.7, and there was a rising trend in pre-election voting, especially e-voting.

Share of online voting was at record high 44 percent, and share of advance voting 61 percent. Estonia was amongst the pioneering nations to allow internet voting (in 2005 local elections). The Estonian Reform Party emerged as the front runner with 28.9 percent of votes, securing 34 seats. Centre Party of Estonia secured 23.1 percent votes, clinching 26 seats. They were followed by Estonian Conservative Party who secured 19.8 percent votes, thereby winning 19 seats. Estonia has conventionally witnessed coalition governments, as no party is able to secure absolute majority.



REFERENCE

1. 2019 Parliamentary Elections in Estonia by Anu Toots (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Tallin; March, 2019)
2. Constitution of Estonia 1992 as amended till 2015
3. Riigikoju Election Act, 2002



General Election to 17th Lok Sabha witnesses highest turnout ever

General Election to the largest democracy of the world is a mega election exercise with its own challenges, given the size, scale, scope and diversity of India.

General Election to 543 seats of 17th Lok Sabha were conducted in seven (7) phases starting from April 11 to May 19, 2019. Alongside, General Elections to Legislative Assemblies in four different states namely Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim too were conducted. Comprehensive preparations were made by Election Commission of India for the conduct of aforesaid elections in a free, fair and peaceful manner. This article aims at sharing with you some of salient points of this festival of democracy.

Named as 'Desh Ka Maha Tyohar', the mega electoral exercise covered 910 Million electors spread over 10.36 lakh polling stations located in a vast expanse of the country including far-flung hamlets in rural, hilly and difficult terrains.

Announcement

Election Commission of India announced the Schedule for General Elections to the 17th Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies on March 10,

2019. As per the press note issued by the Commission on the subject, the five year term of 16th Lok Sabha expires on June 03, 2019. Article 324 of the Constitution of India read with Section 14 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 mandates the Commission for conduct of the elections to constitute a new Lok Sabha.

Preparations

The preparations for General Election started months before the actual announcement of polls. The Electoral Rolls were revised and finally published as Photo Electoral Rolls with January 01, 2019 as the qualifying date. EPICs were provided to 99.36% electors. Facility of checking of voter's name in the Roll was provided on CEO's website. 'Voter Verification & Information Programme (VVIP)' was launched where facility to check the names in electoral rolls through SMS on toll free number was initiated. The Commission organized special camps at all Polling Stations for enrolment of left out eligible voters. As per the rolls, **total electorate number for Lok Sabha 2019 is 910.1 million**. This includes in all 1677386 service electors also.

Photo Voter Slips (PVS) were distributed to the voters in advance. EPIC or any of the 11 items listed by the Commission could be used for identification. Braille PVS were given to PwDs. Voter Guides were provided to every household.

10,35,918 Polling Stations had been set up for conduct of poll with instructions issued for Assured Minimum Facilities at all the Polling Stations. The Commission had decided to use VVPAT along with EVM at every Polling Station to enhance transparency and credibility of the election process. **2.33 mn Ballot Units, 1.635 mn Control Units and 1.74 mn VVPAT machines** were deployed for the poll.

Instructions were issued for strictly following all the prescribed protocols for different stages of

use of EVMs and VVPATs. NOTA option was also provided in the EVMs. Instructions were also issued for printing of photographs of the candidates on EVM.

Model Code of Conduct

Model Code of Conduct came into force with immediate effect with this announcement and was applicable to all Political Parties, the Union, State Governments and UT Administrations. Guidelines on Election Manifesto have been incorporated in the MCC. The Commission called upon all the Political Parties, Candidates and the Union and State Governments and UT Administrations to strictly adhere to the MCC. The Commission had made elaborate arrangements for ensuring the effective implementation of the MCC Guidelines.

Planning

District Election Management Plan, Booth Level Management Plan and Communication Plan had been made as per guidelines of the Commission and made operational in time. Over **14 mn personnel** were deployed for election management. Training and sensitization exercises were organized. Polling Parties were formed through special three stage randomization. Police personnel deployment for the poll day was also finalized through randomization.

Campaigning

The Commission laid emphasis on using eco friendly substances for election campaigns, publicity etc and desist from utilizing environmentally hazardous materials. Restrictions were placed on noise pollution such as use of loud speakers.

All critical activities were video graphed. For the purpose, webcasting, CCTV coverage, videography was taken up and digital cameras were deployed. Videography was done even inside the critical polling booths in vulnerable areas without disturbing the secrecy of the voting process.

Security

The Commission had made elaborate security arrangements for peaceful conduct of free and fair elections. The security arrangements includes not only the security of the polling personnel, polling station and polling materials, but also overall security of election process. CAPFs were deployed to supplement the local police force to ensure conducive atmosphere in which an elector is able to access the polling station and cast his vote without any intimidation or any obstruction.

Observers

The Commission deployed General Observers to keep a close watch on every stage of the electoral process to ensure free and fair elections in a smooth manner. Police Observers at the State and District level were appointed wherever required to monitor deployment of force, law and order and coordinate civil and police administration. The General Observers also deployed Micro-Observers, from amongst Central Government and PSUs Officials, to observe the poll proceedings on the poll day in critical/ vulnerable polling stations. The Commission had also decided to appoint Expenditure Observers and Assistant Expenditure Observers to exclusively monitor the election expenditure of the contesting candidates. Control room and Complaint Monitoring Centre with 24 hours toll free numbers were operative during the entire election process. The Commission deputed some Special Observers in the areas of special law and order problems, expenditure sensitive areas and areas with special challenges. Due protection was provided to SC, ST and other weaker sections to prevent any intimidation in exercise of franchise.

SVEEP

The Commission works on the premise 'No Voter to be Left Behind'. In this pursuit, several initiatives under 'Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation' (SVEEP), had been launched well in advance to connect with voters

of all categories down to the polling station level. As per extant directions of the Commission, State SVEEP Plans had been developed, approved and the implementation closely monitored. Special campaign, including hands on experience, was undertaken for enhancing awareness, elector convenience and confidence in EVM and VVPAT. Voter Facilitation Centers (VFC) were activated in all the States and Union Territories to facilitate voters. Voter Helpline -1950 was activated across the country to cater to the voters queries and in addition, 'Voter Helpline App' had also been launched. Special facilitation was provided to the PwDs. Services of Electoral Literacy Clubs, 'Chunav Pathshalas' were used for enhancing awareness, disseminate information, motivation and facilitation among youth for both, enrollment besides use of EVM and VVPAT and as such for the entire electoral process. National Multi-Media Campaign covering practically all areas of relevance to promote informed and ethical participation was launched to supplement the communication campaign taken up by the CEOs.

Applications

Use of IT/ICT and Mobile Apps driven by Smart Technologies was enhanced for larger efficiency in election operations. Apps like cVIGIL, Voter Helpline Mobile App, PwD App, Suvidha Candidate App, Samadhan besides Voter Helpline Contact Centers were launched. For Election Officials Observer App, Suvidha, Sugam, EMS, EMD and ETPBS were launched.

Media

The Commission considers Media as an important ally in election management. Instructions were given to ensure regular interactions with media, a robust information dissemination system, sensitization of media about election code and issue of authority letters to accredited media persons on duty.

Mechanisms such as MCMC, monitoring of electronic and social media, commitments by intermediaries including social media platforms were brought in place to ensure efficient media interactions. Strict check was maintained on fake news and paid news.

A glance at the planning and preparations:



Poll Days & Schedule for Lok Sabha Election

Sl. No.	Poll Event	Poll Day						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Schedule-1	Schedule-2	Schedule-3	Schedule-4	Schedule-5	Schedule-6	Schedule-7
1	Announcement & Issue of Press Note	Mar 10, 2019 (Sunday)	Mar 10, 2019 (Sunday)	Mar 10, 2019 (Sunday)	Mar 10, 2019 (Sunday)	Mar 10, 2019 (Sunday)	Mar 10, 2019 (Sunday)	Mar 10, 2019 (Sunday)
2	Issue of Notification	Mar 18, 2019 (Monday)	Mar 19, 2019 (Tuesday)	Mar 28, 2019 (Thursday)	Apr 02, 2019 (Tuesday)	Apr 10, 2019 (Wednesday)	Apr 16, 2019 (Tuesday)	Apr 22, 2019 (Monday)
3	Last Date for Filing Nominations	Mar 25, 2019 (Monday)	Mar 26, 2019 (Tuesday)	Apr 04, 2019 (Thursday)	Apr 09, 2019 (Tuesday)	Apr 18, 2019 (Thursday)	Apr 23, 2019 (Tuesday)	Apr 29, 2019 (Monday)
4	Scrutiny of Nominations	Mar 26, 2019 (Tuesday)	Mar 27, 2019 (Wednesday)	Apr 05, 2019 (Friday)	Apr 10, 2019 (Wednesday)	Apr 20, 2019 (Saturday)	Apr 24, 2019 (Wednesday)	Apr 30, 2019 (Tuesday)
5	Last Date for Withdrawal of Candidature	Mar 28, 2019 (Thursday)	Mar 29, 2019 (Friday)	Apr 08, 2019 (Monday)	Apr 12, 2019 (Friday)	Apr 22, 2019 (Monday)	Apr 26, 2019 (Friday)	May, 02 2019 (Thursday)
6	Date of Poll	Apr 11, 2019 (Thursday)	Apr 18, 2019 (Thursday)	Apr 23, 2019 (Tuesday)	Apr 29, 2019 (Monday)	May 06, 2019 (Monday)	May 12, 2019 (Sunday)	May 19, 2019 (Sunday)
7	Counting of Votes on	May 23, 2019 (Thursday)	May 23, 2019 (Thursday)	May 23, 2019 (Thursday)	May 23, 2019 (Thursday)	May 23, 2019 (Thursday)	May 23, 2019 (Thursday)	May 23, 2019 (Thursday)
8	Date Before Which the Election Shall be Completed	May 27, 2019 (Monday)	May 27, 2019 (Monday)	May 27, 2019 (Monday)	May 27, 2019 (Monday)	May 27, 2019 (Monday)	May 27, 2019 (Monday)	May 27, 2019 (Monday)
	Number of PCs	91	97	115	71	51	59	59
	No. of States/UTs in Each Schedule	20	13	14	9	7	7	8

