



Accessible Elections

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The **Election Commission of India's Accessible Elections** initiative in Lok Sabha Election-2019 has been successful in making the election process more **participative** and **inclusive**.

During Lok Sabha Elections special focus was given to ensure the participation of Persons with Disabilities (PwD).

Key Initiatives

- **Facilitation for Persons with Disabilities:** The electors with disabilities and senior citizens were **mapped polling station wise** to provide them targeted and **need based assistance** on the day of poll.
 - **Polling Station:** All the polling stations in Lok Sabha Election 2019 were equipped with **wheelchairs, ramps, sign language expert, signage** and **transport facility** for the convenience of PwD electors.
 - **Easy Enrollment Process:** To facilitate PwDs during the enrollment process **door to door registration drives** and a **special mobile application** was also developed by the Commission for easy registration.
- **Braille Signage on Electronic Voting Machine and Electors Photo Identity Card:** EVMs used in the elections were embossed with Braille signage for the visually impaired voters assistance.
 - It was the first time that **Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC)** with braille were provided to the visually impaired electors.
 - Other documents like **voters slip, voter guide** had braille signage too.
 - **Accessibility Observers** were introduced, who ensured all the polling stations are accessible to PwDs.

- **Assured Minimum Facilities**
 - **Basic Minimum Facilities:** For the convenience and facilitation of voters, polling stations were equipped with clean drinking water, adequate furniture for voters in the queue, shed, and toilets for the voters.
 - **Medical Aid:** Facilities like medical aid with basic supplies were also provided on the day of poll.
- **Special Initiatives by State Chief Executive Officers:** Other than nationwide initiatives states in mountainous and hilly terrains of Uttarakhand, Himachal, J&K launched **Divyang Sarathi** and **Divyang Dolis for** PwDs and senior citizens.

Other Initiatives

- The Government of India enacted **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.**
- **Recently, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has created “7th Guinness Book of World Record” for implanting ‘Modern Artificial Limbs (Legs)’ on 260 Divyangjans within eight hours.**
- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment organised Regional Conference on **“Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)”** in Mumbai.
- Government of India introduced **Indian Sign Language dictionary for hearing impaired individuals.**

Source: PIB