

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No.464/INST /2016/EPS

Dated: 12th March, 2016

To

Chief Electoral Officers
Of all the States and UTs.

Sub: - Providing facilities to Persons with Disabilities (PWD) -reg.

I am directed to invite your attention to the Commission's letter no. 509/110/2004-JS-I dated 21.04.2004, 20.10.2005 & 26.10.2007 and letter no. 464/Direction/2016-EPS, dated 15 February, 2016 regarding providing facilities to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

Each elector is important for better functioning of democracy and must get his/her rights. The Electoral laws not only guarantee equality to persons with disabilities, but also make provisions for facilitating their access and participation in the election process.

The Commission has further decided about the implementation of the directives stated below to be followed uniformly by all States and UTs :-

A-Identifications of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

1. Preliminary data shall be collected by every State with the help of Census, Social Justice & Empowerment Department, Women and Child Welfare Department and Samagra Yojana.
2. The Officers/employees of Social Justice and Empowerment Department, as and when required, shall be drawn on deputation/assigned duty as Nodal Officers to ensure the availability of basic facilities to the PWDs.
3. Polling Station wise list of 18+ persons with disabilities shall be prepared from the data collected from the above mentioned departments at DEO/ERO/BLO Level.

B-Electoral Roll

1. A separate polling station wise list of PWDs indicating the type of disability shall be prepared from the voter list.
2. After obtaining information regarding PWDs from concerned departments, the process for inclusion of the names of the eligible PWDs who are not listed in the electoral roll shall be initiated.
3. PWDs shall be given preference in obtaining facilities at the Polling Stations, Matadata Shayata Kendras (MSKs), Voter Assistance Centers (VACs), Office of DEOs, EROs, ROs etc. All possible steps should be taken to ensure that PWDs are not required to wait in queue.
4. Adequate instructions to facilitate filling-up of forms 6, 7, 8 and 8A shall be provided at the above mentioned help centers.

C-SVEEP

1. An officer shall be designated/appointed assembly-constituency wise for each district. Such officers shall be trained regarding provision of facilities for PWDs.
2. Wide Publicity through various modes shall be ensured. Special basic publicity material shall be prepared by using simple language, sign language and Braille in regional languages (by the respective States).
3. Special/Mobile camps shall be organized to educate and motivate persons with disabilities and regular programs shall be organized through various Media.
4. Efforts shall be made to prepare volunteers from student organizations like NCC, NSS, NYK etc to motivate and create awareness regarding the election process among persons with disabilities.
5. Publicity regarding the services offered by CSCs/ MSKs shall be augmented.
6. Efforts shall be made to have renowned PWDs as District Campus Ambassadors and District /State Icons.

D-Involvement of NGOs/CSOs/DPOs/RWAs

1. Voluntary and other organizations working for PWDs like Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CSOs), Disabled Persons' Organizations (DPOs) and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) etc

shall be motivated to help in imparting information regarding election process to PWDs in a non-political, non-partisan. Assistance shall be sought from these organizations to provide various facilities to PWDs.

2. Only non-political & non-partisan organizations should be considered to motivate and create awareness among PWDs.

E-System Sensitization and Training

1. Special training sessions shall be organized to sensitize the election machinery to make efforts to address the needs of PWDs.
2. All officers/employees, police officials etc involved in the election process should be clearly instructed on the facilities to be provided to the PWDs.
3. Instructors qualified in sign language and Braille shall be appointed for training purposes.
4. Basic Information regarding election process shall be prepared in Braille script and displayed (in Hindi, English or Regional language in use).
5. Contribution in elections process by PWDs - The PWDs who volunteer to assist in the election process in the form of working at Voter Help Centers, working as BLOs, working in polling team etc should be assigned such work so that they can motivate other PWDs to participate in the election process.

F-Use of technology to provide help to PWDs

1. The websites of each CEO/DEO shall be made user friendly and readily accessible to persons with disabilities.
2. Visually impaired voters shall be provided the facility of voice SMS to convey information like the status of registration, polling station number, name of polling station, the Serial Number in the voters' list, the assembly constituency in which the name of PWD is registered, the voter ID no.(EPIC), Polling Schedule, etc.

Note - Data of persons with disabilities shall not be displayed on website and should not be shared so as to maintain their privacy.

Special Exclusive Polling Stations for PWDs

1. In places/areas/institutions where PWDs reside in large numbers, special polling stations may be set up. For this purpose, the DEO with the endorsement of Chief Electoral Officer should submit proposal for setting up of special polling stations.

H-Improving Physical Access and facilities at polling stations

1. It shall be ensured that polling stations are situated on the ground floor, if not, lift facility/extension of ramp to each floor should be provided.
2. A standardized and uniform design of ramps shall be implemented.
3. Temporary/Mobile ramps shall be made available where ever permanent ramp facility cannot be provided.
4. Access to ramps shall be made smooth in places of sandy and slushy pathways.
5. Ramps shall be provided in such a manner that it directly leads to the door of polling stations to avoid navigating through corridors.
6. Proper approach roads to Polling Stations shall be ensured by local authorities/respective departments.
7. Mobile barricades in front of Doors of each Polling Station shall be erected.
8. Entrance door of polling station shall be kept wide open and adequate space around the voting compartment should be ensured for wheel chair movement.
9. Facility for separate entry should be made available for persons with disabilities wherever possible.
10. Pathway to polling rooms shall have indicators with standard signage.
11. Depending on the number of PWDs among electors in a polling station, facilities like ramp, tricycles, basic information through audio-video, should be made available. These facilities should be physically verified and certified by the Observer deputed by the Commission.
12. Wheel chairs shall be provided at identified polling stations.

13. Priority entry passes shall be issued to persons with disabilities. All possible steps should be taken to ensure that PWDs are not required to wait in queue.

I-Cooperation of Political Parties

1. Political parties shall also be motivated to display publicity material, manifesto, appeal etc. in audio-video and in Braille as well as sign language as per the requirement of the PWDs.

J-Statistical data

1. Statistical data should incorporate data regarding PWDs.

Kindly ensure that the instructions given be followed in letter and spirit.

Please acknowledge the receipt of this letter immediately and also confirm action taken as required above at the earliest.

Yours faithfully,


(SUMIT MUKHERJEE)
SECRETARY