

INTRODUCTION:-

The strategic Framework on Accessible Election is built around sensitization through education and training, community involvement of different sections of society, effective partnership with institutions and organization and creation of facilities to cater to the public needs of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with a view of increasing their participation.

OBJECTIVE:-

Election Commission of India works on the vision 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.

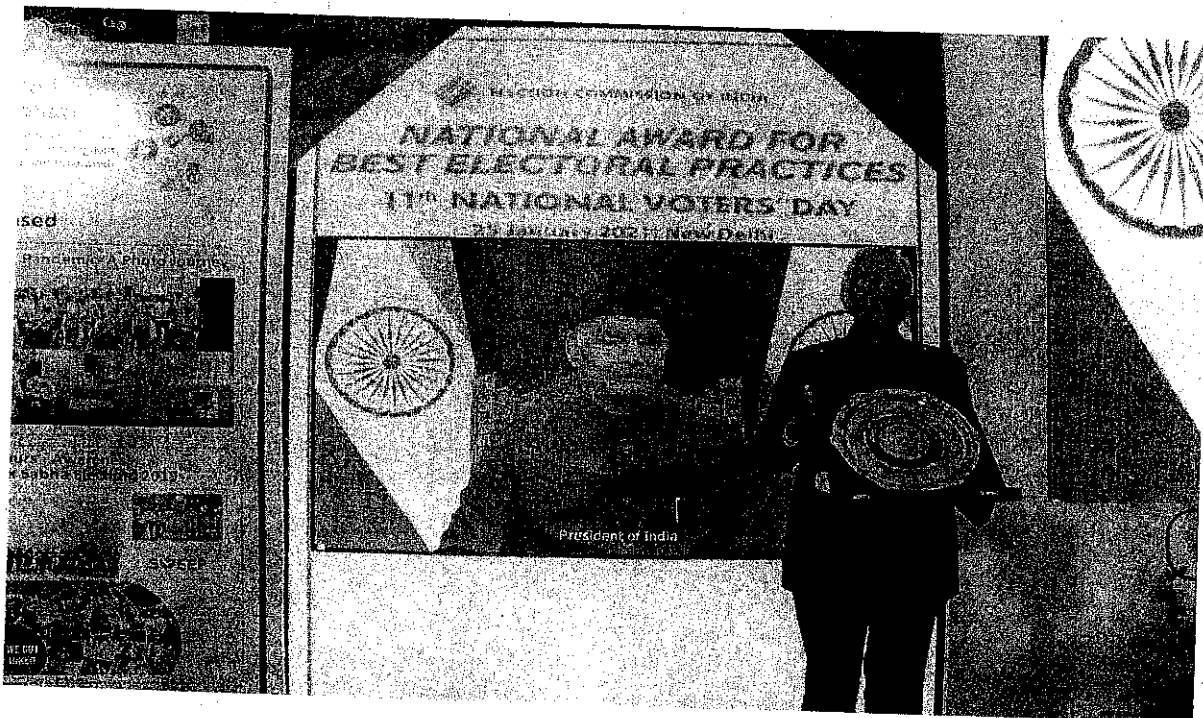
The Election Commission of India is committed to an equal access framework for empowering Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) supported by the fundamentals of responsiveness, respect and dignity to enhance elector confidence among them: and support initiatives for improved service offerings to enhance their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

The office of CEO, Delhi is working on the basis of ECI theme in the election process.

ACHIEVEMENTS:-

The office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi and all 11 District Election Officers put in their best efforts to accomplish to conduct a free, fair and peaceful accessible election. The highlights of the achievements of accessible election for PwDs and 80+ Senior Citizens, in the build up to the General Election to the Delhi Legislative Assembly Elections 2020 are as under:-

The office of CEO, Delhi has received National Award for Best Electoral Practices on 11th National Voter's Day 2021.



**ACCESSIBLE ELCTION
DISTRICT SOUTH-WEST
FACILITY FOR CENTENRIAN VOTER IN AC-34, MATIALA DURING
DELHI LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTION-2020.**

The Delhi Legislative Assembly Election was held on 08-02-2020. During the election, 07 centenarian voters were verified in AC-34 Matiala District South West. The Returning Officer, AC-34 Matiala/SDM Kapashera ensured all arrangements to make the voting accessible for all the centenarian voters.