Poll Days for Assembly Election

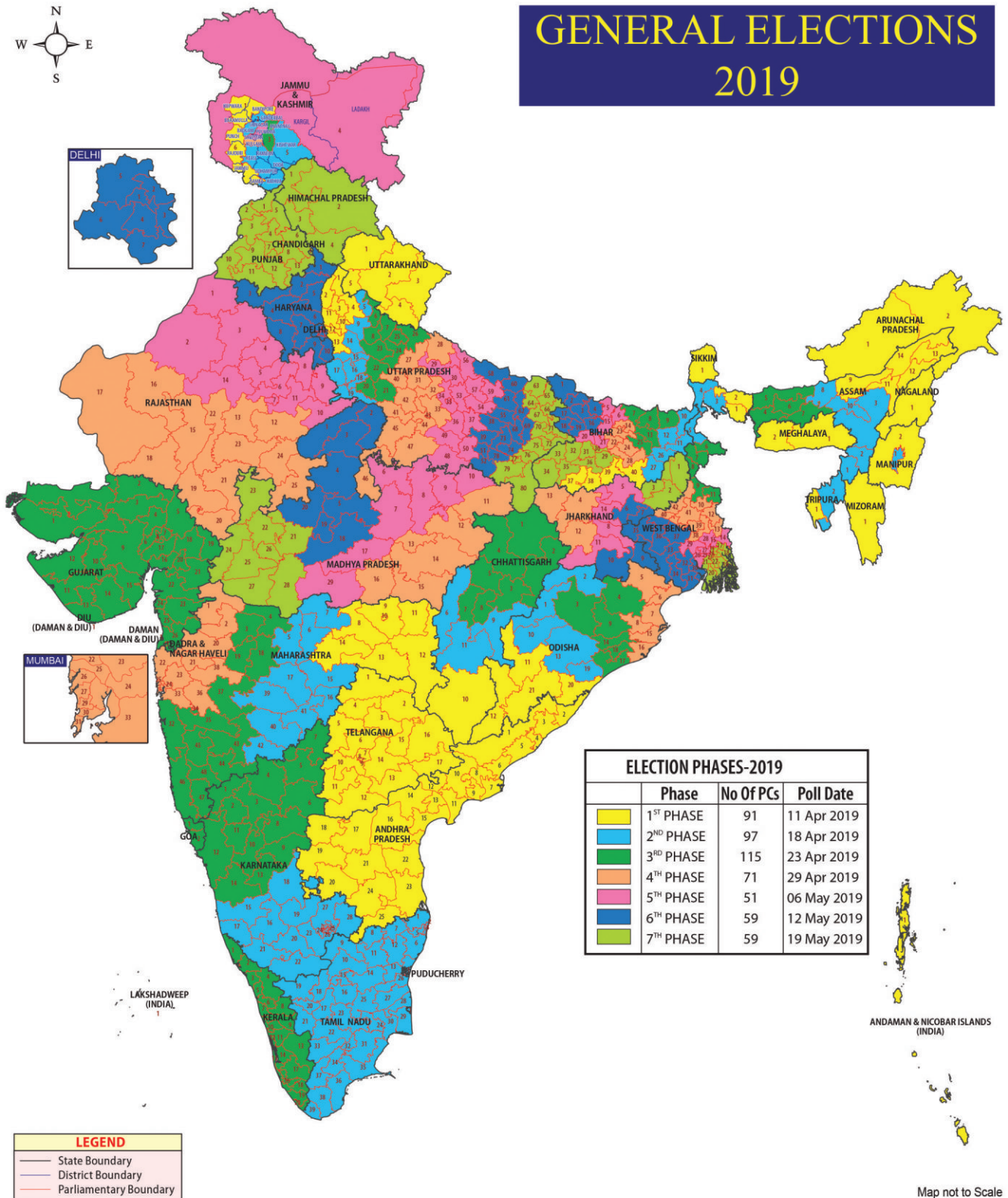
	ANDHRA PRADESH	ODISHA				SIKKIM	ARUNACHAL PRADESH
Date of Poll	11 Apr 2019 (Thursday)	11 Apr 2019 (Thursday)	18 Apr 2019 (Thursday)	23 Apr 2019 (Tuesday)	29 Apr 2019 (Thursday)	11 Apr 2019 (Thursday)	11 Apr 2019 (Thursday)

Number of PCs Voting on Different Polling Dates In States & Union Territories

State/UT	No of PCs	Poll Day No/Date of Poll/Day of the week						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Apr 11, 2019	Apr 18, 2019	Apr 23, 2019	Apr 29, 2019	May 06, 2019	May 12, 2019	May 19, 2019
		Thursday	Thursday	Tuesday	Monday	Monday	Sunday	Sunday
Andhra Pradesh	25	25						
Arunachal Pradesh	2	2						
Assam	14	5	5	4				
Bihar	40	4	5	5	5	5	8	8
Chhattisgarh	11	1	3	7				
Goa	2			2				
Gujarat	26			26				
Haryana	10						10	
Himachal Pradesh	4							4
Jammu & Kashmir	6*	2	2	1	1	2		
Jharkhand	14				3	4	4	3
Karnataka	28		14	14				
Kerala	20			20				
Madhya Pradesh	29				6	7	8	8
Maharashtra	48	7	10	14	17			
Manipur	2	1	1					
Meghalaya	2	2						
Mizoram	1	1						
Nagaland	1	1						
Odisha	21	4	5	6	6			
Punjab	13							
Rajasthan	25				13			
Sikkim	1	1						
Tamil Nadu	39		39					
Telangana	17	17						
Tripura	2	1	1					
Uttar Pradesh	80	8	8	10	13	14	14	13
Uttarakhand	5	5						
West Bengal	42	2	3	5	8	7	8	9
A&N Islands	1	1						
Chandigarh	1							1
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1			1				
Daman & Diu	1			1				
Lakshadweep	1	1						
NCT of Delhi	7						7	
Puducherry	1		1					
Total PCs	543	91	97	115	71	51	59	59
No. of States/UTs in each Poll Day		20	13	14	9	7	7	8
Date of Counting	May 23, 2019							

Election Phases

GENERAL ELECTIONS 2019



Voter Turnout

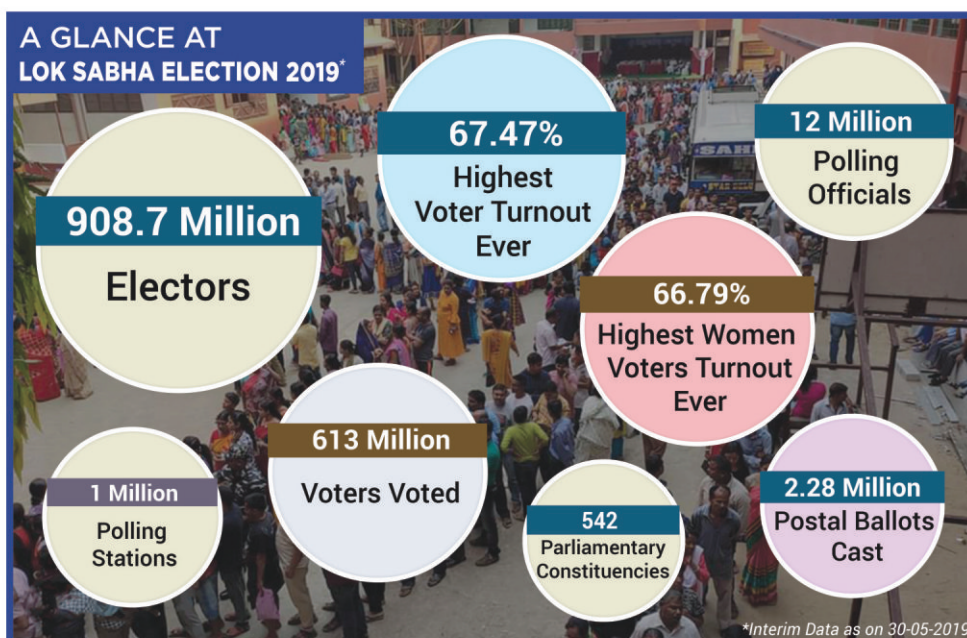
The 2019 Lok Sabha Elections witnessed the highest turnout ever with a voting percentage of 67.47%*. Lok Sabha Elections in 2014 too had witnessed an increase to 66.44% from 58.19% in Lok Sabha Election in 2009. Moreover, women participation in these elections also increased to a

historic 66.79% reducing the gender gap to 0.01% as compared to 1.46% in 2014 Elections.

