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W.P. No.34815 of 2025

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 30.04.2026

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR.SUSHRUT ARVIND DHARMADHIKARI,
CHIEF JUSTICE

AND

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.ARUL MURUGAN

W.P. No.34815 of 2025
and W.M.P.Nos.38985 & 38986 of 2025Vaishnavi Jayakumar
D/o. Saranya
Old 5/1 Venugopal Avenue
Chetpet, Chennai 31

.. Petitioner(s)

Vs

1. The Election Commission of India
Rep. by The Chief Election Commissioner
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashok Road
New Delhi 110 0012.The State of Tamil Nadu
Rep. by its Chief Secretary
Secretariat, Fort St. George
Chennai - 600 0093.The Union Territory of Puducherry
Rep. by its Chief Secretary
Government of Puducherry, Secretariat,
Goubert Avenue, Puducherry - 605 001(RR2 & 3 *Suo Motu* impleaded *vide* order
dt.17.12.2025 made in WP.34815 of 2025)

.. Respondent(s)



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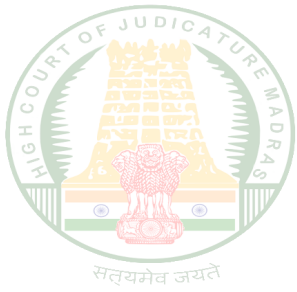
PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking issuance of a writ of mandamus directing the respondent to only designate/notify Polling stations with polling booths contain all the facilities mentioned by the respondent in their document titled "Assured Minimum facilities", to ensure that the design of such facilities are in compliance with the specifications and space standards mandated by the Harmonized Guidelines and Standards for Universal Accessibility in India 2021, publish the complete data of polling stations and booths including location, geo-coordinates, facilities available, contact of the concerned officer on its website, publish the list of contesting candidates under Rule 10(1) of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 in form 7 A or 7 B and any other document uploaded on its website in accessible ePUB or HTML format include multi modal CAPTCHA verification on all websites of the respondents in compliance with 5.2.1 of Guidelines for Indian Government websites as mandated by Rule 15 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules 2017.

For Petitioner(s): Mr. A.Yogeshwaran

For Respondent(s): Mr. Niranjana Rajagopalan
Standing Counsel for R1

Mr. P.S.Raman Advocate General
Assisted by Mr. A.Edwin Prabakar
State Government Pleader for R2

Mr. V.Vasanthakumar
Additional Government Pleader



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(Puducherry) for R3

ORDER

(Made by G.ARUL MURUGAN, J.)

A person with disability seeks for a direction to the Election Commission to notify only polling booths having assured minimum facilities like permanent ramps and upload the details concerning elections in the websites in accessible format for the persons with disabilities.

2. The learned counsel for the petitioner submitted that though the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, mandates the Election Commission to ensure that all materials related to the electoral process are easily understandable and all the polling stations are accessible to persons with disabilities for voting, still, there are several shortfalls in providing the required facilities, including permanent ramps. He further submitted that though there are certain guidelines issued in place and several directions were issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court and this Court, still, permanent ramps have not been provided in the polling booths and only temporary arrangements are made during elections, which ultimately is non-

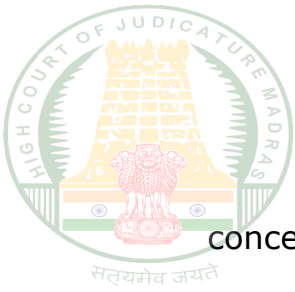


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friendly and inaccessible by the persons with disabilities. Even in the recently concluded State Assembly Elections, there were several defects and problems in the facilities provided which have been widely reported and also forwarded to the Election Commission. He further submitted that the information provided should be made easily accessible and the website of the Election Commission should be made user-friendly for the persons with disabilities.

3. Mr.Niranjana Rajagopalan, learned Standing Counsel for the Election Commission, by relying on the various circulars issued by the Election Commission, submitted that already directions have been issued to all the State authorities in respect of providing the facilities to the persons with disabilities, inclusive of putting up permanent ramps in all polling booths. He further submitted that, pursuant to the directions issued, the Election Commission is ensuring that all the facilities are provided to the persons with disabilities, making it easily accessible for them. Any defects or shortfalls in the recently concluded elections, brought to the notice of the Commission, would also be taken note of and suitably dealt with.

