

264



Action Plan on Accessible Elections

2018-19

Action Plan with Timelines on making Elections
Accessible to all Persons with Disabilities

263

INDEX

	Page No
Goals & Timelines	1
Strategic Framework on Accessible Elections	2
Action Plan on Accessible Elections	5
1. Mapping of PwDs	5
2. Voter Registration	6
3. Pre-Poll and Poll Day Facilitation	7
4. Inclusive Voter Education	10
5. Leveraging Technology	11
6. Research, Study and Knowledge Sharing	12
7. Partnerships	12
8. Engagement with Political parties	13
9. Training & Sensitisation of Staff	14
10. Alternative Voting Methods	14
11. Legislative Initiative	14
12. Organisational	15
13. Barriers: Continuous Identification and Solutions	15
Time Lines (Gantt chart)	17

262

Goals & Timelines

Goal 1		Outcome	
To make the registration completely accessible for all Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)		Higher enrolment of Persons with Disabilities	
Broad Action Point	Concerned Division	Timelines	Assumptions
Mapping of PwDs	ER	2019	PwDs willing to share information on their disability
Accessible Registration process	ER	2019	Necessary statutory interventions made, wherever required
Sensitisation and Training	Training/IIIDEM	2019	--
Research and Knowledge exchange	SVEEP	2019 onwards	Research remains a continuous process
Goal 2		Outcome	
To make the polling completely accessible for all Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)		Voter turnout among PwD electors at par with General electors	
Broad Action Point	Concerned Division	Timelines	Assumptions
Accessible polling process	EPS	2019	Data base of PwD electors ready and updated
Accessible Voter Education and Outreach	SVEEP	2019	
Leveraging technology for accessible election	ICT/IT	2019	
Legal Interventions including Alternative voting methods for PwDs	SDR	...	Requires consultations with Ministry of Law





Strategic Framework on Accessible Elections

(as adopted in the National Consultation at New Delhi on 3rd - 4th July 2018)

The Strategic Framework on Accessible Elections is built around sensitization through education and training, community involvement of different sections of society, effective partnership with institutions and organizations and creation of facilities to cater to the specific needs of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with a view of increasing their participation. The Strategic Framework shall inter alia include the following components:

1. Barriers: Continuous Identification and Solutions

Identifying barriers and finding solutions to the same has to be a continuous process. A system of regular, periodic feedback shall be taken up. Well designed approach with strategic interventions including technology integration can help in obliterating barriers.

2. Voter Registration & Polling

Database on PwDs, identified through mapping or initial voter registration, shall be efficiently and effectively used for follow up steps in the electoral process and the monitoring system for feedback, evaluation and consolidation. Polling stations shall be made accessible to all Persons with Disabilities based on mapping of PwD electors and their specific needs.

3. Inclusive Voter Education

Customised voter education to cater to the different requirements of PwDs shall be taken up to empower them for electoral participation. All voter education content shall be in accessible format. Focussed and need based interventions shall be taken up under ECI's flagship voter education programme SVEEP to engage PwDs and also to sensitise their friends, families, polling officials, security officials and all other stakeholders.

4. Leveraging Technology for Accessible Elections

This would essentially include (i) User friendly websites for PwDs of different categories. (ii) Accessible Technological Tools for facilitating PwDs of different categories to cast their vote (iii) Solutions for assisting voters with disabilities through technological innovation, research and integration. (iv) Accessible Media including Social Media Communications.

5. Research, Study and Knowledge sharing

A continuous search for best practices, international and domestic, through detailed study and research on all areas of participation by PwDs and sharing of experiences to help formulate enabling policies and interventions, to aid, assist and facilitate the participation of PwDs.

6. Role of Partner Departments

To explore and build partnership and commitment with Ministries and Departments to evolve and carry forward the interventions to facilitate electoral participation of PwDs.

7. Role of Educational Institutions

The Commission has already issued directions for setting up of Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) in educational institutions etc. Setting up of ELCs in educational institutions dedicated to the PwDs shall be expedited and the ELC resources shall be customised to match the disability requirements.