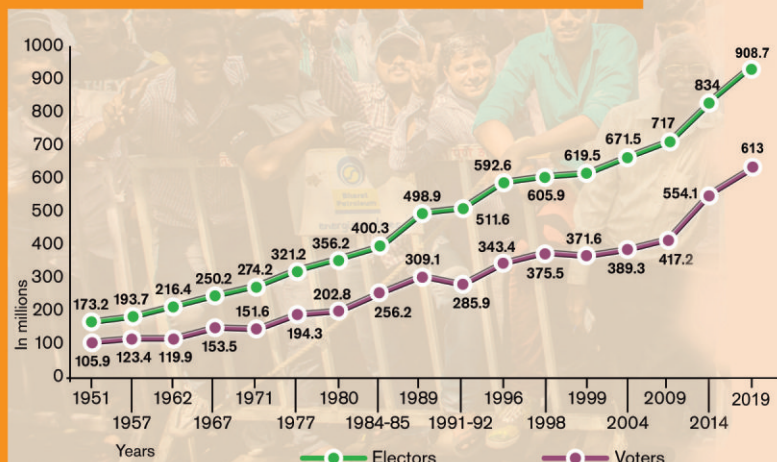
The Commission paid their gratitude to all the Stakeholders for making National elections free, fair, transparent, peaceful, inclusive, accessible, ethical and participative.

