

# ECI HOLDS FIRST EVER NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PWD ICONS FOR ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS; ICONS JOIN IN PERSON & VIRTUALLY FROM VARIOUS STATES

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Elections, Election Commission and the Electoral Reforms in India Incl. Political Parties

Chief Election Commissioner Shri Rajiv Kumar along with Election Commissioner Shri Anup Chandra Pandey today chaired a first ever National Conference of PwD Icons for Accessible Elections organized by Election Commission of India at Rang Bhavan Auditorium, Akashvani, New Delhi.



In his address, CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar said that ECI is committed to mainstream and deeply embed the concept and practice of accessibility in all its processes and functioning. Complementing the indomitable spirit of performers at the ceremony, CEC Shri Kumar said that Disability is not at all Inability. The real disability is perhaps our own inability to see the inner ability of the specially abled individuals. The challenge is not the disability but developing the right attitude towards it, ability of the system to be sensitised to needs of all.

While highlighting various initiatives taken by ECI to make elections Accessible & Inclusive, CEC said that ECI will consider the suggestions received to make our elections more inclusive. He added that ECI is also collaborating with the Department of Person with Disabilities for reaching out to identify more voters with special needs.



Link of CEC Address at conference: <https://youtu.be/3OtNIIEyTkw>

Election Commissioner Shri Anup Chandra Pandey said that a forum such as this conference provides an opportunity to brainstorm and exchange ideas for making our elections more accessible and inclusive. He stressed that the focus of ECI has been to enhance participation, strengthen facilitation, mould public perceptions about the potential of PwDs and include their voice as equal citizens that set the stage for their social and economic integration. Accessible and Inclusive elections to all eligible voters have been an underlying non-negotiable premise of the Election Commission of India.



Link of EC address at the Conference: <https://youtu.be/fjoPND371UY>

Shri Rajesh Agarwal, Secretary DEPwD in his remarks recalled the ground covered by ECI over the years in making elections more inclusive, accessible and participative. Padam Shree Dr Niru Kumar, ECI's PwD national Icon in her remarks appreciated the commendable efforts instituted by ECI to facilitate PwD voters and sensitization of the election machinery to provide comfortable voting experience to the PwD voters.

The State PwD icons interacted with the Commission in person as also virtually from CEO offices from Delhi, Kerala, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Mizoram, Chandigarh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal mentioning their experiences and suggestions to make elections more PwD friendly. Senior officials from DePwD, All India Radio, ECI and representatives from civil society organizations also attended the conference.



CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar along with EC Shri Anup Chandra Pandey launched the PwD App 2.0, the updated version of mobile app to facilitate various services to PwDs from the process of registration to availing pick and drop facility on the poll day. In the new avatar, the design, layout, interface and features of the app have been revamped. The Interface of PwD App has been made accessible & user friendly with features such as Screen reader, Text to Speech, Visibility enhancements, colour adjustments etc.

The Commission also launched a training module for sensitization of election personnel regarding PwDs and senior citizens.

During the Conference, Music band 'Light After Dark' from Meghalaya, also ECI State Icon with visually challenged artists and specially abled dancers from Delhi gave a spirited and inspiring performance. A short movie highlighting various initiatives by ECI to facilitate PwD voters in the election process was also screened during the conference.





Performance Link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGCCUjn3J\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGCCUjn3J_k)



Performance link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YixqJnlsz8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzVev7XuRvU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSVZZaWzrjY&t=21s>



Live Stream link of the Conference: <https://youtu.be/ffjGw7FRbbY> and for tweet threads follow @ECISVEEP

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