4. Insofar as the accessibility of the information on the website is

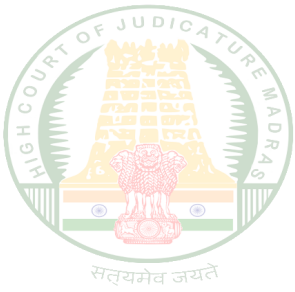


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concerned, the Election Commission has provided the required facilities and they have already made a request to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to conduct audit of ECI websites and applications as per GIGW 3.0 and WCAG 2.1 guidelines. Since the development of new module is in advanced stage, in the first phase, the audits of the ECI website "eci.gov.in" and voter services portal "voters.eci.gov.in" are taken up in alignment with MeitY's guidelines.

5. Mr.P.S.Raman, learned Advocate General, submitted that the directions issued by the Election Commission providing various facilities to the persons with disabilities are carried out in letter and spirit and even for the recent election, the Chief Secretary had convened a meeting with all the District authorities and ensured that all the facilities are in place, including the provision of ramps in all the polling booths.

6. Mr.V.Vasanth Kumar, learned Additional Government Pleader (Puducherry), submitted that all the required facilities providing easy access to the persons with disabilities were made during the elections and all the instructions issued by the Election Commission in this regard have been complied with.



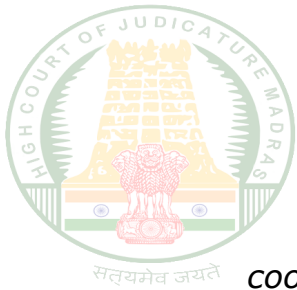
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7. We have bestowed our anxious consideration upon the submissions made and materials placed on record.

8. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, was enacted for the purpose of providing full participation and equality of people with disabilities. Further, in view of clarity on the conceptual understanding in the modern day requirements, the United Nations General Assembly adopted its Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the year 2006, laying down the principles for empowerment of persons with disabilities, which includes "accessibility". India being a party to the Convention, ratified the same. Subsequently, in tune with the international obligation, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, came to be promulgated.

9. The relevant provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, regarding voting facilities and accessibility are as follows:

"2(i) "establishment" includes a Government establishment and private establishment



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2(v) "private establishment" means a company, firm, cooperative or other society, associations, trust, agency, institution, organisation, union, factory or such other establishment as the appropriate Government may, by notification, specify

2(w) "public building" means a Government or private building, used or accessed by the public at large, including a building used for educational or vocational purposes, workplace, commercial activities, public utilities, religious, cultural, leisure or recreational activities, medical or health services, law enforcement agencies, reformatories or judicial foras, railway stations or platforms, roadways bus stands or terminus, airports or waterways

2(x) "public facilities and services" includes all forms of delivery of services to the public at large, including housing, educational and vocational trainings, employment and career advancement, shopping or marketing, religious, cultural, leisure or recreational, medical, health and rehabilitation, banking, finance and insurance, communication, postal and information, access to justice, public utilities, transportation

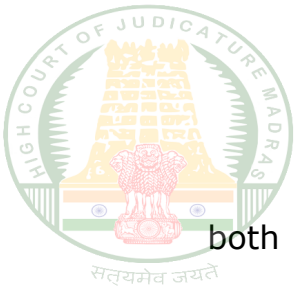
11. Accessibility in voting - The Election Commission of India and the State Election Commissions shall ensure that all polling stations are accessible to persons with disabilities and all materials related to the electoral process are easily understandable by and accessible to them.

16. Duty of educational institutions - The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall endeavor that all educational institutions funded or recognized by them provide inclusive education to the children with disabilities and towards that end shall-

(i) ...

(ii) make building, campus and various facilities accessible;"

10. In view of the above provisions, any establishment includes



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both public and private. Further, public building also includes a Government or private building, used or accessed by public at large including educational institutions. Public buildings are mandated to provide permanent facilities for having easy access to the persons with disabilities. Section 11 of the Act referred *supra*, gives a statutory right for the persons with disabilities to have all materials related to elections, easily understandable and also have accessible polling stations for voting. There is a mandatory duty cast on the part of the Election Commission to ensure that all the polling stations are provided with sufficient infrastructure and facilities, easily accessible by the persons with disabilities.