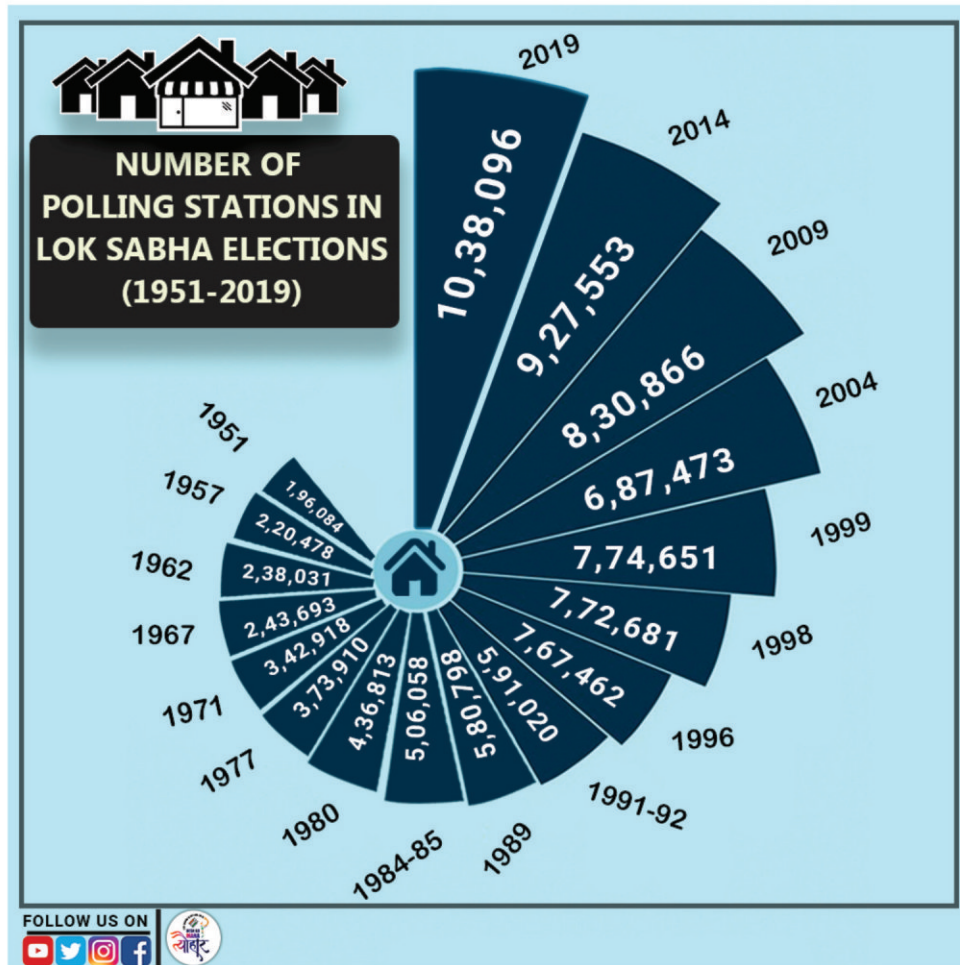
**Data as on May 30, 2019*

A Look at Numbers

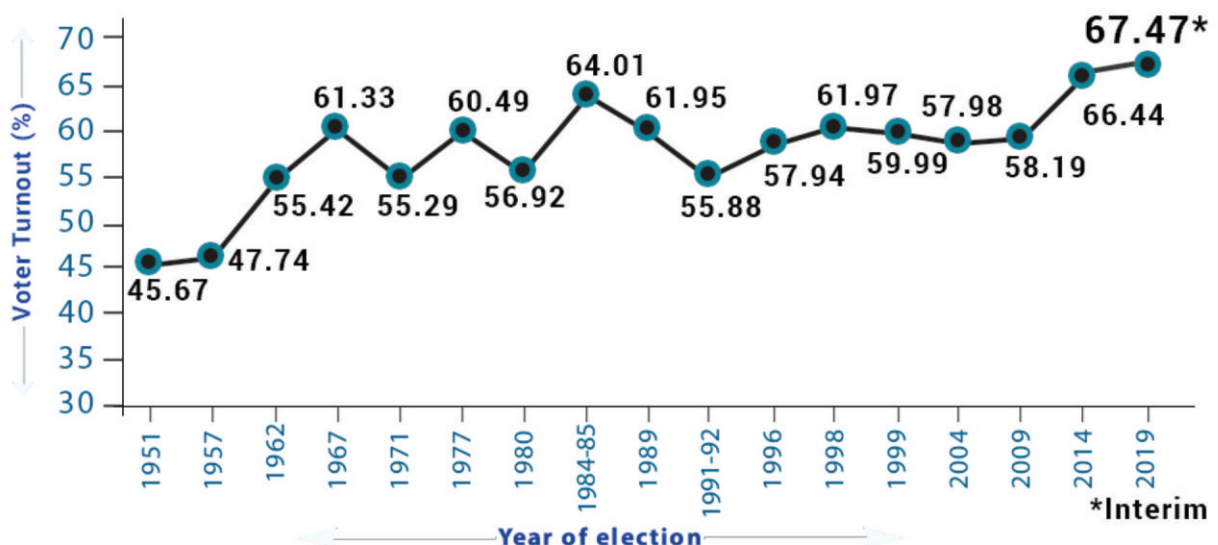


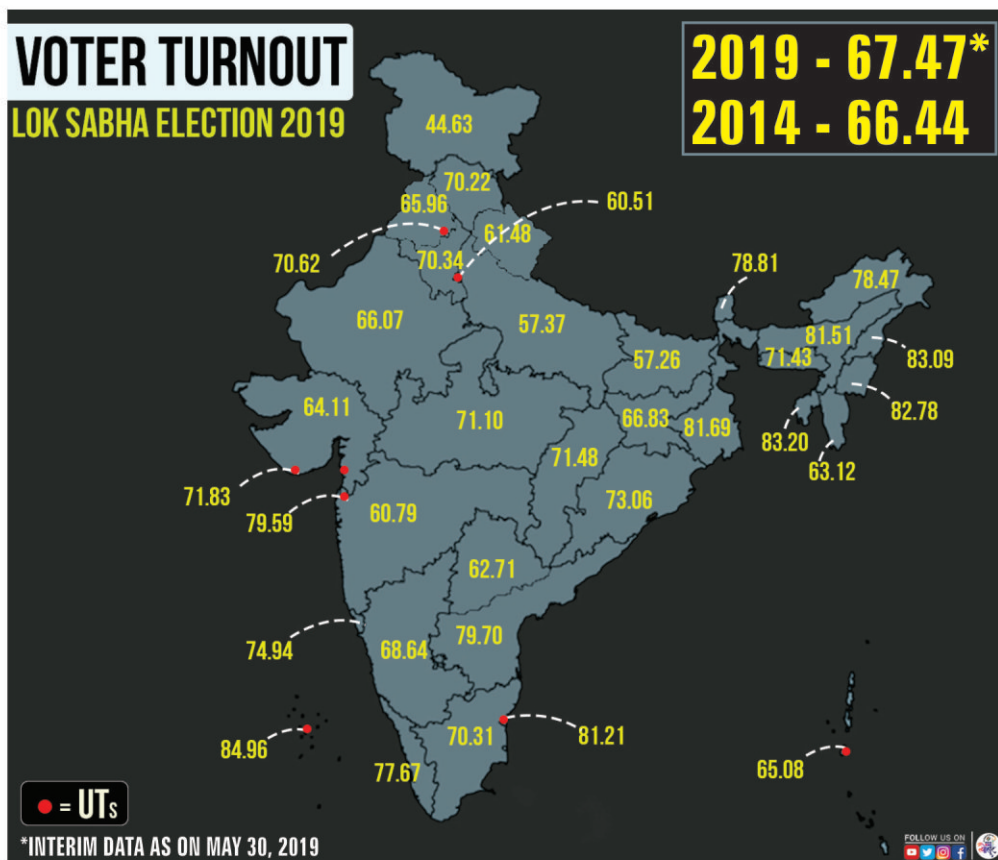
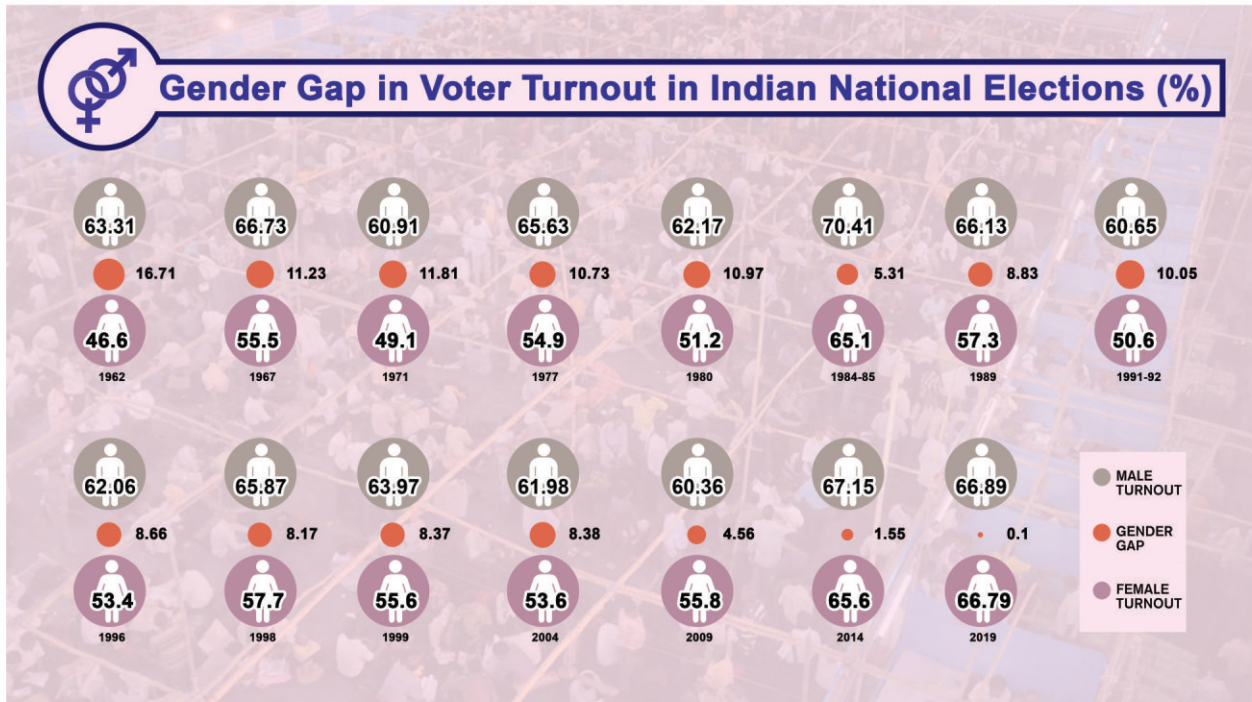
COMPARISON OF ELECTORS AND VOTERS IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS





VOTER TURNOUT OVER YEARS





Dr. Aarti Aggarwal
Sr. Consultant, ECI



Indonesia Holds World's Largest Single-Day Election

On April 17, 2019, Indonesia held the largest single-day election in the world. For the first time since Indonesia's transition to democracy, more than 192 million registered voters had an opportunity to select their new president and legislature at the same time. In the past, these two elections were held three months apart.

In a complex logistical undertaking, General Election Commission of Indonesia (KPU) reported that most polling stations were run well, with some delay in parts of Papua province due to the late arrival of elections materials. These elections will be held as soon as possible, starting with elections in Jayapura scheduled for April 18. With an average of 300 voters per polling station, voting closed at 1:00 p.m. Counting subsequently began at each polling station and, since each voter was issued five ballots, is projected to continue late into the night. Once the polling station results have been announced, a copy of the results will be posted at each station and another copy



Election Oversight Body Commissioner Fritz Edward Siregar (left) and IFES President and CEO Anthony Banbury (right)

carried forward to the subdistrict level, where the first level of manual tabulation will take place. The electoral law stipulates that the formal vote tabulation process must be conducted manually and flow through various administrative levels, ending at the national level and with official results announced by May 22.

As in past elections, local polling and media organizations have collected quick counts. Two hours after polling stations closed, the quick counts showed the incumbent Joko Widodo and his running mate Ma'ruf Amin as leading the race with 53-56 percent of the vote and Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno coming in at 44-47 percent.



The KPU announced that the initial estimated domestic turnout was 77.5 percent, while overseas turnout was 65 percent. Both of the initial figures are an increase from 2014, when the domestic voting turnout was 70 percent and overseas was 22 percent.

As in the 2014 election, KPU aims to post the result tabulation form from each polling station (CI) to its website, enabling independent tabulation and results verification. An independent group of volunteers, developers and civil society members will be tabulating results in parallel from the available forms and make them available on Kawal Pemilu. In 2014, with a thin margin in the presidential election, this crowdsourced result served an important role in upholding the integrity of the election as it verified the official result.

Courtesy: International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Arlington, Virginia

Source: <https://www.ifes.org>



Israel elects 21st Knesset: Closely contested election throws up tie

Israel conducted the elections for constituting 21st Knesset, as its Parliament is called in Hebrew, on April 9, 2019. The Knesset is reconstituted once in every four year, but it can be dissolved sooner by a Knesset resolution passed by simple majority. Under certain circumstances, the tenure of a Knesset can also be extended. Israel has no independent permanent body for supervising the elections. A Central Elections Committee (CEC), appointed by each Knesset and Chaired by a Supreme Court judge holds the election.

The CEC is to be constituted within 60 days of the inauguration of the new Knesset and will be co-terminus to the Knesset's term. The CEC is headed by a sitting justice of the Supreme Court, who is chosen by the other justices. The chair has at least four deputies, who represent the four largest factions in the Knesset. The Knesset

House Committee is empowered to approve the appointment of up to four more deputy chairs of the CEC.

Israel follows a proportional representation system under which the whole country is regarded as one constituency. It is somewhat rare in Israeli politics for one party to capture majority of seats, and parties must form coalitions in order to govern and complete a full term in Knesset.

The number of seats that each list (of candidates) receives in the Knesset - the House of Representatives - is proportional to the number of votes it received. Its legal basis comes from Basic Law: the Knesset of 1958 and the Knesset Elections Law (combined version) of 1969. Since the Parties Law of 1992 was passed, only registered political parties (or a collation thereof) can present a list of candidates and participate in the elections. Say, a registered party (or coalition) submits a list of 10 candidates to the Central Election Committee. If the party receives sufficient votes for 10 seats, the first 10 candidates on its list will enter the Knesset. During the entire tenure of that Knesset, if a Knesset member passes away or resigns his seat for whatever reason, the next candidate on the list will replace him/her.

The voting was open between 10 am to 10 pm; and the voters' turnout was 67.9%.

Electoral Participation since 8th Knesset (1973)

Year	Until 10:00	Until 12:00	Until 14:00	Until 16:00	Until 18:00	Until 20:00	Until 22:00
1973	21.8	33.1	41.4	54.1	65.2	73.4	78.6
1977	16.8	31.3	42.4	50.6	60.2	71.4	79.2
1981	17.0	30.2	39.4	47.0	57.0	69.6	78.5
1984	15.6	29.8	39.8	47.2	55.6	68.9	78.8
1988	14.8	29.3	42.1	52.9	65.2	75.6	79.7
1992	14.0	27.5	38.4	47.0	56.3	68.2	77.4
1996	14.3	28.9	41.3	50.6	60.0	70.9	79.3
1999	14.2	28.9	41.7	51.8	60.9	71.4	78.7
2001	11.1	21.1	34.7	43.21	51.2	58.2	62.3
2003	10.1	24.0	35.3	44.2	52.8	62.8	67.8
2006	9.9	21.7	30.9	39.0	47.0	57.0	63.2
2009	10.3	23.4	34.0	41.9	50.3	59.7	65.2
2013	11.4	26.7	38.3	46.6	55.5	63.7	66.6
2015	14.3	26.9	36.6	45.4	54.6	62.4	71.8
2019	12.9	24.8	35.8	42.8	52.0	61.3	67.9

Source: 1. Central Elections Committee, Elections for 21st Knesset (website) 2. The Knesset, Israel (Website)
3. The Elections in Israel – 2013, a collection of papers by Israel Democracy Institute

Korean National Assembly Elections

The National Election Commission (NEC) of the Republic of Korea announced the results of the April 3 re and by-elections for constituency members of the National Assembly, confirming that Yeo Young-guk of the Justice Party has been elected as Seongsan-gu Changwon-si constituency member and Jung Jeom-sik of the Liberty Korea Party has been elected as the Tongyeong-si and Goseong-gun, South Gyeongsang Province constituency member.

In addition, three candidates were elected in elections for local council members in three different regions. The term of office for all of the members elected in these re and by-elections



Yeo Young-guk,
National Assembly member
for the Justice Party



Jung Jeom-sik
National Assembly member
for the Justice Party

begins from when they are confirmed as elected and they will see out the remaining term of office of their predecessors.