8. Role of CSOs

To assess the potential of CSO's and assign them specific role in assisting equal access and capacity building through well designed partnerships. CSO's potential to build partnerships should be utilised subject to their non partisan nature.

9. Role of Media

To utilise the potential of Media in taking forward voter education and to engage PwDs for increasing their electoral participation. Media can actively contribute to an effective and successful integration of Persons with Disabilities in the electoral process.



10. Poll Volunteers

Poll volunteers from among future voters can be organised from educational institutions, and Chunav Pathshala, (ELCs for Communities) and trained to assist PwDs, besides from among NCC/NSS/NYKS and other non-partisan voluntary groups. The initiative will be subject to provisions of Rule 49N.

11. Training and Sensitization of Staff

Training and sensitization of the election staff is important so that they are empathetic to the needs of PwD voters. The training shall be factored into regular training to the staff as also for the registration and facilitation of the PwDs.

12. Alternative Voting methods

Alternative voting methods like advance voting or early voting, voting from home, Postal vote, transport assistance to PwDs or mobile polling station concept shall be looked at without compromising on the essential requirements of sanctity and secrecy of vote.

13. Legislative Initiative

The scope of assistance to PwDs for participation is wide and diverse. Need for legislation shall be examined for enhancing electoral participation of the PwDs.

14. Special 4 tiered Committees on Accessible Elections

Committees shall be formed at National, State, District and Assembly Constituency level with members from departments as well as stakeholders to review implementation of the directions of the Commission on 'Accessible Elections'.

258

Action Plan on Accessible Elections

Whereas Election Commission of India works on the premise of 'No voter to be left behind' and is committed to inclusion of all categories of voters in the electoral process to achieve the desired objective of universal adult suffrage as per its constitutional and legislative mandate.

Whereas the Commission is committed to build an equal access framework for empowering Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) supported by the fundamentals of responsiveness, respect and dignity to enhance elector confidence among them; and support initiatives for improved service offerings to enhance their electoral participation.


Whereas the Commission has been issued directions for inclusion of the PwDs in electoral process from time to time especially in the wake of Supreme Court Judgments.

Whereas the Commission organized National Consultation with the Stakeholders right from the District level through State level and considered recommendations have emerged from the Cascaded set of Consultations and the Commission released its document Strategic Framework on Accessible Elections.

Having consideration to all the aspects, the Commission approves and adopts the following Policy for enhancing the Electoral participation of the Persons with Physical Disabilities so as to make Elections Accessible to all.

1. Mapping of PwDs

- 1.1. Statistical database for the PwDs shall be developed at the Polling Station level. This is necessary for planning and timely resource mobilization for the accessibility programmes and developing need based modules for PwDs.
- 1.2. PwD electors shall be mapped, i.e. PS wise electors with disability shall be identified and their disability shall be also noted down. Data of PwD electors shall be maintained suitably so that it helps in planning interventions related to registration facilitation as well as facilitation during polls.

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- 1.3. Comprehensive guidelines and directions from time to time have been issued by the Commission on identification, mapping and registration of the PwDs. Last two sets of guidelines are contained in March 2016 and May 2018. The latter directions of May, 2018 carry specific timelines and aim at maximizing the coverage of the PwDs especially in view of the theme of the year as 'Accessible Elections'.

2. Voter Registration

Effective supervision by the senior officers such as the ERO, District Election officer and the Divisional Commissioner (Observer for the Registration Process) would be helpful in achieving the premise of 'No voter to be left behind'. All the concerned Departments, Disability Organizations/CSO's may be involved in process to ensure maximization of PwDs registration. Database on PwDs, identified through mapping or initial voter registration at PS Level, shall be efficiently and effectively used for follow up steps in the electoral process and the monitoring system for feedback, evaluation and consolidation.