11. The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in a public interest litigation, in the case of *Disabled Rights Group vs. Chief Election Commissioner and Another* [W.P.(Civil) No.187 of 2004 decided on 05.10.2007], issued the following directions:

"On 19.4.2004, this Court directed the Chief Secretaries of respective States, in coordination with the Chief Electoral Officers of those States, to make available wooden ramp facilities at polling stations situated in cities and in urban areas. By communication dated 20.10.2005, the Election Commission



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instructed all State Governments/Union Territories to make provisions for good quality permanent ramps in all public buildings where polling stations are located. By affidavit dated 23.4.2007, Election Commission has confirmed that in the election held after 19.4.2004, specific instructions have been issued to provide ramps at polling stations.

... ..

The remedy is for the Election Commission to give appropriate directions to the officials manning the polling stations, regarding the special facilities for the physically disabled electorate at all polling stations. This should be done well-in-advance and sufficient publicity should also be given in the print and electronic media about the availability of such facilities so that the persons with disabilities are aware of the facilities beforehand and are, thus, encouraged to go and exercise their franchise. Further, its observers should also satisfy that such facilities are given. The absence of such facilities should be notified to the respective Government for remedial/future action. On behalf of the Election Commission of India it is stated that the appropriate directions will be given in this behalf. We are of the view that the above directions/ observations will meet the needs of the disabled voters. We accordingly dispose of the writ petition."

12. In compliance to the interim directions issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Election Commission had by letter dated



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20.10.2005, directed all the States and Union Territories to construct permanent ramps in all public buildings in which polling stations are located. The relevant portion reads as under:

"Polling stations for elections to the House of People and State Legislatures are located in public buildings, in most of the cases. The Commission is of the view that the issue of ramps at polling stations could be resolved, if the Govt./local authorities concerned provide permanent ramps at the public buildings where polling stations are located. As the public buildings are used by the general public every day for one purpose or the other, permanent ramps in such buildings would serve the purpose of the 1995 Act, and also make the polling stations disabled friendly on a permanent basis. Such permanent ramps would also be economically more viable as compared to setting up temporary ramps at each election.

In view of the above, the Commission desires that good quality permanent ramps may be constructed in all public buildings in which Polling Stations for elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies are located. The list of locations of polling stations in the State is available with the Chief Electoral Officer, who will furnish the same to you. The Commission desires that the work may be taken up on priority basis."

13. Again pursuant to the above final directions issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Election Commission by letter dated

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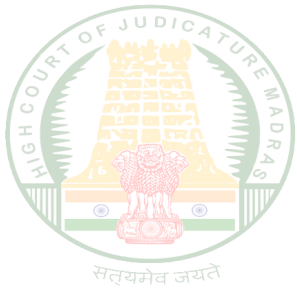


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26.10.2007, addressed to all the State and Union Territories insisted for taking up the work of providing permanent ramps in the buildings at the earliest. There after the Election Commission also issued detailed instructions dated 10.06.2023 to all the Chief Electoral Officers of the State and Union Territories, in respect of providing assured minimum facilities and other facilities at polling stations. The instructions included the description of the provision for ramp. Instructions 1(ii) reads as under:

"1(ii) Provision for Ramp: A permanent ramp of maximum gradient 1:12 should be provided at all Polling Stations to facilitate the PwD (Persons with Disabilities) voters and senior citizen electors, as per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the Polling Stations. The Supreme Court has also directed to give wide publicity about the provision of ramps in Polling Stations."

14. The Election Commission had further issued guidelines dated 03.08.2023 to all the Chief Electoral Officers of the State and Union Territories, for providing various facilities for persons with disabilities and senior citizens. The guidelines issued are usefully extracted hereunder:



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“ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

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TEL: 011-23052206

Fax 011-23052001

Website: www.eci.gov.in

Nirvachan Sadan,

Ashoka Road

New Delhi-110 001.

No.464/INST/EP(AS)/2022

Dated : 3rd August, 2023

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
all States and Union Territories.

Subject : Facilities for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens- reg.