The final confirmed overall turnout was 48.0%, with 196,604 of the 409,566 registered voters casting a ballot. Detailed information, including the status of voting and counting and the elected candidate for these re and by-elections, is available on the NEC website (www.nec.go.kr).



REPUBLIC OF KOREA
NATIONAL ELECTION
COMMISSION



Moldova gets a new Parliament

Moldova recently conducted its elections for Parliament on February 24, 2019. Formerly a part of the erstwhile USSR, the nation gained its independence on August 27, 1991. The new Constitution adopted on August 27, 1994 guaranteeing 'justice and political pluralism' established a unicameral Parliament, whose members are directly elected by the people for four year term. The Parliament has 101 seats, for which 51 members are directly elected in single seat constituencies by simple majority votes, and 50 members directly elected in a single nationwide constituency by closed party-list proportional representation vote.

Moldova has a population barely above four million. Of the 2,803,573 registered voters 1,457,220 cast their vote in February 24 elections representing a turnout of 52 percent appx. The percentage of votes by parties in new Parliament are – the Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) - 31.2, ACUM or Platform (PPDA + PAS)- 26.8, Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM)-23.6, Shor Party (PS)-8.3 and Others-10.1. Seats won by parties are as following: PSRM-34, ACUM (PAD + PAS)-27, PDM-30, PS-7 and Independent- 3. As against 78 men, 23 women have been elected to Parliament.



REFERENCE

1. The Constitution of Moldova



INDEPENDENT
National Electoral Commission

Nigeria conducts 'triple' elections

Nigeria, Africa's biggest democracy, recently held its elections for Presidency, Senate and House of Representatives together on February 23, 2019. Earlier the elections for House of Representatives were scheduled for February 16, but a day earlier it was postponed, to coincide with the other two. Under the 1999 Constitution the President is the head of the state and chief executive, who is elected directly for a four years term. The Constitution provides for bicameral National Assembly comprising House of Representatives and Senate. Each of the 36 states of Nigeria sends ten representatives to the House of Representatives, whose maximum strength is 360. The Senate draws three members from each state, and one from the Abuja Federal Capital Territory.

The incumbent President Major General Muhammadu Buhari (Retd.), representing the All Progressive Congress (APC), secured 55.6 percent votes to retain the Presidency. He

defeated 72 other candidates representing as many parties. The APC also emerged as the biggest party in House of Representatives clinching 217 seats, whereas Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) finished distant second at 115 seats. In the Senate also the APC emerged front runner with 65 seats and PDP the runners up with 39 seats. Nigeria has 84 million plus registered voters.



REFERENCE

1. Independent National Electoral Commission <https://www.inecnigeria.org/>



INDEPENDENT
National Electoral Commission

Macky Sall retains Presidency in Senegal

Senegal, the west African nation, often called the 'Gateway of Africa', held its Presidential elections on February 24, 2019. Sitting President, Macky Sall, having secured 58.3 percent of votes, was declared the winner after the conclusion of the first round, thus obviating the need to hold a second. Sall leads the political formation Alliance for Republic, popularly called Yaakar or APR. Senegal is a multi-party republic. Its Parliament comprises the National Assembly and the Senate. The President is the head of the state, he is elected by direct universal adult franchise for seven years, with maximum number of terms limited to two. Senegal has 6,683,043 registered voters, out of which 4,426,344 cast their votes in the election signifying 66.23 percent voter turnout.



REFERENCE

1. Statement by the Chairperson of the Commission of on Elections in Senegal- March 5, 2019
2. 'Senegal's Macky Sall wins second term' (Aljazeera.com – 28 February, 2019)

Indian Election 2019: Glimpses





7th Executive Board Meeting of A-WEB held in Sofia, Bulgaria

The 7th Executive Board Meeting of A-WEB was co-hosted by A-WEB and the Central Commission of Bulgaria on February 21, 2019. During the meeting, the Executive Board members discussed and made decisions on important issues regarding the future direction of this Association. Marian Muhulet from the Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania presided over the meeting which was attended by officials from Elections Management Bodies across the world.

A-WEB is the largest association of EMBs

worldwide, having 109 EMBs as members [22 from Asia, 35 from Africa, 30 from America, 16 from Europe and 6 from Oceania] besides 20 international organisations/regional associations as Associate Members.

A two member ECI delegation, led by Dharendra Ojha, Director General with V. K. Sharma, Consultant visited Sofia, Bulgaria from 19-22 February 2019 to participate in the A-WEB Special Committee on Charter Amendments on February 20, 2019 and the 7th meeting of the A-WEB Executive Board on February 21, 2019.

ECI has been closely associated in the process of formation of A-WEB during 2011-2012 and has been its Executive Board member, since its inception in October 2013, for two consecutive terms (2013-15 & 2015-17). At the last General Assembly held in Bucharest on August 31, 2017, Romania took over as Chair and the ECI was elected, unopposed, as Vice-Chair of A-WEB for 2017-19. Further, the General Assembly of A-WEB will be hosted by Election Commission of India in late 2019.



Social media, transition of power and campaign finance during Argentina elections 2019

A seminar on the Argentina Elections was held on March 11, 2019 at the headquarters of the Argentina Council for International Relations (CARI, for its Spanish acronym), in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The event was organized by the National Electoral Chamber, the Wilson Center, The Annenberg Foundation, CARI and International IDEA, represented by its Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Dr Daniel Zovatto.

The seminar saw the participation of justices of the National Electoral Chamber, Dr Alberto Dalla Via and Dr Santiago Corcuera; the President of the Annenberg Foundation, Ambassador David Lane; the Director of the Latin America Program of the Wilson Center, Dr Cynthia Arson; Justice José

Luis Vargas of the Federal Court of the Judicial Power of the Federation, who was the chief guest for the seminar; prominent politicians and legislators; representatives of social media platforms Twitter, Facebook and Google, civil society as well as research centers specializing in the subject.

The programme addressed three main issues:

1. Responsible use of social networks during electoral campaigns;
2. Orderly Transition of Power; and
3. International best practices in campaign financing.

In the final part of his presentation, the Regional Director pointed out that a reform would represent for Argentina not only an important advance, but also help to make it transparent and to open up the current political financing regime. And it would also contribute to fostering a new political culture, committed to respecting the rules of political financing, in order to complement good standards with good practices.

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Published: 13/03/2019

Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)





‘Inclusive Elections strengthen democracy’ International Conference on Inclusive and Accessible Elections

India acts as a beacon light for the new and emerging democracies throughout the world. It's long expertise in conducting impartial and credible elections is an asset. As such mutual exchange of notes on challenges and best practices amongst democracies can improve electoral management. Elections are not just about numbers but about people. A key marker of modern democracies is that it cares for electors outside the mainstream- Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), senior citizens, first time voters, migrant population, transgender and illiterates etc.

On January 24, 2019 – the eve of 9th National Voters' Day (NVD)- heads and top brass of electoral management bodies from democracies like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Russia and Sri Lanka converged in New Delhi for an international conference on **‘Making Our Elections Inclusive and Accessible’** organized by the Election Commission of India (ECI). Also present in the seminar were Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre (UK), International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (UK) and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.



Sunil Arora, Chief Election Commissioner, in his keynote address, emphasized that voices of all categories of citizens were important in shaping democracy. Inclusive elections coupled with transparency, accountability and competitiveness





Launch of VoICE International : Making Polling Stations Accessible and Voter Friendly

strengthen the democratic polity. While underscoring that the ECI was open to any constructive ideas, he categorically rejected any suggestion to return to the pre-EVM days of ballot papers. The EVMs have been in use in elections in India for close to two decades now. The results have sometimes gone in favour of the incumbent power, and opposition on comparable number of times. The near universalization of VVPAT, he said, should put the EVM controversy to rest.



Signing of MoU between Election Commission of India and Election Commission of Bhutan on January 24, 2019 in New Delhi.

Ashok Lavasa, Election Commissioner, referred to the internationally acknowledged role played by the ECI in the field of election management through its close association with regional and world bodies like Forum of Election Management

Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA), Association for African Election Authorities (AAEA), A-WEB and International IDEA. He mentioned how the technical assistance provided by India helped election management in Jordan, Maldives, Namibia, Egypt, Bhutan and Nepal. He hailed the improved status of inclusion for women voters, first time voters, PwDs etc. in world's largest democracy.

Previously, in his welcome address, Umesh Sinha, Senior Deputy Election Commissioner, remarked how the ECI has matured over the last 68 years having an experience of conducting 388 elections. Its vision and achievements have brought it international recognition. The flagship programme Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) has been a major success in making elections more inclusive, accessible, informed and ethical.

The various heads of the participating EMBs shared their experiences, initiatives and outcome through presentations. The ECI, on the sidelines of the conference, renewed its cooperation with the Election Commission of Bhutan on electoral management. The January 2019 issue of '**Voice International**', an international magazine published by the ECI on inclusive, accessible and ethical voting, was released on the occasion.



Mobilization and training programs of Election Officials

Election Commission of India through its India International Institute of Democracy & Election Management (IIIDEM) conducted an array of extensive State, National and International training and mobilizing programs in the quarter of January – March 2019, planned over a period of time to ensure flawless conduct of elections required for General Elections to Lok Sabha 2019 with updated knowledge, skill. For this enormous exercise of electioneering involving over 900 million electors to caste vote using approximately 1.035 million polling stations spreading across the length and breadth of India, nearly 6 million election officers were mobilized through various training programs.

