

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1387

ANSWERED ON 14.12.2023

IMPROVING VOTING PROCESS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS AND PwDs

1387. Shri Neeraj Shekhar:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) *the steps taken by Government to improve the voting process for senior citizens and Persons with Disability (PwDs); and*
- (b) *the challenges, if any, in implementation thereof?*

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF
THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE;
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS;
AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE
(SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL)**

- (a) and (b): The Election Commission of India (the Commission) has informed that the following steps have been taken by the Commission to make the voting process smooth and inclusive for Senior Citizen and *Persons with Disability (PwDs)*:
- (i) **Polling Station at Ground Floor:** The polling stations are set up on the ground floor of a building to facilitate voting for aged and disabled electors. Polling stations are set up in such a manner that ordinarily; no voter is required to travel more than two kilo meters to cast his vote.
- (ii) **Provision for Ramp:** A permanent ramp of maximum gradient 1:12 is provided at all Polling Stations to facilitate the PwDs and senior citizen electors, as per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in

the Polling Stations. Wide publicity is given about the provision of ramps in Polling Stations.

- (iii) **Adequate Furniture:** Adequate chairs/ benches are provided at each Polling Station for disabled, pregnant or senior citizen electors.
- (iv) **Shade in Polling Station:** Tented arrangement for shade with adequate size (minimum 15ft X 15ft) canopy is made available, as waiting area, at each Polling Station with sufficient chairs/benches preferably for ladies/senior citizens/nursing mothers/differently abled voters and children accompanying them.
- (v) **Volunteers:** Volunteers from NCC/NSS/Scout & Guides are deployed to manage the voters' queue. Identified PwDs and senior citizen voters are assisted by volunteers to reach the polling station and if required, wheelchair is provided. The PwDs electors can request for wheelchair facility by registering on Saksham-ECl App. The volunteers shall guide the PwDs electors up to the entrance of polling station. Inside the polling station, such PwDs electors are assisted by polling staff.
- (vi) **Provision for Transport Facility:** Senior Citizens, Persons with visual and Locomotive Disabilities and infirmed voters with impaired movement are provided free pass for using public transport on poll day. If public transport is not available, private vehicles are hired for the purpose.
- (vii) **Queue Management:**
 - (a) There are three queues at the polling station: one for male voters, one for female voters and third one for senior citizens and PwDs electors. One male elector is allowed to vote per two female electors.
 - (b) Persons with disability/infirmed electors are given priority for entering the polling station without having to wait in the queue for other electors and all necessary assistance as may be required is provided to them at the polling stations.

(c) The CEO/DEO gives adequate publicity about facilities to be extended to senior citizens, PwD/infirm.

Detailed instructions dated 10.06.2023 in this regard has been issued by the Election Commission.

- (viii) **Home Voting Facility for PwDs & Senior Citizens:** PwDs with benchmark disability and Senior Citizens above 80 years are provided with the option of Home Voting Facility through Form-12D under AVPD (Absentee Voters of PwDs) category and AVSC (Absentee Voters of Senior Citizens) category. An absentee voter wishing to avail this facility of casting votes by postal ballot from his/her home, makes an application to the Returning Officer (RO) of the Constituency concerned.
- (ix) **Mapping of Persons with Disabilities:** Polling station wise and thereafter providing necessary assistance while exercising their franchise during poll process.
- (x) **Appointing PwDs Icons:** From amongst persons with disabilities and being used optimally for engagement purposes to promote awareness on accessible elections among electors with disabilities.
- (xi) **Saksham ECI App (Earlier PWD App):** As a one stop access point solution to avail various services by PwDs in respect of election process.
- (xii) **Issuing accessibility checklist:** For polling stations in addition to assured minimum facilities.
- (xiii) **Availability of Wheelchairs:** At all Polling Stations for PwDs/ Senior Citizens.