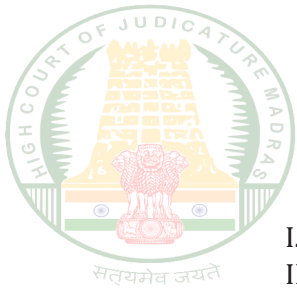
Reference:

- i. No.464/2009-EPS Dt 30.04.2009,
- ii. No.464/INST/2016-EPS Dt 15.02.2016
- iii. No.464/INST/2016-EPS Dt 12.03.2016
- iv. No.464/INST/2016-EPS Dt 07.09.2016
- v. No.464/INST/PwD/2018-EPS Dt 27.09.2018
- vi. No.464/INST/PwD/2018-EPS Dt 27.09.2018
- vii. No.464/INST/PwD/2018-EPS Dt 27.09.2018
- viii. F.No 464/EGS/EP(AS)/2023 Dt. 14.06.2023

Sir/Madam,

The Commission is committed for inclusion of all the eligible PwDs and Senior citizens in electoral process to achieve its maxim of 'No Voter to be left behind'. In order to encourage and facilitate the voters' various instructions have been issued from time to time in respect of facilities to be provided for Persons with Disabilities(PwDs) and Senior Citizens for their enrolment and ease of voting at the polling station.

In view of this, I am directed to state that the instructions referred above have been reviewed, consolidated and in supersession of all the previous instructions, the Commission has directed to issue a comprehensive direction in order to eliminate any ambiguity on the subject cited. The consolidated instruction is classified into five categories :-



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- I. Identification, Enrolment and Mapping of PwDs
- II. Infrastructure and Physical Accessibility
- III. Capacity Building and Outreach
- IV. IT interventions
- V. Miscellaneous

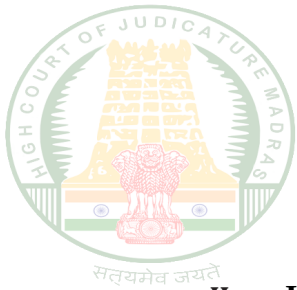
I. Identification, Enrolment and Mapping of PwDs: -

a. Identification and Enrolment

- (i) All the eligible PwD voters are required to be enrolled in electoral roll. For this purpose, preliminary data shall be collected by every State with the help of database available with other state government departments such as Social Justice & Empowerment, and Disability Department to ensure that no eligible PwD voter is left behind.
- (ii) 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. Polling Station wise list of 18+ persons with disabilities indicating the type of disability shall be prepared from the data collected from the above mentioned departments at DEO/ERO/BLO Level.
- (iii) The officers/employees of above Departments as and when required shall be drawn on deputation/assigned duty as Nodal Officer to ensure the availability of basic facilities to the PwDs.
- (iv) PwDs shall be given preference in obtaining facilities at the polling Stations, Voter Assistance Booths (VABs), Facilitation centres, Office of DEOs, EROs, ROs etc. All possible steps should be taken to ensure that PwDs do not face any inconvenience.
- (v) Adequate instructions to facilitate filling-up forms 6, 7 and 8 shall be provided at the above mentioned help centres.

b. Mapping of PwDs

- (i) A separate polling station wise list of PwDs shall be prepared from the electoral roll to provide necessary assistance while exercising their franchise during poll process.
- (ii) PwDs in each polling station should be identified category wise and mapped. The list is to be made available to the BLOs but it should not be marked in the electoral roll nor the data of PwDs/Sr. Citizens be displayed on the website to maintain the privacy of PwDs/Sr.Citizens.

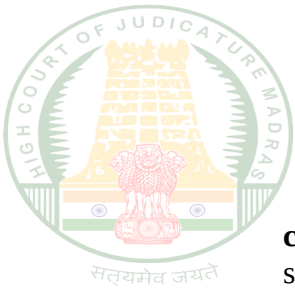


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II. Infrastructure and Physical Accessibility:-**a. Polling Stations**

- (i) It shall be ensured that polling stations are situated on the ground floor of the building to facilitate voting for the aged and disabled electors. Due consideration shall be given to the topography and the ease of travel for these electors.
- (ii) Access to ramps shall be made smooth in places of sandy and slushy pathways.
- (iii) Ramps shall be provided in such a manner that it directly leads to the door of polling stations to avoid navigating through corridors.
- (iv) Proper approach roads to polling stations shall be ensured by local authorities/respective departments.
- (v) Proper parking facility should be made available at the polling stations.
- (vi) Mobile barricades in front of Doors of each Polling Station shall be erected.
- (vii) Entrance door of polling station shall be kept wide open and adequate space around the voting compartment should be ensured for wheel chair movement.
- (viii) Facility for separate entry should be made available for persons with disabilities wherever possible.
- (ix) Pathway to polling rooms shall have indicators with standard signage and sign boards.
- (x) 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.
- (xi) **A permanent ramp shall be provided at all the polling stations with a gradient not exceeding 1:12 as per the existing guidelines issued by Department of Empowerment for persons with Disabilities under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. Due publicity about this provision of ramps shall be given.**