- 2.1. As a part of the formal exercise for registration of voters, House to House survey/visits should be carried out by the BLOs to ensure that no PwDs are left out of identification/ mapping process. Existing data bases even with other departments etc. may be obtained to facilitate mapping/ identification.
- 2.2. Provision to mention type of disability is already provided in the registration form (Form 6); specific field may be introduced in the resultant relevant data bases at PS Level for the PwDs.
- 2.2.1 There may be reluctance on the part of PwDs or their families to bring their disability public domain owing to psycho social reservations, the disability disclosure may be made optional and voluntary and projected in the databases in such a fashion that the information is available to the facilitators in the registration, facilitation and the polling process only.
Care to be taken that the information so collected is strictly used for PwD voters' facilitation and shall not be made public.

- 2.2.2 As per the International practice, nature of the barriers and assistance

256

required from the electoral machinery may also be recorded for each of the PwDs so as to link it with planning and service offering for enhancing electoral participation.

2.2.3 PwDs may face difficulties in filling up of the forms and appending the supporting documents. The concerned BLO may help them fill the forms and in case a BLO is not able to interact with the PwDs for the purpose he may take help of relevant skilled interpreter to fill up the form of registration.

2.2.4 Specific disability in Form 6 may be given in clear terms to ensure clarity of coverage at the ground level.

2.3. Data base of the PwDs as per final voter lists should be made available to the BLO, Presiding officer and the officer in charge of the facilitation center in each polling station area for advance planning for the facilitation and the service offering during the election period.

2.4. EPIC may be issued to the blind electors in Braille along with the normal print.


2.5. EPIC of PwD electors of different colour to enable polling officials to identify PwD electors immediately to facilitate quick connect with the volunteers.

3. Pre-Poll and Poll Day Facilitation

3.1. Consolidation of data base of PwDs, Polling Station wise, must be completed as per time line that may be fixed by the Commission. This consolidation of data should help in planning for service offering, training, sensitization, transportation and availability of volunteers at the facilitation centers etc.

3.2. Data base of PwDs, complete with the nature of disability, assistance required and service offering at the poll/facilitation center should be made ready before the start of the electoral process in poll going states. Such lists should be made available to the Presiding Officers, Sector Magistrates, DPO's/CSO's, Facilitation Centers. **Care to be taken that the information should not be made public.**



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- 3.3. Photo voter slips of PwDs may be stamped over leaf for priority and assistance. Accessible photo voter slips i.e. voter slips may be prepared in Braille for blind voters.
 - 3.4. Candidate details, including affidavits in accessible formats so that the blind and deaf blind voters (who use screen reader software / Braille display) can make informed decision.
 - 3.5. Polling Stations may be located in the PwD institutions wherever possible. Alternatively, auxiliary polling stations may be set up in areas where PwDs have larger concentration.

Poll Volunteers

- 3.6. CSO's and other organizations like NSS, NCC, and ELC should make available the volunteers at the polling station facilitation centers. This deputation should be need based depending upon number and type of PwDs at each polling station. CSOs should help in developing a connect between the PwDs as per mapping and the database with the volunteers to ensure that the assistance is provided to PwDs on time in a manner that PwDs feel confident in moving to the PS and exercising their franchise.
- 3.7. Specific intervention may be made for women with disabilities for their participation in electoral process. A trained female volunteer may be assigned in every booth to assist them.
- 3.8. Poll volunteers from among future voters can be organised from educational institutions, Electoral Literacy Clubs and Chunav Pathshala, (ELCs for Communities) and trained to assist PwDs. The initiative will be subject to provisions of Rule 49N.
- 3.9. Badges may be provided to the volunteers also to facilitate connect and the contact for improving the efficiency of the help and facilitation.
- 3.10. Capacity building for raising matching number of skilled volunteers may be taken up with the help of CSOs.

234

Transport Facility

3.11. Transport facility may be provided to the PwDs from home to polling booths and back on the polling day.

Polling Station: Infrastructure

Polling stations shall be made accessible to all PwDs based on mapping of PwD electors and their specific assistance needs. Proper infrastructure as per prescribed specification should be provided at all the polling stations as a long term measure.