Sh. Nand Lal Gupta S/o Sh. Rup Chand Gupta, age 104 years EPIC No. WGO0615807, resident of Flat No.409, Manchahat Apartment, Plot 42 Sector 10, Dwarka polling location at Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidhyalaya, Sector 10, Dwarka was the eldest voter of AC-34 Matiala. During the process of verification of centenarian voters the officers of the AC-34 Matiala, contacted Sh. Nand Lal Gupta and his son Sh. Sunil Gupta. It was found that the grand children of Sh. Nand Lal Gupta were also voters in AC-34 Matiala. Sh. Nand Lal Gupta was suffering from some old age ailments and not able to walk properly. The officers of election department told Sh. Gupta about the purpose of visit and conveyed that they will provide pick and drop facility from his home to polling centre and wheel chair facility also. Although, Sh. Gupta was already firm about his decision and said that he will go for voting in our conditions.

On the poll day, Sh. Nand Lal Gupta presented at the polling station, was brought by his son in his own vehicle. They denied to avail the pick and drop facility being provided by the election department. The volunteers at the polling station provided wheel chair facility to Sh. Gupta. The sector officer, who was already present to welcome Sh. Gupta and escorted him to the polling booth. He was taken to the polling booth avoiding the queue of the voters already present. The presiding officer and the polling staff stood up in honour of Sh. Gupta. The designated staff completed the pre-polling formalities and escorted Sh. Gupta towards the polling booth where the EVM was kept ready for polling. Sh. Nand Lal Gupta pressed the button of EVM and caste his vote. With the beep sound of EVM all the polling staff and polling agents stood up and clapped for sometime in praise of the high moral of Sh. Gupta.

Thereafter, the sector officer escorted back the centenarian voter to the lounge area of the polling centre. The sector officer presented drinking water to Sh. Gupta. Thereafter, fruit juice and tea with biscuits was offered to the centenarian voter.

All the persons present at the polling centre including election officers, security persons, volunteers and those who had come for voting were overwhelmed on the presence of Sh. Gupta. The sector officer thanked the centenarian voter for showing his keenness for voting. The centenarian voter told that it is for more than 60 years that he is casting his vote. He doesn't remember if he has ever missed casting his vote. That he has strong faith in Indian Democracy and that the overall development shall flourish by following the Democracy. Further, he told that he always tries that he should be first one to vote. He always takes pride in voting and also teaches his children/grand child to vote. That every vote counts and even a single vote can decide the fate of the Government. It means the every vote strengthens the democracy.

Sh. Gupta viewed the arrangements like pick and drop facility, wheel chairs, ramps, volunteers and lounge area for waiting etc. made to help the old age voters and PwD voters.

After sometime, Sh. Nand Lal Gupta, the centenarian voter returned back to his home in a cheerful mood.

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Accessible Election

PICK & DROP AND OTHER FACILITIES

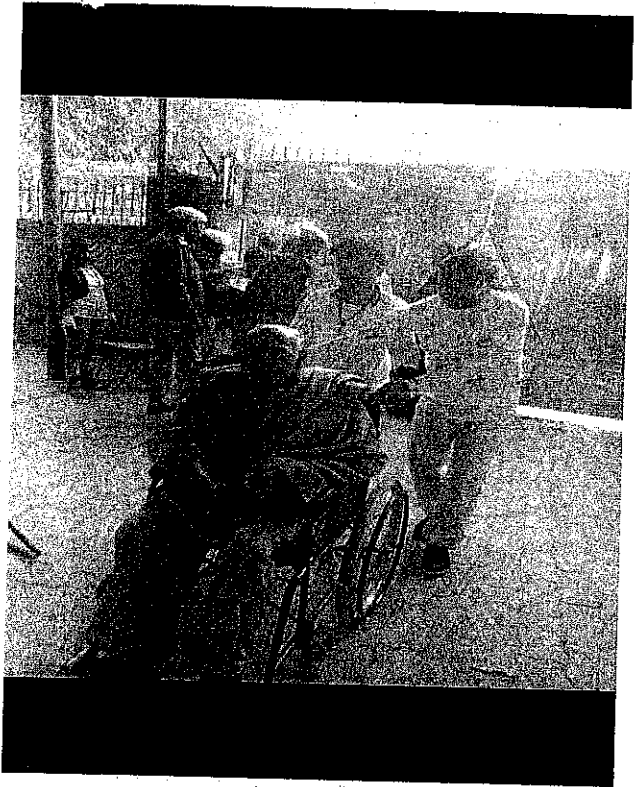
District North-West

During Delhi Assembly Elections 2020, numerous initiatives were taken up at district level such as ramps, wheel chairs, Braille EPIC, Braille EVM and ballot paper, accessible toilets, tactile signage, sign language interpreters, volunteers and transport facility to ensure hassle free participation of Persons with Disabilities. In addition to that, the District Election Officer, North-West emphasized all the election machinery for strengthen by the voter education, efficient mapping, sensitization training programs and improved facilitation at the polling station for all voters of district North-West. Special efforts were made for ensuring participation of centenarian voters, voters aged over 80, and Persons with Disability, during the Assembly Elections 2020. With the announcement of Assembly elections, District Election office, North-West started a special campaign through SVEEP Activities to ensure new benchmarks in Accessibility of Elections.