Polling stations for elections to the House of People and State Legislatures are located in public buildings, in most of the cases. The Commission is of the view that the issue of ramps at polling stations could be resolved, if the Govt./local authorities concerned provided permanent ramps at the public buildings where polling stations are located. As the public buildings are used by the general public every day for one purpose or the other, permanent ramps in such buildings would serve the purpose of creating accessible polling stations on a permanent basis. Such permanent ramps would also be economically more viable as



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compared to setting up temporary ramps at each election. In the polling stations where permanent ramps have not been provided due to a valid reason then, temporary ramps should be provided for the purpose.

- (xii) **Wheel chairs** shall be provided at identified polling stations. PwDs/Senior Citizens should be informed in advance about polling station where facility for wheel chairs is available. Adequate facilities should be provided for such voters to take the wheel chair inside the polling booth. Department of social justice and ALIMCO may be approached for fulfilling the requirement of wheel Chairs for PwD Voters.
- (xiii) The polling personnel should be specifically briefed about the provisions of Rule 49N of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, which provides for permitting a companion to accompany a blind/infirm elector to assist him/her to cast the vote.
- (xiv) Ensure pictorial representation through posters/videos and informative brochures regarding voting process and facilities provided for the aid of hearing-impaired voters outside the polling booth. Elaborate instructions on PwDs/Senior Citizens should be prepared by DEO/RO and the same should be displayed at the Polling Station.

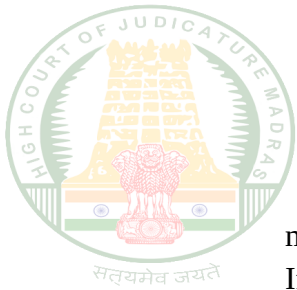
b. Priority Entering Facility/Separate Queue

All possible steps should be taken at polling stations to ensure that PwDs are not required to wait in queue.

The personnel at the polling station must ensure that differently abled electors are given priority. The same may be applicable for senior citizens. In case there are many such voters, a separate queue may be maintained for such voters. As this is being a voter friendly initiative, the CEO should give adequate publicity about it and issue an appeal to voters to co-operate in this initiative with a request that those who are able bodied and healthy should not try to avail this opportunity to jump the queue. Rather this should be need based. The voters in the queue should have open mind to help the fellow voters who are suffering from disability and other age related and health related problems. The Presiding Officers and other field officers may be instructed accordingly.

c. Transportation and Pick & Drop Facility

There should be proper transport facility for PwDs/Sr. Citizens in each and every polling station on the day of poll. Senior citizens, Persons with visual and locomotive disabilities and infirmed voters with impaired



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movement shall be provided free pass for using public transport on poll day. If public transport is not available, then arrangements for private vehicles for free pick up and drop facility from their residence to polling booth may be made. The eligible voters may also be provided with a registration facility on web portal/Saksham ECI App or helpline in order to avail these facilities. The DEO/RO shall be responsible for entire transportation exercise for PwDs. Each and every PwD/Sr. Citizen should be tagged polling station-wise and he/she should be picked-up from his/her residence and be dropped back there, after he/she has cast his/her vote. Nodal Officer for Transport appointed for each district/Constituency shall coordinate the exercise.

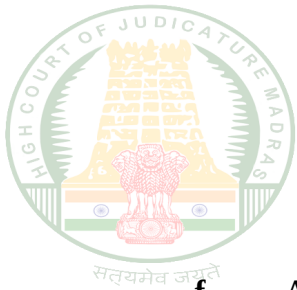
d. Assured Minimum Facilities

Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) should be ensured for PwD Voters at each and every Polling Station viz.- a. Permanent ramps with appropriate gradient should be provided as per national standards; b. Braille facility should be provided in the EVM; c. Proper accessibility to the polling station should be ensured; d. Proper parking facility should be made available at the polling station; e. Proper signage, f. Clean Drinking Water, Waiting Shed, medical kit, Accessible Toilet and Adequate Lightning should be ensured in all the polling Stations.

e. Postal Ballot Facility

PwDs with benchmark disability and Senior Citizens above 80 years can avail the option of Postal Ballot Facility through Form -12D under AVPD(Absentee Voters of PwD Category) and AVSC(Absentee Voters of Senior Citizens Category). An Absentee Voter wishing to vote by postal ballot has to make application to the Returning Officer (RO) of the constituency concerned, in Form-12D, giving all requisite particulars. Such application seeking postal ballot facility should reach to the RO during the period from date of announcement of election to five days following the date of notification of the election concerned. For detailed instructions and guidelines in respect of postal ballot, letter No. 52/2021/ SDR Vol-I Dt. 02.02.2021 may be referred to.