3.12. Ramps as per prescribed specifications may be provided for PwD's by the concerned construction agencies at the polling stations. Polling booths to be well lit and accessible as per laid down standards. Demarcated parking space, accessible toilets, quality wheel chairs, trained volunteers, assistive aids like magnifiers, small stools, etc. may be made available at polling booths. EVMs carry Braille print to facilitate exercise of the franchise by PwDs concerned. Improved Service offering for different categories of PwDs may be provided.

3.13. The entrance to the polling booth should accommodate wheel chair movement as also the furniture etc should be designed for access to the PwDs.

3.14. Guidelines and instructions at polling stations may be made available in Braille, sign language, audio, plain language, and posters with pictures and large text with contrast colors etc.


Service Offerings at the polling station

3.15. The polling officials may be sensitized appropriately for interaction with PwDs with its base in empathy.

3.16. PwDs shall be given priority to cast their vote.

3.17. Quick orientation to PwD voters about the setup of polling booth & voting compartment with regard to directions, polling officers desks, Braille ballot sheet, EVM Braille numerals and VVPAT to be provided at the Help Desk. Posters at PS specifying all measures on accessibility. Different





categories of PwD may require different facilitation. Assistance to blind or infirm voters etc may be provided promptly at the polling booth as per rules for accompanying person. Secrecy of vote must be ensured. Instructions of the Commission issued from time to time may be taken note of for strict compliance.

Election Observers

- 3.18. Observer's checklist should include specific check points on accessible electoral process to ensure that the concerned authorities have earnestly implemented the directions of the Commission in true sense as per directions of the Commission.
- 3.19. Funding should be provided by the concerned Department of the Government on time. Responsibility for infrastructure should vest with the Nodal Ministry at the Center or the States.

4. Inclusive Voter Education

Voter awareness and education content shall be accessible to Persons with disabilities. Besides, focussed and need based interventions under ECI's flagship voter education programme SVEEP to engage PwDs and also to sensitise their friends, families, polling officials, security officials and all other stakeholders.

- 4.1. Voter education should take note of the psycho social factors that discourage PwDs to come out and participate in the electoral process. Elector confidence building is critical to electoral participation of the PwDs. Customized need based voter education modules may be developed for different categories of the PwDs with the help of experts. The outreach also will have to factor in the need based approach for different categories of PwDs.
- 4.2. Personnel carrying out the VE programme should also include skilled persons for respective disability field to engage the PwDs of respective category.
- 4.3. Special modules for voter education to Volunteers may be developed as also for Sensitization of Staff/volunteers.

25

- 4.4. Camps may be organized at PwDs institutions if available in the Polling Station area for hands on experience for filling up the registration forms. Volunteers may also help them fill up the forms and other support documents for registration

Budgetary Allocation

- 4.5. Ten percent of the total funds allocated under SVEEP shall be earmarked for SVEEP interventions specifically for Persons with Disabilities.

Communication Strategy

- 4.6. Adapting existing SVEEP material in accessible formats such as Braille, sign language, text to speech conversions, audio visuals, signage, posters/brochures/charts in plain language with pictures and large text etc., accessible web tutorial, IVRS and so on by involving CSOs/ institutions working for the PwDs.
- 4.7. Process of voting and usage of EVM /VVPAT to be explained using radio, short films and other awareness materials / activities in large print posters with contrast colors, audio visual / sign language/ plain language/ pictorial chart formats as well as by experiential demonstration.
- 4.8. Sign language window in audio visual and advertisement content material for the convenience of deaf persons may be provided.
- 4.9. SVEEP website shall be made accessible for PwDs. The website shall have screen reading facility besides having all contents uploaded in a format that is screen reader friendly. Information about polling facilities to be made available through accessible media including inter-personal.
- 4.10. Voter guides may be provided to the blind voters in Braille also in addition to normal print. Digital platforms may be used to send audio messages to the visually impaired in addition to the normal messages for display on screen.
- 4.11. PwD Icons may be appointed at different levels.
- 4.12. General and Awareness observers to monitor the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in voter education and outreach as well.
- 4.13. All Social Media outreach to cater to accessibility standards.