Further, the office of the district North-West started to convey the message to all PwDs voters, centenarian voters, and voters aged above 80, through various media and SVEEP Activities for the facilities and administrative arrangements being made to assist them in casting their vote at all polling station locations of district North-West. The PwDs voters, centenarian voters, and voters aged above 80 were being given priority for entering the polling station, without having to wait in the queue and a separate queue was made for them, if required and also providing the wheelchairs, adequate slope on ramps and clear space for movement within the polling room till the voting compartment. The transport facilities were also provided at all polling station locations to all Persons with Disability (PwDs), centenarian voters, and electors aged more than 80 years upto Polling Station and back. Volunteers were also deployed at all polling locations to assist the voters with disabilities.

A District Nodal officer (PwD) was appointed at district level for facilitation of PwDs voters and the details of Nodal Officer was shared widely between such voters of district North-West. Pick and Drop Facility was also made in order to ensure the maximum participation of PwDs voters in Delhi Assembly Election-2020 as well as centenarian voters, and electors aged more than 80 years. Electors could reach out through a dedicated pick-drop mobile app or directly calling to Nodal Officer. This enabled them to effectively ensure in real-time, that the facility reached the intended beneficiary.

Senior citizen of more than 80 years of age, centenarian voters and PwD electors marked in the electoral roll had a choice of voting either as an absentee voter or as a regular voter on the poll day. During Delhi Assembly Elections 2020, a significant facilitation was ensured in the form of postal ballots. These facilities were extended to voters above the age of 80, centenarian voters and Persons with Disabilities electors. All these voters were given the choice of casting votes through postal ballots, at home.





Accessible Elections: Lok Sabha & Vidhaan Sabha Elections

Election Commission of India announced Accessible Elections as the central theme during National Voters Day 2018.

AADI as a member of the National Advisory Committee on Accessible Election and State Steering Committee on Accessible Election is provided inputs creating guidelines for accessible elections.

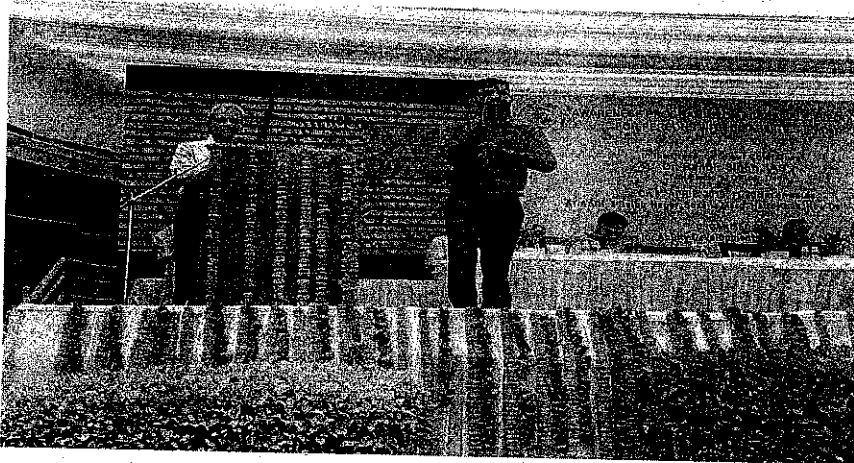
- Meeting was held at AADI with NGO representatives of different districts of Delhi, District Social Welfare Officers (led by Dr. (Ms.) A. Madhvi), Sector Officers, Nodal Officers, AD Planning from O/o CEO, Delhi to discuss about roles and responsibilities to ensure access to voters with disabilities.
- AADI in collaboration with Social Welfare Department, Delhi and created training modules for MCD and polling booth officials and trained them towards the needs of voters with disabilities.
- AADI Team along with South District, EO, EVM audited the polling booths in Dera Village, Bhatti Mines & Fathepur Beri and report was submitted to the Office of the CEO, Delhi.
- Active citizens from the theatre club of AADI performed an educative street play to raise awareness on accessible elections, urging diverse voters especially people with disabilities to cast their vote.