Informative and educational material to be prepared for awareness campaigns to sensitize about the availability of facility of Postal Ballot for PwD voters with benchmark disability and Senior Citizens (above 80 years of age).



f.

Activity Chart

A comprehensive activity chart (Annexure-I) regarding ease of registration and voting by PwD has been prepared for clarity and coherence. This chart clearly underlines the various activities to be carried out, steps to be taken, fixing of responsibilities of concerned officials, a definite time frame for each activity and the desired outcomes. It is requested to initiate immediate steps to implement the above measure in a time bound manner.

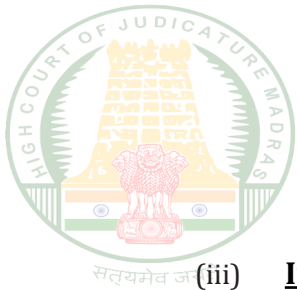
- g. A model checklist of the facilities to be provided at the polling stations is placed at Annexure-II.

III. Capacity Building and Outreach :-**a. Capacity Building**

- (i) **Volunteers:** - Identified PwDs and Senior citizen voters shall be assisted by volunteers (less than 18yrs of age) from NCC/NSS/Scout and Guides etc. for their guidance up to the entrance of the polling booth. Inside the polling booth, such voters shall be assisted by the polling staff. These volunteers can be organised from educational Institutions, and Chunav Pathshala, (ELCs). Only youth volunteers with no political allegiance shall be roped in and are to be trained to assist PWDs/Senior Citizens.

- (ii) **Disability Co-ordinators:-** For the purpose of implementation of Commission's instructions and for inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in electoral process, Disability Co-ordinators are to be appointed at State, District and AC levels.

- State Disability Co-ordinator at State level should be assigned within CEO office or deputed from State department of the welfare of persons with Disabilities to ensure that facilities are provided to persons with disabilities in electoral process and rendering effective grievance redressal mechanism for voters with Disabilities.
- District Coordinator may be assigned within the DEO's office or with the assistance from district welfare office to ensure that facilities are provided to persons with disabilities in electoral process.
- Assembly Constituency coordinator may be assigned within every RO's office in association with the local block/zonal level for each Assembly Constituency to monitor the facilities provided to PwD/Sr. Citizens at Constituency level.



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- (iii) **Involvement of NGOs/CSOs/DPOs/RWAs** :-All CEOs/DEOs may engage in partnership with civil society organizations working for welfare of persons with disabilities in respective States and all districts/ACs pertaining to their states. Voluntary and other organizations working for PwDs like Non-Government Organization (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CSOs), Disabled Persons' Organization (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 manner. If required assistance shall be sought from these organizations to provide various facilities to PwDs by following due process.

Data collection or data sharing with these organizations shall not be permitted under any circumstances.

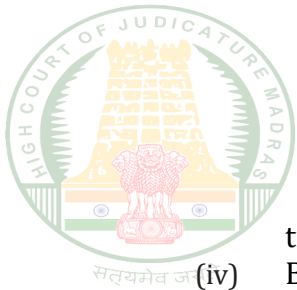
(Note: Only non-political & non-partisan organizations should be considered to motivate and create awareness among PwDs).

- (iv) **Monitoring and Assessment of the facilities for PwDs**:- During the poll period, the concerned CEO may ensure that the Divisional Commissioners for all districts under their division may assess and evaluate the facilities available for persons with disabilities and senior citizens. The Divisional Commissioners shall visit minimum 10 Polling Booths covering at least three Assembly Constituencies of each district.

In those States where the post of the Divisional Commissioner does not exist, equivalent rank officers may be engaged after consultation with the State Govt. CEO of the concerned state may intimate the names of all such officers to the Commission.

b. Training and Sensitization

- (i) Training sessions shall be organized to sensitize the polling and security personnel about the special needs of the differently abled electors, for courteous behaviour towards them and for providing necessary support to them at the polling station. Electors with speech and hearing impairment should also be given special care like in the case of other differently abled person.
- (ii) All officers/employees, police officials etc. involved in the election process should be clearly instructed on the facilities to be provided to the PwDs.
- (iii) Instructors qualified in sign language and Braille shall be appointed for



training purpose.