5. Leveraging Technology for Accessible Elections

This would essentially include (i) User friendly websites for PwDs of different categories. (ii) Technological Tools for facilitating PwDs of different categories to cast their vote (iii) Solutions for assisting voters with disabilities through technological innovation, research and integration. (iv) Media, including Social Media Communications.

- 5.1. Mobile App enabled with GPS/Audio features to guide Persons with Disabilities to help reaching the Polling stations and back as well as with other aspects.
- 5.2. ECI and CEO's websites including NVSP.IN may be made accessible as per standards.
- 5.3. Template for accessible election page should have candidate list for all ACs in accessible formats so that the blind and deaf blind voters (who use screen reader software / Braille display) can decide whom to vote from amongst their candidates and do so independently even if Braille ballot sheets fail in some booths or doesn't help in some cases.
- 5.4. Accessible mobile apps may be developed for enrolment of electors. The entire process of registration (form 6) and grievance redressal to be made accessible and simple to Persons with Disabilities including those with intellectual and multiple disabilities/deaf blindness with inbuilt human and technical assistance throughout the process.

6. Research, Study and Knowledge sharing

A continuous search for best practices, international and domestic, through detailed study and research on all areas of participation by PwDs and sharing of experiences to help formulate enabling policies and interventions, to aid, assist and facilitate the participation of PwDs.

- 6.1. Research and development for improved service offering should be carried out and also the sharing of Knowledge for gaining from each and other's experience. Many countries provide service offerings of high quality. Their policy, practice and models may be studied for developing improved service offerings.

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Knowledge Network:

- 6.2. An inventory of barriers, solutions thereto and Service Offerings should be available to the Knowledge network for experience sharing, evolving solutions through learning from each other. The Network should be accessible to the concerned officials, CSOs and the DPOs.


7. Partnerships

7.1. Role of Partner Departments: To explore and build partnership with Ministries and Departments for evolving and carrying forward the interventions to facilitate electoral participation of PwDs. Ministries and State Governments have resources, expertise and infrastructure for supporting services to PwDs. They may be suitably involved with the enhancing of electoral participation of PwDs by way of partnerships and also members of the Committees at different levels.

7.2. Role of Educational Institutions: The Commission has already issued directions for setting up of Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) in educational institutions etc. Setting up of ELCs in educational institutions dedicated to the PwDs shall be expedited and the ELC resources shall be customised to match disability requirements. Educational Institutions should work on enhancing positive environment and culture for equal access; and empathy and dignity for help of the PwDs. Educational Institutions may ensure PwD friendly infrastructure for access as a long term measure.

7.3. Role of CSOs: To assess the potential of CSOs and assign them specific role in assisting equal access and capacity building through well designed partnerships. CSO's potential to build partnerships should be utilised subject to their non partisan nature. CSOs and the Disabled Persons Organizations have important role to play in empowering PwDs to electoral participation. They have expertise, connect with PwDs and skilled manpower that can be harnessed to empower PwDs in electoral participation. They should be involved as partners at different levels especially in the following areas:

- 7.3.1. Volunteers for helping the PwDs in voter education, registration, facilitation and other electoral processes.

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- 7.3.2. Transport to PwDs for movement to the Polling Station and back.
 - 7.3.3. Developing voter education and training materials in customised modules in different languages in accessible formats.
 - 7.3.4. Training and sensitization of Election machinery.
 - 7.3.5. Interpreters in the Camps for the PwDs.
 - 7.3.6. The CSOs must remain neutral/nonpartisan in their association with the program.

7.4. Role of Media: To utilise the potential of Media in taking forward voter education and to engage PwDs for increasing their electoral participation. Media can actively contribute to an effective and successful integration of Persons with Disabilities in the electoral process. Media should be engaged for creating positive environment especially to support the psycho social barriers faced by the PwDs. Media Houses may cover programs for the PwDs inclusion in electoral process as part of their Corporate Social responsibility.