National Training Programs

Training of National Level Master Trainers (NLMTs)

During the 'Train the Trainers and Facilitator Programme' 294 National Level Master Trainers (NLMTs) consisting of 235 serving officers and 59 Retired/IAS/Election officers and 2040 State Level Master Trainers (SLMTs) were trained who have further imparted training to 50000 Assembly Level Trainers (ALTs) and other officials of the Election Machinery.

A detail customised training program was conducted for the SLMTs on various election management related subjects. These officers further trained the Assembly Level Trainers (ALT) and other executives and field functionaries.

Training of State Level Master Trainers (SLMT)

Certification Program for District Election Officers (DEOs) and Returning Officers (RO)

An in-depth training program was conducted for the District Election Officers (DEOs) and Returning Officers (RO) of all States and Union Territories. The month long training program from January 29 to February 28, 2019 imparted training to 28 batches wherein 865 (459 at ECI and 406 at States) officers were trained on all election related subjects.

Certification Programme for AROs of PCs and RO/ ARO of ACs for States having simultaneous Elections

An exhaustive Certification Programme and evaluation was conducted for overall 6079 Assistant Returning Officers (ARO) of 20 States. These training programs were specially designed for AROs of those 20 States who had not organized Certification Programme during assembly elections in the last two years.

Refresher Training at States for AROs of PCs

States where Certification of RO/ AROs has been done in last 2 years Refresher Training programs were conducted at States by SLMTs.



CERTIFICATION PROGRAM OF ARO IN PUDUCHERRY



TTF AT MANIPUR

Training of Trainers and Facilitators

TTF provides opportunity to develop skills in delivering effective training by embracing best suitable techniques by the trainers. This programme aims at empowering the trainers of all categories with training techniques and methodologies. Commission has empanelled some of the best training agencies and rolled out Train the Trainers and Facilitators (TTF) programme since 2016, mandating that every trainer should undergo residential TTF organised by IIIDEM. 58 batches have been trained across states from different categories.

Leadership and Motivational Trainings

IIIDEM has introduced this program in 2016 for field officers from Chief Electoral Officers and District Electoral Officers' offices having leadership and supervisory role in the election management. A total number of 95 programmes have been organized to train officers from different categories as of now.

Chief Electoral Officers are organizing State and District Level trainings of all election officials with the help of master trainers (SLMTs and ALTs).



Training Of Polling Personnel at Dadra and Nagar Haveli



TRAINING OF ARO/SECTOR OFFICERS/TAHSILDAR AT UTTARAKHAND

Training for Social Media Team

Considering the increasing use of social media in public, use of social media by political parties, Election Commission of India has developed its in-house dedicated team for content development, monitoring, engaging to the stakeholders through its social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram). To ensure accuracy of information and increase efficiency of the team ahead of Lok Sabha Elections 2019, a two days Election Orientation program was conducted from March 16-17, 2019 on various relevant subjects.



TRAINING OF SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM

Police Officers Training

A special training programme was designed for Police Officers of different ranks considering their vital role and responsibility in the conduct of successful elections. During the first quarter of the year approximately 1,69,000 officers were trained from various States and Union Territories.



POLICE TRAINING AT J&K

International Training Programs

ITEC 10: Capacity Development in Electoral Technology

In its effort to reach out and exchange ideas with Election Management Bodies of various countries ECI has conducted a 5 days training programme on 'Capacity Development in Electoral Technology' under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India from January 7 – 11, 2019. 15 enriching sessions covering all aspects of "Electoral Technology" comprising of 'The importance of Electoral Technology', 'Guiding Principles for Electoral Technology in India' were conducted. The exchange of best practices across 18 countries through 'Country Presentations' was one of the highlights of the program where all the 31 participants shared their Country's information and challenges related to the Usage in Electoral Technology in their respective countries. As part of the training program, a visit to Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC), Soochna Bhawan, Lodhi Road was also organized wherein the Director, EMMC presented an overview of the election specific work.



DEMONSTRATION OF EVM MACHINES DURING ITEC 10



ACTIVITIES DURING ITEC 10

Capacity Building on Voter Education for UECM Officials

IIIDEM organized a five-day Capacity Building program for Voter Education for the officials of Union Election Commission of Myanmar from January 28 to February 1, 2019. Twenty-five candidates participated in this training program including Deputy Director, Assistant Directors and staff officers and visited a voter Registration center in Delhi.



PARTICIPANTS FROM UECM FOR MYANMAR PROGRAM PN VOTER EDUCATION

Visit of Myanmar delegation (Leaders of Union Solidarity and Development Party)

On September 6, 2017 the Election Commission of India and the Union Election Commission of Myanmar signed an MoU to promote co-operation in mutually agreed and identified priority areas. In the same capacity, following a series of programs covered, IIIDEM hosted the Leaders of Union Solidarity and Development Party at IIIDEM on February 27, 2019. A delegation of 11 participants along with MEA Undersecretary Priyadarshini Ravindran visited the IIIDEM Campus.



VISIT OF MYANMAR DELEGATION

National Voters' Day (NVD)

On January 25, 2019 IIIDEM hosted delegates from different countries as part of ECI's NVD celebrations. Delegates from Election commission of Kazakhstan, Election commission of Sri Lanka, Election commission of Bangladesh, International IDEA on this occasion accompanied by Deputy Election Commissioner Chandra Bhushan Kumar, Director Vivek Khare and Director A Mona Sreenivas.



INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION ON NVD



The new endeavour by Election Commission of Indonesia

The General Elections Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, KPU) scheduled for five presidential debates before the April 17 election. The first debate made headlines before the actual events because the candidates had received a list of questions from the KPU beforehand. The decision sparked questions and criticism about the merits of giving the four cheat sheets.

Since then, the KPU decided to no longer give the candidates their questions, saying it had taken into account the public's aspiration for livelier debates.

In the five debates, the candidate will talk about 25 topics and have a chance to communicate their platform to the public.

First debate (January 17, 2019)

Theme : Law, human rights, corruption, and terrorism

Who : Joko Widodo and Ma'ruf Amin vs Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno

Second debate (February 17, 2019)

Theme : Food and energy, natural resources, and environment

Who : Joko Widodo vs Prabowo Subianto

Third debate (March 17, 2019)

Theme : Education, health, manpower, social and culture

Who : Ma'ruf Amin vs Sandiaga Uno

Fourth debate (March 30, 2019)

Theme : Ideology, governance, security and defense, and international relations

Who : Joko Widodo vs Prabowo Subianto

Fifth debate (TBA)

Theme : Economy and social welfare, finance, investment, trade and industry

Who : Joko Widodo and Ma'ruf Amin vs Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno

(Source: <https://jsis.washington.edu/seac/>)





Laying the foundations for Women's Political Empowerment and Representation in Paraguay

Understanding that Electoral Management Bodies play a central role in advancing women's political leadership and women's participation in the electoral processes, International IDEA's work with Superior Tribunal for Electoral Justice (TSJE) has been to develop and implement programmes, actions and practices with a gender perspective. There is clearly a commitment from the TSJE to advance women's participation, with the body creating a Gender Policy Unit in 2017. Since then, TSJE has become a leading institution in the country advocating for gender equality and the promotion of women's participation in politics and elections. In order to build an understanding of the importance of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, over 150 TSJE staff have received in-depth training in key concepts of gender equality and its importance for the exercise of political rights in 2017 and 2018. The training utilised the BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections) methodology for the first time in Paraguay's history.

During these workshops, participants were able to discuss and analyse strategies to address

obstacles to the full political participation of women, the participation of women in politics as voters, candidates and as elected representatives in political positions, as well as discussions on gender quotas and their effectiveness in electoral systems.

Through this exercise, strengths and weaknesses with regards to the access and participation of men and women in equal conditions during Election Day were identified. With the support of International IDEA, by mid-2019 around 230 women leaders will have received specialized training and skills that will allow them to launch effective electoral campaigns. The main objective of the school is to increase female candidates' political capacities and to increase women's representation in elected positions at all levels. Many of the women leaders graduating from this School are expected to run in the next Municipal Elections in 2020.

Lourdes González Prieto

Published: 08/03/2019

Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)





BELGIUM



Brussels Parliament give foreigners the right to vote in regional elections

The Brussels Parliament voted in favour of a bill submitted by majority representatives (PS, DéFi, cdH, sp.a) and the Green opposition on Friday.

It called for non-Belgian nationals living in Brussels to have the right to vote in the regional elections. The MR, N-VA and Vlaams Belang voted against it. Stefaan Cornelis (Open Vld) abstained. Putting it into legislation is a federal matter.

In layman's terms, the bill says the federal government should extend the vote in the regional elections, making conditions the same as the local elections. The bill also includes an evaluation of the pre-registration process for non-

European foreign voters, to see whether or not it is an obstacle to them exercising their right to vote.

The Brussels Parliament wants the future Senate to do a more thorough investigation on this issue and see whether people's right to vote can be registered automatically, with an option to deregister. It also thinks other points should be examined by the Senate, including eligibility and giving foreign nationals the right to vote in other regions.

Currently, one Brussels resident in three old enough to vote cannot do so. That's more than 300,000 citizens.