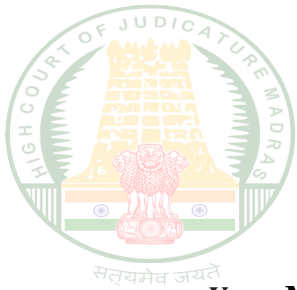
- (iv) Basic Information regarding election process shall be prepared in Braille Script and displayed (in Hindi, English or Regional Language in use).
- (v) PwD employees who get deployed at Voter Help Centers, as BLOs, polling team etc. should be assigned work so that they can motivate other PwDs to participate in the election process.
- (vi) Polling officials should be briefed to interact with voters with disabilities and senior citizens with due sensitivity.

c. SVEEP

- (i) Wide publicity through various modes shall be ensured to convey the availability of various facilities for PwDs and Sr. citizens. Accessible publicity material shall be prepared by using simple language, sign language and Braille in regional languages (by the respective States.).
- (ii) Special/Mobile camps shall be organized to educate and motivate persons with disabilities and regular programs shall be organized through various Media platforms.
- (iii) Efforts shall be made to prepare volunteers from student organizations like NCC, NSS, NYK etc. and other non-partisan voluntary groups to motivate and create awareness regarding the election process among persons with disabilities.
- (iv) Publicity regarding the services offered at Polling Station and Facilitation centres shall be amplified.
- (v) Icons with disabilities may be appointed as State and District ambassadors to inform and motivate persons with disabilities to take part in electoral process as voters.
- (vi) Coordination and Partnerships with stakeholders to create awareness and carry out outreach activities for enrolment of PwD and Senior citizens during SSR period.
- (vii) Meetings with CSOs/ NGOs may be planned, by involving SSCAE and DMCAE as required.

IV. IT interventions :-

- a. The websites of CEO/DEO shall be made user friendly and accessible for persons with disabilities. All the voter awareness content developed should be in accessible format.
- b. Wider publicity of SAKSHAM-ECI APP is required for increasing the usage of the app by PwD voters for their convenience.



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V. Miscellaneous :-

- a. A helpline service such as 1950 may be maintained by CEO/DEO offices to address all the grievances and queries w.r.to PwD voters and Senior Citizens.
- b. The Commission has directed to issue Voter guide, Voter Information Slips and EPIC cards with Braille Features to Persons with Visual Impairment or Blind.
- c. Braille facility is to be made available on the EVMs and due publicity should be given in respect of this facility.
- d. Statistical data on elections should incorporate data regarding PwDs/Senior Citizens.
- e. Special and exclusive polling stations for PwDs may be set up in places/areas/institutions where PwDs reside in large numbers after endorsement from the Chief Electoral Officer for setting up such special exclusive PwD polling stations.
- f. Dissemination of information regarding available facilities should be made known to the Stakeholders, Political Parties, Election Machinery, Media and Electors.
- g. Political parties shall be briefed about such facilities and they may also be motivated to display publicity material, manifesto, appeal etc. in audio-video and in Braille as well as sign language as per the needs of the PwDs.
- h. Wide publicity is to be made over the electronic media and Press to create awareness and to encourage PwDs/Sr. Citizen electors to exercise their franchise.

The above instructions may be brought to the notice of all the DEOs/EROs/AEROs for strict compliance in letter and spirit.

Yours faithfully,
Sd/-
(DEEPALI MASIRKAR)
DIRECTOR"

15. In spite of the directions issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court and also various guidelines issued by the Election Commission from time to time, we find that in most of the educational institutions and public buildings which are routinely notified as polling booths



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during every elections, still, permanent ramps are not available.

During every elections, temporary ramps are put up with wooden planks, just few days prior to the date of election, and every time several problems and shortfalls are noticed in the temporary ramps put up for the accessibility of persons with disabilities.

16. Even in the recently concluded elections, though the Election Commission issued directives and the State authorities took various steps for providing necessary facilities to the voters, including the disabled and elderly, the construction of permanent ramps at notified polling booths remained incomplete. It is to be noted that even otherwise, all these buildings are mandated to provide permanent ramps for the access of the persons with disabilities and they still fail to comply with the mandatory provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Therefore, necessary steps are to be taken by the respondents to ensure that permanent ramps are provided in these buildings, providing accessibility for the persons with disabilities.