8. Engagement with Political Parties

ECI can give advisory to Political parties so as to make the process accessible for both PwD electors and voters besides those aspiring towards political representation. The recommendations may cover the following aspects:

- 8.1. Political Parties to have their constitution and manifestoes in accessible format.
- 8.2. Websites of Political parties to be accessible for all Persons with Disabilities.
- 8.3. All political consultations and campaigns to be made accessible to PwDs in terms of infrastructure, information and communication.
- 8.4. Booth Level Agents may also have representation from among PwDs.
- 8.5. BLAs and Polling agents may be sensitised about the right to equal participation of Persons with Disabilities in electoral process.

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9. Training and Sensitization of Staff

Training and sensitization of the election staff is important so that they are empathetic to the needs of PwD voters. The training shall be factored into regular training to the staff as also for the registration and facilitation of the PwDs. Training modules may be developed with the help of experts. Sign language window in all audio visual content material for the convenience of deaf persons may be provided. Cascaded training on accessibility may be provided to Poll officials.

10. Alternative Voting methods

Alternative voting methods shall be looked at without compromising on the essential requirements of sanctity and secrecy of vote. If PwD electors cannot travel to the respective Polling Station, feasibility of alternative voting methods such of Postal Ballot, mobile polling station or Remote Voting /Voting from Home facility may be examined.

11. Legislative Initiative

The scope of assistance to PwDs for participation is wide and diverse. Need for legislation shall be examined for enhancing electoral participation of the PwDs. While examining the need for specific legislation for electoral participation of the PwDs, it may be noted that as of present, Rule 49N of Conduct of Election Rules provides for assistance to Blind and/or infirm voters at the polling station. Rights of PwDs Act 2016 is an act legislated under Article 253 of the Constitution. Social justice as such is a state subject. Rules have not been framed under that Act for inclusion in electoral process where Election Commission has to play the key role independent of the Government. These issues may be examined for feasibility of suitable supporting legislative framework for electoral participation of PwDs.

12. Organisational

12.1. Committees shall be formed at National, State, District and Assembly Constituency level with members from departments as well as stakeholders to review implementation of the directions of the Commission on 'Accessible Elections'.

12.1.1. The National level Committee may be headed by the Senior Deputy Election Commissioner, the State level by the CEO, the District level by



the District Election Officer and the AC level committee may be headed by the ERO.

12.1.2. The Committees, with representatives of the concerned Ministries/ Departments, Institutions for PwDs, Experts, representatives of Disability Organizations/CSO will serve as an Institutional framework to review the implementation of the directions of the Commission on 'Accessible Elections' and advise on various aspects of inclusion of PwDs in the electoral process.

12.2. An Accessibility Cell in IIIDEM shall be set up.

12.3. Disability Coordinators shall be appointed at the AC, District and the State level.

13. Barriers: Continuous Identification and Solutions

Identifying barriers and finding solutions to the same has to be a continuous process. A system of regular, periodic feedback shall be taken up. Well designed approach with strategic interventions including technology integration can help in obliterating barriers.

13.1. Identification of Barriers to electoral participation should not be restricted to be a one-time exercise and as such it should be continuous process with consolidation and monitoring right from the Assembly constituency level. The said identification will be in three parts viz (i) Barriers identified and solutions implemented (ii) Identification of new barriers, whether their solutions are available and can be implemented. (iii) New barriers where solutions/service offerings are not available not found should be reported to higher level for resolution of the problem.

13.2. Stakeholders including concerned Govt Departments and Disability organizations/CSO's may be involved in the exercise and encouraged to identify the barriers with a view to provide relevant information to election machinery.

13.3. Nodal Ministry should also be asked to ensure adequate funding for implementation of the service offerings to the PwDs.

TIMELINES

Topic	Activity	Responsible Division	Timelines			
			Jan 19	Mar 19	June 19	Sept 19
1. Mapping of PwDs	1.1 Collecting data of the PwDs at Polling Station Level across the country	EDMD&ER				
	1.2 Flagging of the entries of PwD electors, i.e. PS wise electors with types of disability identified and compiled.	ER Division & IT Division				
2. Voter Registration	2.1 House to House survey by BLOs to ensure that every PwD of 18+ years category is identified and enrolled. Existing data bases with other departments obtained	ER Division				
	2.2 Specific field on types of disabilities as provided in the registration form (Form 6) is created in the Database of Electoral Roll entries at PS level	ER Division & IT Division				
	2.3 List of the PwDs at PS Level as per final voter lists to be made available to the BLO, Presiding officer and the officer in charge of facilitation center	ER/EPS				
	2.4 EPIC issued to the visually impaired PwDs in Braille	ER				
	2.5 EPIC and Photo Voter Slips of different colour for PwD electors for easy identification of PwD electors at PS	ER				

