



Booth Level Officer e-Patrika



MCD GIRL'S SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL



Ground-Level success: BLOs shine in implementing ECI guidelines on the ground

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Echoes of Success: Reflecting back on General Election

2024

The magnitude of elections in India is truly staggering. Over the years, the country has conducted 18th General Elections, more than 400 State Assembly Elections, 16 Presidential Elections, and 16 Vice-Presidential Elections, establishing a "Gold Standard" in the democratic process. With a voter base of approximately 97 crore registered voters, the logistics involved are immense.

Over 10.5 lakh polling stations are set up across the nation, manned by an estimated 1.5 crore polling officials and security staff. To facilitate the voting process, around 55 lakh Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are deployed, ensuring the smooth conduct of elections on a monumental scale. The Lok Sabha 2024 elections along with general elections to Legislative Assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim concluded triumphantly with the announcement of results on June 4, 2024.

Setting a world record, around 312 million Indian women voters cast their votes, exceeding the total number of voters in the 27 European Union countries by more than 1.25 times.

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The diverse mosaic of electorates



49.7 crore male voters



47.1 crore female voters



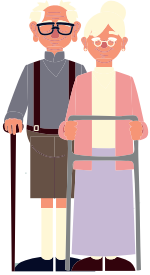
82 lakh voters aged 85 and above



19.74 crore young voters aged 20-29



48,000 transgender voters



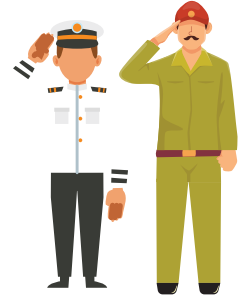
2.18 lakh centenarians



1.8 crore first-time voters aged 18-19



88.4 lakh PwD voters



19.1 lakh service electors

This historic election had over 10 lakhs Booth Level Officers (BLOs) working as the first point of contact between voters and election machinery. These BLOs played a pivotal role in the successful conduct of the elections, ensuring every eligible voter was registered and informed about their voting rights. They reached out to the most remote and vulnerable sections of society, ensuring that everyone, from first-time voters to centenarians, was included in the electoral process. Their dedication and hard work exemplified the spirit of Indian democracy, making the 2024 Lok Sabha elections a monumental success and a proud moment for the nation.

DID YOU KNOW?

The General Election 2024 tagline "*Chunav Ka Parv, Desh Ka Garv*" emerged through several iterations before reaching its final form after an extensive brainstorming session. Originally conceived as "*Garv Ka Parv*," the tagline underwent refinement to capture its essence of invoking a sense of festivity and pride not only among voters but also among 2 crore-strong election machinery staff.

The phrase "*Chunav Ka Parv, Desh Ka Garv*" resonates deeply, capturing the spirit of elections as a celebration of democracy and national pride. It was officially launched by the Hon'ble President of India on the 14th National Voters Day in 2024. At the grassroots level, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and officials played a pivotal role in popularising the tagline through banners,

merchandise, and various communication channels.

This tagline not only serves to inspire voter turnout but also symbolises the dedication and commitment of election officials nationwide, fostering a collective sense of duty towards shaping the future of the nation through democratic participation.

BLO's Endeavour which led to BRANCH FILE of 64.2 million proud Indian voters in the General Election 2024:

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Ensuring a Successful and Inclusive Electoral Roll

The BLOs were instrumental in ensuring a comprehensive, accurate, and inclusive electoral roll for the Lok Sabha 2024 elections. Their efforts ensured that every eligible voter was registered and at the same time ineligible and multiple entries were removed from the electoral roll which ensured that the voter lists were meticulously updated, contributing significantly to the overall success of the election process.

The voter turnout for the Lok Sabha 2024 elections was, largely due to enhanced voter engagement and awareness initiatives led by BLOs. These initiatives included the introduction of purification of the electoral roll, through house-to-house verification by BLOs, distribution of voter slips, home voting facilitation and pick-drop services, which played a crucial role in encouraging greater participation, particularly among the elderly and differently-abled voters. To mitigate urban apathy in voting, an extensive survey was conducted to establish new polling stations in high-rise or group housing societies that have common facilitation areas or community halls on the ground floor. Additionally, polling stations were set up in slum dwelling clusters and areas experiencing urban or semi-urban expansion.

Role of BLOs in Home Voting

BLOs ensured the successful implementation of home voting by marking the eligible voters such as 85+ voters, and PwD voters with 40% benchmark in the ER, providing them with clear instructions and facilitating voting from the comfort of their homes, thereby upholding the integrity and inclusiveness of the democratic process. It includes:

1. Identifying and Verifying Eligible Voters: BLOs conducted thorough filling of the form- 12 D, verification processes to identify eligible home voters.

2. Coordinating with AEROs/ Voters: BLOs submit the form to AEROs and AEROs approve the application and depute the polling parties on the poll day. Further, BLO provides necessary information and assistance to home voters, ensuring they understand the process and the dates on which the polling teams were to reach their homes for voting.



