

Message from the Chief Election Commissioner of India on the Eighth National Voters' Day

25 January, 2018

It is my proud privilege and pleasure to congratulate citizens of our country on the 8th National Voters' Day, a unique celebration in the largest democracy of the world. I welcome the new voters; especially the millennium voters who have just been enrolled and call upon them to exercise their voting right in the next election in their respective constituency in a free and fearless manner.

Election Commission of India was established on this day in the year 1950. From the year 2011 it was decided to celebrate it as National Voters' Day. The Day is dedicated to the voters of India and reminds us of the Constitutional Rights of adult suffrage granted to every Indian citizen irrespective of religion, race, caste, community, language, region or socio economic considerations. Through a 'Pledge' on this day, while reiterating our abiding faith in democracy, we renew our resolve to uphold the rich democratic traditions of our country and the sanctity of free, fair and peaceful elections.

Voters' participation in elections starts with registration in the electoral roll and culminates in exercise of right to vote on the polling day. Through consistent efforts, we have achieved an electoral roll of nearly **87.53 crore electors*** spread over around **9.97 lakh Polling Stations*** that cover the vast expanse of our country including remote and far flung localities.

The Election Commission has taken several initiatives in its continued endeavor to encourage and enhance inclusive, informed and ethical electoral participation from all categories of voters. The initiatives integrate technology and media including social media for efficiency and efficacy of connect with the voters down to the polling station level in consonance with theme 'No voter to be left behind'.

Voter Education connects electoral processes with the voter. Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation programme SVEEP, the flagship voter education programme has been further strengthened especially for engaging future and new voters. Interactive School Engagement and ECI National Election Quiz have found tremendous response from the future voters in our schools. Mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy through Educational Institutions has been launched under which the first batch of the Electoral Literacy Clubs is being rolled out today.

Significant and considered initiatives have been taken for strengthening the Elector confidence by 100% coverage of EVMs with VVPATs. ERO-Net has been introduced to roll out e-services to stakeholders. Special initiatives have been launched for registration of service voters also. Dividend from these initiatives comes in the form of enhanced participation.

The Commission has launched the 'Accessible Elections' as theme in the year 2018 to facilitate registration and larger participation from the persons with disabilities (PwDs).

I once again extend my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to every citizen of the country on the National Voters' Day, 2018

Jai Hind!