2015

Topic	Activity	Responsible Division	Timelines		
			Jan 19	Mar 19	June 19 Sept 19
3. Polling including pre-polling activities, Facilitation Centers	3.1 DEOs to plan facilitation measures for PwDs based on data base of PwDs at each PS.	EPS			
	3.2 PwD electors list made available to the Presiding Officers, Sector Magistrates, Facilitation Centers. Care to be taken that the information is not made public.	ER/EPS			
	3.3 Photo voter slips of PwDs may be stamped over leaf for priority and assistance. Accessible photo voter slips i.e. in Braille for blind	EPS			
	3.4 Candidate details, including affidavits in accessible formats for the blind and deaf blind voters (who use screen reader software / Braille display)	EPS/IT Division			
	3.5 Polling Stations in the PwD institutions wherever possible. Alternatively, auxiliary polling stations may be set up in areas where PwDs have larger concentration.	EPS			
Poll Volunteers	3.6 Poll Volunteers at the polling station and facilitation centers depending on number and type of PwDs.	EPS			
	3.7 A trained female volunteer in every booth to assist female PwD electors	EPS			
	3.8 Poll volunteers from among future voters can also be organised from Electoral Literacy Clubs	SVEEP			
	3.9 Badges may be provided to the volunteers.	EPS			
	3.10 Capacity building of volunteers may be taken up with the help of CSOs	IIDDEM			

294

Topic	Activity	Responsible Division	Timelines			
			Jan 19	Mar 19	June 19	Sept 19
Transport Facility	3.11 Transport facility may be provided to the PwDs from home to polling booths and back on the polling day.	SDR/EPS				
	3.12 Polling stations shall be made accessible to all PwDs. Accessibility standards to be specified i.e ramps, lighting, demarcated parking, accessible toilet, assistive aids like magnifiers, small stools, etc.	EPS				
	3.13 Entrance to the polling booth should accommodate wheel chair movement and also the furniture etc should be arranged for access of the PwDs.					
	3.14 Guidelines and instructions at polling stations in Braille, sign language, audio, and posters with pictures and large text with contrast colors etc.					
Service Offerings at the polling station	3.15 The polling officials may be sensitized for interaction with PwDs with its base in empathy.	Training/III DEM				
	3.16 PwDs shall be given priority to cast their vote	EPS				
Election Observers	3.17 Orientation to PwD voters at Help Desk about the setup of polling booth & voting compartment polling officers desks, Braille ballot sheet, EVM Braille etc	EPS				
	3.18 Observer's checklist should include specific check points on accessible electoral process	Observer Division/SVEEP				

Topic	Activity	Responsible Division	Timelines			
			Jan 19	Mar 19	June 19	Sept 19
4. Inclusive Voter Education	4.1 Customized voter education for different categories of the PwDs	SVEEP				
	4.2 Personnel carrying out the VE programme should also sensitised	SVEEP/IIIDE M				
	4.3 Special modules for voter education to Volunteers and also for Sensitization of Staff/volunteers.	SVEEP/IIIDE M				
Budgetary Allocation	4.4 Camps at PwDs institutions for hands on experience for filling registration forms.	SVEEP				
	4.5 Ten percent of the total funds allocated under SVEEP earmarked for interventions specifically for Persons with Disabilities.	SVEEP				
Communication Strategy	4.6 Adapting existing SVEEP material in accessible formats through CSOs/experts	SVEEP				
	4.7 Process of voting and usage of EVM /VVPAT to be explained using radio, short films and other accessible awareness materials	SVEEP				
	4.8 Sign language window in audio-visual and advertisements	SVEEP				
	4.9 Websites made accessible for PwDs.	SVEEP/ICT				
	4.10 Voter guides provided to blind voters in Braille.	SVEEP				
	4.11 PwD Icons appointed at different levels	SVEEP				
	4.12 Awareness observers to monitor the inclusion of persons with disabilities in voter education and outreach	SVEEP				
	4.13 All Social Media outreach to cater to accessibility standards	Communications				