Role of BLOs in Pick-Drop Facility

BLOs organised and managed pick-drop facilities for voters such as pregnant women, and elderly voters with any disability who needed assistance in reaching polling stations, ensuring that every voter, regardless of their mobility challenges, could participate in the democratic process with ease and dignity. It includes:

1. Identification of Beneficiaries: BLOs identified voters requiring transportation assistance.

2. Coordination with Transport Services: They arranged and coordinated transport services to ensure timely and convenient travel for voters.

3. Ensuring Safety and Comfort: BLOs ensured the safety and comfort of voters using the service.



Bashavani Sadanandam's Success Path: A Story of Commitment

Bashavani Sadanandam has dedicated 14 years of service as a Booth Level Officer and Field Assistant under the MGNREGA Employment Guarantee Scheme at Polling Station No. 24 in Madada, Siddipet district, Telangana State. Serving a community of 1,113 voters in Madada and its auxiliary villages, Bantupalli and Ramulapalli, Sadanandam's commitment to democracy is inspiring.

He ensures that all residents who turn 17 are identified and submit their advance application for registration, and once they reach 18, he takes action towards their addition to the voter list. By collecting necessary documents like Intermediate marksheet, Aadhaar Card, or Marriage Certificate, he meticulously registers new voters. He also identifies long-term residents, assists them in obtaining residence certificates from the Gram Panchayat, and registers them as voters.



In the Assembly Elections of 2023 and the Lok Sabha Elections of 2024, Sadanandam organised Chunav Pathshala and voter awareness programs, encouraging everyone to vote. He ensured that all eligible PwD persons and senior citizens over 85 received 12-D forms for home voting, providing advance notice to ensure they were prepared.



On election day, he coordinated volunteers and wheelchairs to assist those needing help to reach polling stations. He informed the community about transport facilities, separate restrooms for nursing mothers, play equipment for children, and female-only polling stations, ensuring a comfortable and inclusive voting experience for everyone.

Bashavani Sadanandam's unwavering dedication and compassionate service have significantly strengthened the democratic process in his community, making him a beacon of hope and encouragement for all.

Role of BLOs in Popularising Assured Minimum Facilities at Polling Station

BLOs effectively promoted accessible materials and facilities through various outreach programs, ensuring that voters had the necessary information and support and that minimum facilities were guaranteed at every polling station to accommodate all voters. It includes:

1 **Community Outreach :** The BLOs organised community meetings and information sessions to educate voters about available accessible materials and facilities that allow voters to feel empowered with the electoral process.



2 **Distribution of Information Materials:** They distributed pamphlets, brochures, and other informational materials to spread awareness about facilities at polling station



3 **Collaboration with Local Organization:** BLOs collaborated with local NGOs and community groups to reach the last mile.

BLOs collaborated with

a) Local NGOs

b) community groups

Marking a triumph for Inclusivity:

Mayurbhanj celebrates high voting turnout among PVTGs

In the 2024 General Elections, the Mayurbhanj district in Odisha achieved a remarkable milestone with a voter turnout of 98.61 per cent among Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), showcasing a significant triumph for inclusivity in electoral participation.

This high turnout is credited to the district administration's proactive measures along with the extensive SVEEP initiatives, which included intensive awareness campaigns tailored for tribal communities and efforts by the BLOs on the ground level.



Key special initiatives included:

- Establishment of 55 PVTG-specific polling booths
- Integration of local languages in communication strategies such as street plays and quiz competitions
- Sensitization efforts through multilingual leaflets and artistic wall paintings effectively connected with voters
- Model polling stations were equipped with amenities ensuring a seamless voting experience
- Special registration drives for inclusion of PVTGs in the electoral rolls.

These dedicated efforts led to a commendable voter turnout of 75.79 per cent for the Mayurbhanj constituency, contributing to an overall turnout of 77 per cent in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Overall, Mayurbhanj's success in achieving high voter turnout among PVTGs reflects a resounding endorsement of inclusive electoral practices, setting a significant precedent for future elections in ensuring equitable participation across diverse communities.



BLOs integrating IT Tools to enhance responsibilities

Technology also aided BLOs in performing their duties efficiently. Their hard work and perseverance in utilising IT tools such as the Voter Helpline App, Know Your Candidate App, c-VIGIL App, and the 1950 Helpline were instrumental. They not only used these tools but also educated voters on their benefits for ease of registration, correction, and updates.

1. Voter Helpline App (VHA):

BLOs resolved voter queries and provided assistance through the app, ensuring quick and reliable support.



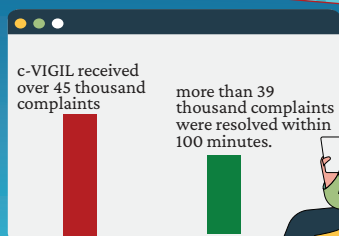
2. Know Your Candidate (KYC): They promoted the KYC tool to help voters make informed choices.



3. C-Vigil: BLOs popularised the C-Vigil app for filing complaints during MCC and ensured transparency.



4. 1950 Helpline: BLOs popularised the 1950 helpline, providing prompt responses to voter inquiries.



50 million downloads of the Voter Helpline App (VHA).