Vidhaan Sabha Elections 2020, Election Commission announced postal ballot facility for absentee voters to ensure larger voter participation. For the first time the postal ballot facility offered to absentee voters, included person with disability (PwD) and senior citizens who are above 80 years at their homes.

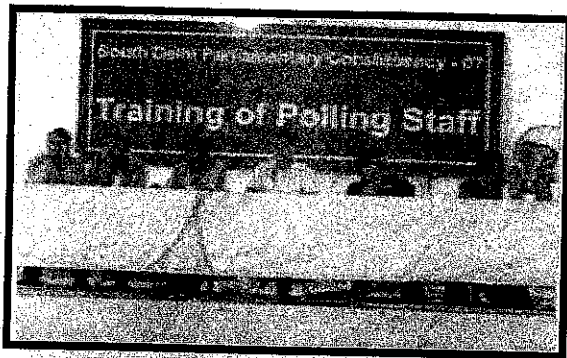
- AADI did a training of 80 officers at the level of Executive and Assistant Engineers, regarding the polling booth accessibility features and shared information regarding Assured Minimum Facilities.
- The information was disseminated far and wide amongst Organisations, persons with disability and families.
- Two persons with disabilities, Darsana and Sheel (sisters) cast ballot at their residence in Panchsheel Enclave. "The staff from ECI who visited us were very helpful and cooperative. They used a three sided screen to ensure secrecy of ballot. We were able to stamp our vote using ink. They immediately sealed our vote in an envelope."



Access Audit of Polling Booth



**Awareness Programme on Accessible Elections for person with disabilities at AADI by
Dr. Ranbir Singh, IAS, Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi as a Chief Guest**



Training of Polling Booth Officials by AADI Team



**Street Play by AADI on Raising Awareness on
Accessible Elections at Dilli Haat!**

REPORT –DELHI LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2020 and GENERAL ELECTION 2019

National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI) were members of the Steering committee of Delhi Election Commission PWDs. NAD has suggested and brought forward crucial points regarding the issues faced by Deaf and Hard of Hearing voters especially during the Lok Sabha Elections in 2019. To tackle the issues various solutions were placed before the committee and the Dr. Ranbir Singh, Delhi's CEO was open to the ideas and facilitated quick work on all the points.

The very first thing that came out was a poster on Indian Sign Language awareness which was initiated by NAD that included some basic ISL terms related to elections like voter ID card, signature, etc; alphabets, and sentences like "What is your name?", "Do not remove ink". The same were circulated before the Delhi Legislative Assembly Elections. The poster was designed in collaboration with Deaf Enabled Foundation (DEF).

Deaf Experts from NAD along with Sign Language Interpreters from ASLI had given sensitization training on Deaf and Hard of Hearing voters to school volunteers, polling officials and police officials to be deployed during the Delhi Legislative Assembly Elections 2020. A special training for Engineers on Deaf and Hard of Hearing voters was also held at the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer's office at Kashmere Gate. The trainings were held at various assembly constituencies for volunteers, polling booth officials and police personnel. The trainings carried on from 13th January to 6th February 2020. Most of the trainings followed the same structure of intro to Deaf, how to recognize and interact with a Deaf voter, basic ISL words related to elections and alphabets in ISL. The training modules were also designed according to the young volunteers or polling officials and they were given demo scenarios and real life examples and questions & doubts were taken and answered. The sessions were quite interactive and great response and interest was shown by the participants.

Deaf experts from NAD along with Sign Language Interpreters from ALSI facilitated the sessions, in which approximately 10,000 volunteers were sensitized.

Apart from this ASLI and NAD has deployed 60 Indian Sign Language Interpreters in Top 60 locations where Deaf voters were registered in PWD app of Election.

The following Sign Language experts sensitized the Polling Officials, Volunteers and Delhi Police Officials:-

1. Ms. Ritu Panda (NAD)
2. Sh. Shivoy Sharma (ASLI)
3. Sh. Anuj Jain (NAD)
4. Ms. Sheetal (ASLI)
5. Ms. Preeti Sapra (ASLI)
6. Sh. Shashi Kant Pathak (NAD)
7. Sh. Manvir Singh (NAD)
8. Ms. Garima (ASLI)
9. Sh. Shashikant Pathak (NAD)
10. Ms. Payal Saini (ASLI)
11. Ms. Aishwarya (ASLI)