292

Topic	Activity	Responsible Division	Timelines			
			Jan 19	Mar 19	June 19	Sept 19
5. Leveraging Technology	5.1 Mobile App enabled with GPS/Audio features to guide persons with disabilities.	IT/ICT				
	5.2 ECI and CEO's websites including NVSP.IN may be made accessible as per standards.	IT Division				
	5.3 Candidate list for all ACs/PCs in accessible formats for the blind and deaf blind voters (who use screen reader software)	EPS/ICT				
	5.4 Accessible mobile apps may be developed for enrolment of PwD electors, and grievance redressal Portal to be made accessible and simple	ICT Division				
6. Research & Knowledge sharing	6.1 Research for improved service offering and sharing of Knowledge.	IIIDEM				
	6.2 An inventory of barriers, solutions thereto and Service Offerings should be made available to the Knowledge network.	SVEEP / IIIDEM				
7. Partnerships	7.1 To build partnership with Ministries and Departments for evolving and carrying forward interventions to facilitate PwDs	SVEEP				
	7.2 Setting up of ELCs in educational institutions dedicated to the PwDs and the ELC resources customised to match disability requirements.	SVEEP				

Topic	Activity	Responsible Division	Timelines			
			Jan 19	Mar 19	June 19	Sept 19
	7.3 CSO's should be involved especially in areas of providing volunteers, developing voter education material, outreach, sensitisation and training of poll officials, sign language interpreters	SVEEP				
	7.4 Media Houses may cover programs for the PwDs inclusion in electoral process as part of their CSR.	Communication /SVEEP				
8. Engagement with Political Parties	8.1 Advisory to Political Parties to have their constitution and manifestoes in accessible format.	Political Parties Division				
	8.2 Advisory for Websites of Political parties to be accessible for all persons with disabilities.					
	8.3 Advisory for Political campaigns to be made accessible to PwDs in terms of infrastructure, information and communication.					
	8.4 Advisory for Booth Level Agents may also have representation from among PwDs.					
	8.5 Advisory for BLAs and Polling agents may be sensitised about the right to equal participation of persons with disabilities in electoral process.		Political Parties Division			
9. Training and Sensitization	9.1 Training and sensitization of the election staff so that they are empathetic to the needs of PwD voters.	IIIDEM				
	9.2 The training shall be factored into regular training to the staff. Cascaded training on accessibility may be provided to Poll officials.	IIIDEM				
	9.3 Training modules may be developed with the help of experts.	IIIDEM				

Topic	Activity	Responsible Division	Timelines			
			Jan 19	Mar 19	June 19	Sept 19
10. Alternative Voting methods	10.1 Alternative voting methods shall be looked at without compromising on the essential requirements of sanctity and secrecy of vote.	SDR/ICT				
11. Legislative Initiative	11.1 Need for legislation shall be examined for enhancing electoral participation of the PwDs.	SDR				
12. Organisational	12.1 Committees shall be formed at National, State, District and Assembly Constituency level on 'Accessible Elections'.	EPS				
	12.2 Accessibility Cell in IIIDEM to be set up.	IIIDEM				
	12.3 Disability Coordinators shall be appointed at the AC, District and the State level.	EPS				
13. Barriers: Continuous Identification and Solutions	13.1 Identification of Barriers to electoral participation should be continuous process.	NACAE/EPS				
	13.2 Stakeholders including concerned Govt Departments and Disability organizations/CSO's may be involved in the exercise and encouraged to identify the barriers	NACAE/EPS				
	13.3 Nodal Ministry should also be asked to ensure adequate funding for implementation of the service offerings to the PwDs.	NACAE/EPS				



ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD,
NEW DELHI-110001