Source: <http://brusselstimes.com>



INDIA



Appointment of a new Election Commissioner of India

Sushil Chandra has assumed charge as the new Election Commissioner (EC) of India on February 15, 2019 and joined the panel of Commission with Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora and Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa.

Born on May 15, 1957 Sushil Chandra belongs to 1980 batch Indian Revenue Service. Prior to his appointment as Election Commissioner of India, Chandra was posted as the Chairman, Central

Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) which is the Apex Body looking after the work of Policy Administration and implementation of Direct Taxes in India. He had been heading CBDT since November, 2016. Chandra has a rich and varied experience in various areas of taxation. Chandra served for 38 years in the Indian Revenue Service before assuming charge as Election Commissioner of India.

JAPAN



41 Year-Old Man From Pune Becomes First Indian to Contest and Win Elections in Japan

A Pune-born man has become the first ethnic Indian to contest and win an election in Japan.

Puranik Yogendra, who goes by the nickname “Yogi”, has been elected to Tokyo’s Edogawa Ward assembly.

Puranik Yogendra, a naturalized Japanese, secured 6,477 votes, the fifth highest of the 226,561 valid ballots cast, in the April 21 poll, part of unified local elections held across Japan, the Asahi Shimbun reported.

“I want to be a bridge between Japanese and foreigners,” Puranik Yogendra, who was backed by the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, was quoted as saying. Edogawa Ward has the highest number of Indian residents among Tokyo’s 23 wards with 4,300 or so Indian nationals registered, accounting for more than 10 percent of Indians living in Japan. Over 34,000 Indians live in Japan.

Source: <https://www.news18.com>

KOREA

Parliamentary panels fast-track key reform bills

Two parliamentary panels fast-tracked key reform bills, including a proposal to overhaul the election system on Tuesday, despite strong objections from the main opposition Liberty Korea Party.

The ruling Democratic Party and three minor parties agreed last week to a package deal to fast-track four reform bills without the participation of the conservative LKP.

The deal centers on the adoption of a new proportional representation system; the establishment of a unit to investigate alleged corruption by high-ranking government and public officials; and enhancing the police's authority to conduct probes.

The agreement was reached as the DP and two other parties accepted the minor opposition Bareunmirae Party's offer to fast-track two bills on the investigative unit, including a separate bill proposed by the BP.

The special parliamentary committees on judiciary and political reform held their respective plenary meetings and approved the designation of those bills as fast-track measures.

The National Assembly can designate a bill that fails to get bipartisan support for a long period as a fast-track proposal if three-fifths of lawmakers in a parliamentary committee approve the move. This is designed to prevent a certain proposal from remaining pending for too long.

Source: <http://www.koreaherald.com>





MALAWI



MEC tells election staff to be tech savvy

The Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) has cautioned its polling equipment operators to quickly master the technological innovations that MEC has adopted for the Tripartite Elections to avoid becoming a weak link in an otherwise solid electoral results management system in the heat of the pressure of the elections on the day of voting.

Commissioner Bishop Mary Nkosi said this in a speech that she delivered at Katoto Secondary School in Mzuzu on Friday.

“Do not fall in the trap of believing that if you don’t get it now, you will learn later. I urge you to master the equipment at this training. During

polling there will be pressure on you and if you miss something here, you may find yourself in a very precarious situation on the polling day, even failing to send the results to the tally centre,” Nkosi said.

The MEC Commissioner also charged the electoral equipment operators to exercise professionalism and courtesy in a bid to provide a seamless voting experience for the electorate on the Historical Day when Malawi’s 6.8 million registered voters will choose the country’s next President, Members of Parliament and councillors.

Source: <https://malawi24.com>



MAURITANIA

Mauritania to hold presidential election on June 22

Mauritanians will go to the polls on June 22 to vote for a successor to President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, who is stepping down after his second and final term in office.

If there is no outright winner in the first round of elections, a runoff vote will be held on July 6, under a presidential decree seen by AFP.

Candidates have until May 8 to file their bid to be next president.

Elections were staged in 2009, which Abdel Aziz won. He was returned to office in elections in 2014, winning in the first round.

Several major figures have already declared their intentions to run.

They include former defence minister Mohamed Ould Cheikh Mohamed Ahmed, who is a close associate of the current president.

Others are the former head of the 2005-2007 transitional government, Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubacar; anti-slavery activist Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid; and long-standing opposition figure Mohamed Ould Moloud.

Source: Arabnews.com





SINGAPORE



Updated Registers of Electors open for viewing; more than 2.59m Singaporeans eligible to vote

The updated voter rolls of Singaporeans eligible to vote in the next general election are now open for public inspection, the Elections Department (ELD) said on Monday (April 15).

There are a total of 2,594,740 electors in the Registers of Electors, which were certified on Monday. This is about 80,000 more people than the 2,515,322 when the registers were last revised in 2017.

The ELD said those who did not vote in a past election and had their names removed from the register as a result can apply to have their names restored, so that they can vote in future elections. This has to be done before the election period, as

applications for restoration will not be processed from the day the writ for an election is issued until after Nomination Day, if the election is not contested, or until after Polling Day.

Singaporeans living abroad, whose names are in the registers, may register as overseas electors to vote at one of the designated overseas polling stations if they have not done so after Feb 1, 2019.

But they must have resided in Singapore for an aggregate of at least 30 days during the three-year period between Feb 1, 2016 and Jan 31, 2019.

The last general election took place in September 2015 and the next will be held by April 2021.

Source: <https://www.straitstimes.com>

My Vote Matters

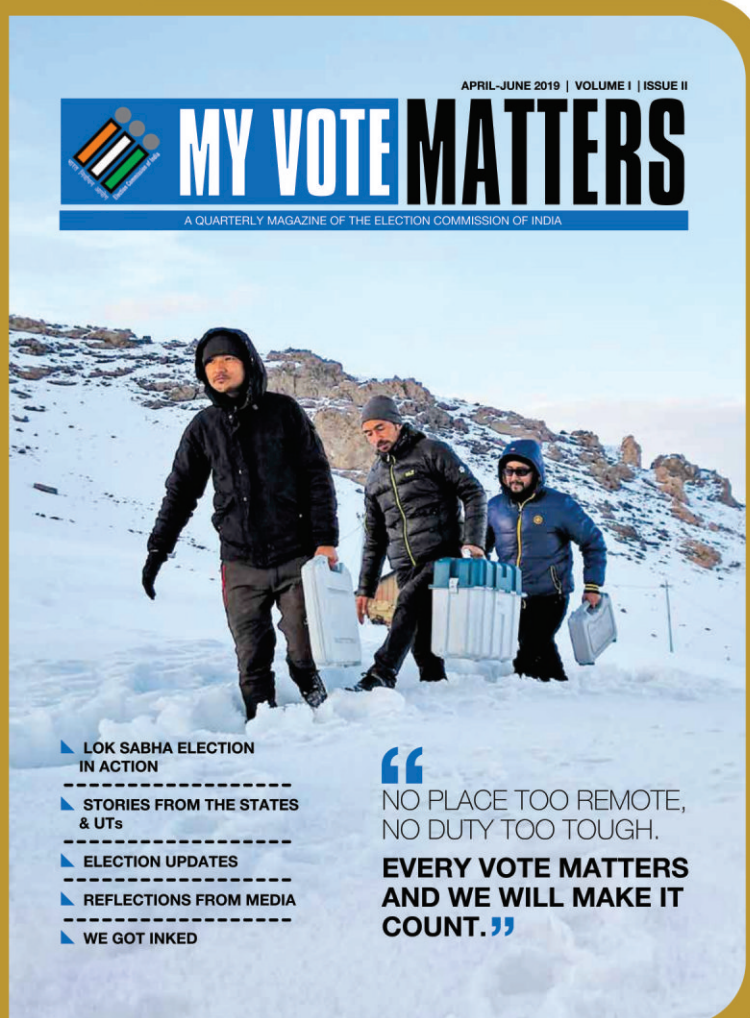
The second issue of 'My Vote Matters', a quarterly magazine of the Election Commission of India was released by the Commission during the Briefing of Foreign Delegates during International Election Visitors Program for General Election to Lok Sabha, 2019 held on May 11, 2019. This issue provides a holistic overview of the Lok Sabha Elections 2019 in action with the world's largest democratic exercise having started in full swing.

This publication provided an overview of the various kinds of interventions being undertaken across the country in various states. New ventures, interventions and perspectives of subject matter experts on various facets of the electoral processes of India were covered extensively.