17. As regards the accessibility of website of the Election Commission, it is stated that the Election Commission is in the process of complying with the guidelines on a priority basis in all its digital



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platforms ensuring accessibility and usability. In this regard, the Election Commission has addressed a letter dated 14.11.2025, to the Director General, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for the purpose of conducting audit. The letter is reproduced hereunder:

“SECRETARIAT OF ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road
New Delhi-110 001.

No.485/Comp/IT/Accessibility Audit/2025

Dated 14.11.2025

To

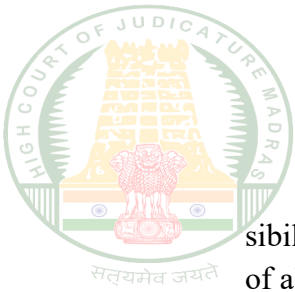
The Director General
STQC Directorate
Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology,
Electronics Niketan, III Floor
6,CGO Complex, Lodi Road,
New Delhi-110 003

Subject: Request for Conducting Audit of ECI Websites and Applications as per GIGW 3.0 and WCAG 2.1 Guidelines

Sir/Madam,

Ensuring accessibility, usability, and compliance with the Government of India guidelines is a priority for the Election Commission of India for all its digital platforms.

2. As per the *Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW)* 3.0 notified by MeitY, and the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1)*, all Government websites and applications are required to conform to the prescribed acces-



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sibility standards. In this context, ECI intends to undertake a comprehensive Audit of all its digital platforms.

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3. In this regard, I am directed to request that an audit be conducted for the portals and mobile applications of ECI. In the first phase, the audits of the ECI website "**eci.gov.in**" and the Voter Services Portal "**voters.eci.gov.in**" may be taken up, in alignment with MeitY's *Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW)* 3.0 and the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1)*. You are kindly requested to provide the financial estimate for conducting the above audits.

4. As the portals are providing services to the citizens, it is requested that audit may be expedited and completed within 30 days. For any further information or clarification, kindly contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully.

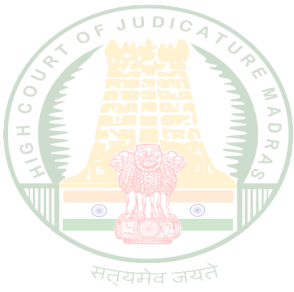
Sd/-

xxx"

18. In view of the fact that already the Election Commission is in the process of updating its digital platforms to ensure accessibility and usability by the persons with disabilities, further expeditious effective steps may be undertaken in this regard.

19. Accordingly, the writ petition is disposed of with the following directions:

- i. The respondents are directed to ensure that permanent ramps are constructed in the routinely notified polling



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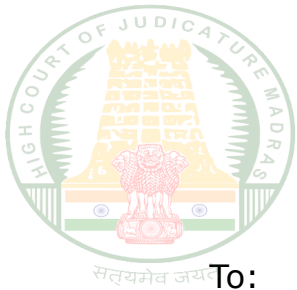
booths, particularly in the educational institutions and public buildings, in strict compliance with the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

- ii. The Election Commission shall take expeditious and effective steps to ensure completing the process of making their websites easily accessible and usable by the persons with disabilities.

There shall be no order as to costs. Consequently, interim applications are closed.

(SUSHRUT ARVIND DHARMADHIKARI, CJ) (G.ARUL MURUGAN, J)
30.04.2026

Index : Yes
Neutral Citation : Yes
gya

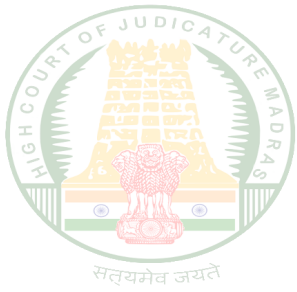


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To:

WEB COPY

1. The Chief Election Commissioner
Election Commission of India
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashok Road
New Delhi 110 001
- 2.The Chief Secretary
State of Tamil Nadu
Secretariat, Fort St. George
Chennai - 600 009
- 3.The Chief Secretary
Union Territory of Puducherry
Government of Puducherry, Secretariat,
Goubert Avenue, Puducherry - 605 001



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THE HON'BLE CHIEF JUSTICE
AND
G.ARUL MURUGAN,J.

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30.04.2026