BLOs facilitating Voter Slip and Voter Guide distribution

The Voter Slip and Voter Guide are essential tools that empower voters and instil confidence in their names in the voter list. Therefore, BLOs ensure the thorough distribution of these materials, ensuring that every voter receives essential information and guidance to navigate the electoral process with ease and confidence.

01

House-to-House Distribution: BLOs visited households to deliver voter slips and guides, ensuring every voter received the necessary information such as polling date, and polling station.

02

Engagement with RWAs and Community groups: They conducted interaction sessions to educate voters and address their concerns.

03

Collaboration with Booth Level Agents: BLOs worked with booth-level agents to provide on-ground assistance such as outreach programmes, distribution of voter guide and voter slip to voters and facilitation on poll day.

04

Coordination with Local Representatives: BLOs collaborated with gram pradhans and nagar panchayat workers to reach out to the community.

Success Stories from the Ground:



In the 109-Kandukur Assembly Constituency, Andhra Pradesh 271 Booth Level Officers (BLOs) were deployed across all 271 polling stations, playing a crucial role in the Special Summary Revision (SSR) of the Electoral Roll that commenced on July 21, 2023. At the outset of the SSR, the total number of electors stood at 218,913. During the house-to-house verification and survey from July 21 to August 21, the BLOs enrolled 1,165 new voters, removed 5,838 duplicate, deceased, or permanently shifted voters, and corrected details for 3,050 voters. Additionally, they identified and processed 366 Photo Similar Entries (PSEs) within parts, 605 PSEs across parts, 80 Demographic Similar Entries (DSEs) within parts, and 60 DSEs across parts, addressing these from August 22 to September 29.

The BLOs were instrumental in facilitating home voting and conducting door-to-door surveys to identify voters above 85 years of age and persons with disabilities (PwD) with a 40% benchmark disability. In the 109-Kandukur Assembly Constituency, they identified 126 eligible individuals, of whom 123 availed of the home voting facility.

To support first-time voters, women, and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), the BLOs conducted an awareness program on April 15, 2024, throughout the constituency. They visited tribal habitations, explaining the importance of voting, the credibility of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), and how to check their names in the electoral roll, thereby boosting voter confidence and turnout. Special programs like street rangoli, postcard campaigns, and ethical voting awareness sessions were organised to engage first-time voters and instil confidence in them.

Polling Station No. 144 was designated as a Pink Polling Station, especially for women voters. This station was decorated with pink colours and balloons, and a baby crèche with toys was arranged for children brought by women voters. Additionally, an auto with a woman driver was arranged for the transportation of PwD and pregnant women, ensuring a comfortable and inclusive voting experience.

Through their dedication and hard work, the BLOs in the 109-Kandukur Assembly Constituency not only ensured the integrity of the electoral process but also significantly increased voter engagement and turnout, making the 2024 elections a success.

prominent



A commemorative stamp on the Election Commission of India, on the theme of inclusive elections, issued on January 25, 2024

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 Shiva is from the municipal ward of a quaint town nestled in the Mahabubnagar District of Telangana State. During the Lok Sabha Elections of 2024, he served as an office subordinate as well as a Booth Level Officer for Polling Station Number 253 in Mahabubnagar Town. Shiva's dedication to his role is unwavering, and his commitment to the welfare of his community is unparalleled.

Shiva embarked on his journey as a VRA and took on the additional responsibility of being a Booth Level Officer, overseeing the electoral process in his locality. With meticulous attention to detail, he ensured that every aspect of the electoral process was conducted with integrity and fairness. His dedication to maintaining an accurate and up-to-date voter list was commendable. He distributed all poll slips and encouraged every voter to participate in the elections.



Despite the challenges he faced, Shiva remained undeterred in his mission. His conscientiousness and compassion were evident as he visited every home in his ward three or four times a week to personally check on the well-being of the people. These interactions were more than just routine visits; Shiva transformed them into meaningful dialogues, aiming to identify problems and find solutions. He tackled obstacles one by one, ensuring that there were no deceased voters on the list, no duplicate entries and that every eligible citizen was enrolled as a voter.

He actively participated in all SVEEP activities to encourage voter participation. His focus was on ensuring that the voter's guide and Voter Information Slip (VIS) reached every eligible voter in the polling booth. Shiva went the extra mile by personally handing over the voter's guide (in Telugu) and VIS, duly explaining the contents for healthy and active participation of eligible electors.



Today, Shiva's success was remarkable, as he succeeded in encouraging all voters in his area to participate in the voting process.

Helping Hand at Polling Stations

Likewise, BLOs provided crucial assistance at polling stations by being present at the help desk on poll day, ensuring voters received essential support, information and guidance throughout the voting process, contributing to a seamless and inclusive electoral experience.

1. **Ensuring Smooth Operations:** BLOs ensured that all facilities were in place and that polling stations operated smoothly.
2. **Assisting Voters:** They assisted voters, particularly those needing special assistance, ensuring a positive voting experience.
3. **Maintaining Order:** BLOs helped maintain order and resolve any issues at polling stations regarding their name in the ER.