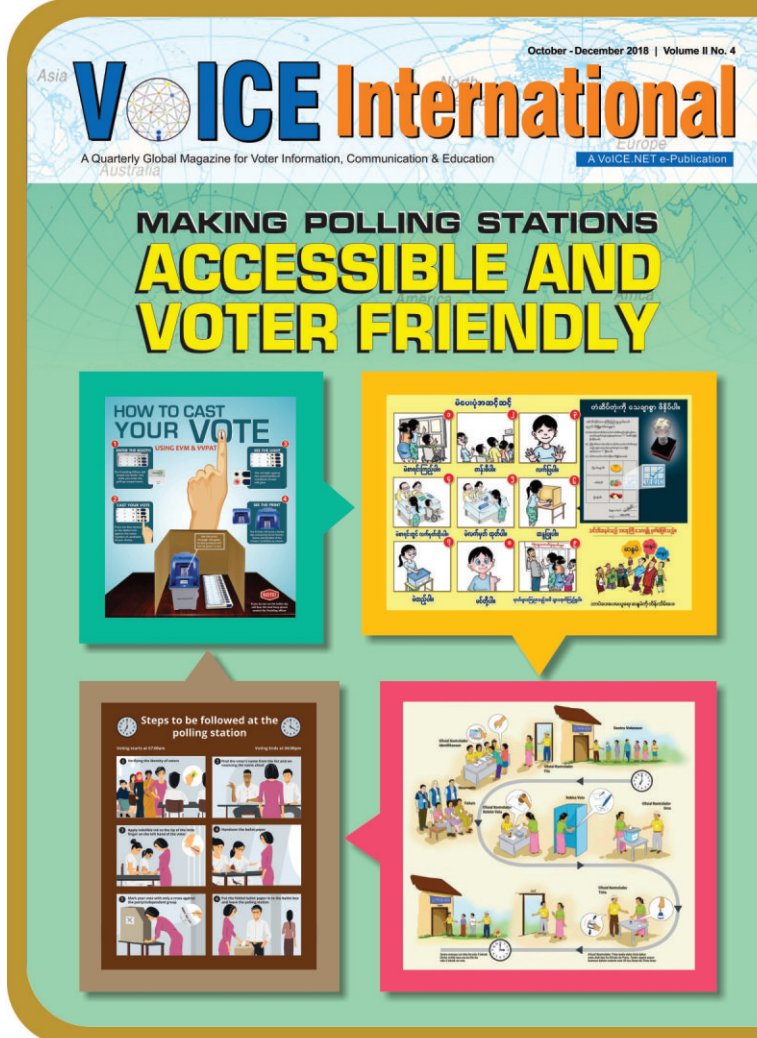
Covering a host of topics such as Electoral Roll Management, Voter Helplines, SVEEP, National Multi-media campaign, Poll Day Preparation, EVM & VVPAT; this issue of 'My Vote Matters' gives the reader a comprehensive understanding of the gargantuan task of undertaking the world's largest democratic exercise.

My Vote Matters Vol I Issue 2

Published - Election Commission of India (ECI)



VoICE International



This issue of VoICE International highlighted the experiences of different EMBs on 'Making Polling Stations Accessible and Voter Friendly' besides some articles on 'Inclusion and Equal Access'.

The theme essentially focuses on making the elector experience at the polling station pleasant and memorable to encourage and attract more and more voters to participate in the electoral process. The needs of different voters are different and need to be addressed suitably so as to obliterate barriers to achieve inclusion in real terms.

This issue was released during the International Conference on 'Making our Elections Inclusive and Accessible' on the eve of 9th National Voters' Day. In this context, some articles from previous issues have been included to revisit and share the good practices on the theme for larger readership on 'Inclusion and Equal Access' especially when ECI has adopted the theme of 'No Voter to be Left Behind'.

VoICE International Vol II No. 4

Published - Election Commission of India (ECI)

Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies?

As national governments, international donors, and local advocates increasingly recognize that youth participation is vital to stability and success, a variety of public measures, policy mechanisms and legal reforms aimed at promoting youth engagement have gained traction. There is a growing consensus among practitioners and scholars that politically and civically engaged youth are integral to a country's economic and democratic health.

Proponents of these measures contend that pro-youth policies and reforms can increase youth participation and, ultimately, result in better policy outcomes across a range of issues.

This report analyzes four pro-youth legal and political mechanisms and offers recommendations for funders, implementers and local partners considering the implications of:

- National youth policy strategies
- Reducing the minimum age for voting and candidacy
- Youth electoral quotas
- Political party youth wings

Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies?

Published - Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS)





The Party Abroad And its Role for National Party Politics



The Party Abroad and its Role for National Party Politics

International IDEA Discussion Paper 1/2019

In various countries, the electoral behaviour of citizens who live outside their nation of origin—the diaspora—has played a key role in the success of political parties in their home countries.

The research presented in this Discussion Paper looks at the idea of the party abroad and aims to explain how and to what extent national political parties engage with citizens who live outside their country. It considers the legal treatment of how political parties can operate beyond national borders and it presents various models that can be used by parties wishing to engage with their citizens abroad.

The Party Abroad And Its Role For National Party Politics

Published - International IDEA

Violence Against Women in Elections in Afghanistan: An IFES Assessment

As Afghanistan prepares for a presidential election in September 2019, strategic efforts are urgently needed to better ensure that women's rights to participate as electoral and political decision-makers are safeguarded and bolstered. Recognizing this need, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) worked with the Afghan Women's Network to conduct a field-based violence against women in elections (VAWE) assessment that uncovers the specific ways that Afghan women experienced violence throughout the 2018 parliamentary elections, as well as mitigation strategies needed to reduce and prevent electoral violence against women. Carried out with support from Global Affairs Canada, the assessment includes data from in-person focus groups, individual interviews and informational surveys that, taken together, reached electoral stakeholders across all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

Violence Against Women in Elections in Afghanistan: An IFES Assessment

Published - International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

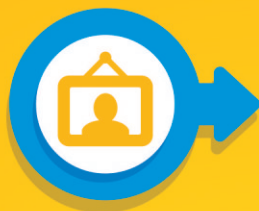
Violence Against Women in Elections in Afghanistan: An IFES Assessment



Canada



GLOSSARY



CANVASSING

During a campaign, active supporters of a party ask voters who they will vote for and try to drum up support for their own candidates.

Source: www.bbc.com

EXIT POLL

A poll carried out by researchers asking people how they have voted just after they have left the polling station on Election Day.

Source: www.bbc.com



TACTICAL VOTING

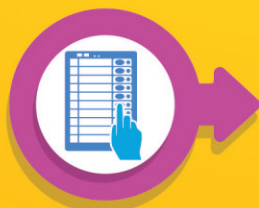
This is when people vote not for the party they really support, but for another party in order to keep out a more disliked rival.

Source: www.bbc.com

PSEPHOLOGY

The study of elections and voting statistics

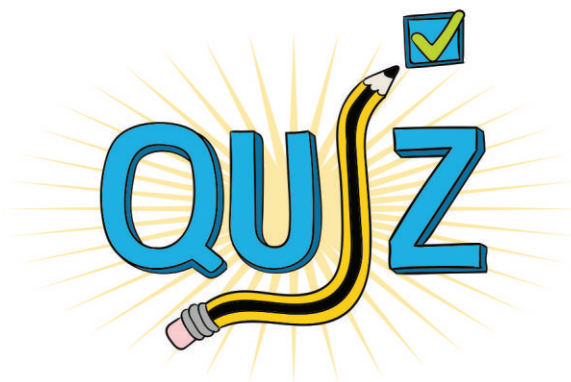
Source: dictionary.cambridge.org



BALLOT SCANNER

Device used to read the voter selection data from a paper ballot or ballot card.

Source: www.eac.gov



The system of British Parliamentary democracy and operation of a legislature gets its name from the Palace that the UK Parliament sits in. What is this system called?

1

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 overturned existing Jim Crow laws in the United States to guarantee which group of people the right to vote freely and openly?

2

What word comes from Italian, meaning a "small ball used in voting"?

3

In ancient Rome, a person standing for election wore a completely white coloured outfit known as the toga candida. What modern English word do we get from this practise?

4

Designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, its construction took six years. The opening ceremony was performed on January 18, 1927 by the then Viceroy and Governor-General of India, Lord Irwin. What are we talking about?

5

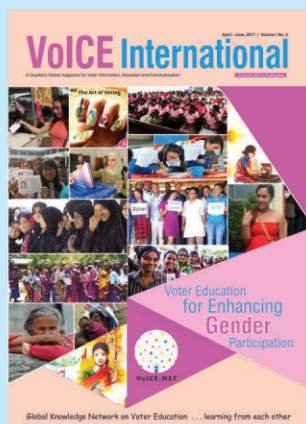


1. Westminster system 2. African-Americans 3. Ballot 4. Candidate 5. Parliament house or Sansad Bhawan

PREVIOUS ISSUES OF VoICE INTERNATIONAL



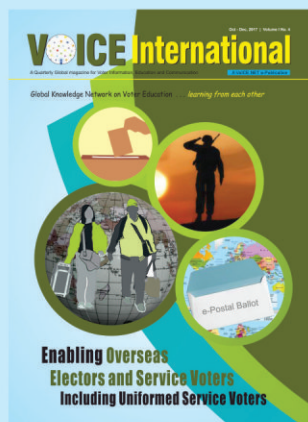
JAN-MAR 2017



APR-JUN 2017



JUL-SEP 2017



OCT-DEC 2017



JAN-MAR 2018



APR-SEPT 2018



OCT- DEC 2018

VoICE.NET





Voter Information, Communication & Education Network

Voter Information, Communication & Education Network (VoICE.NET) is a Global Knowledge Network for sharing knowledge, resources and expertise on **Voter Education**.

VoICE.NET was launched on October 20, 2016 at the International Conference on Voter Education for Inclusive, Informed and Ethical Participation held at New Delhi. The Global Knowledge Network is a part of the New Delhi Declaration adopted at the Conference by the 25 Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and representatives from UNDP, International IDEA, IFES and Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre. **VoICE.NET** contents are provided by the member EMBs/ Organizations and the portal is maintained by Election Commission of India.

