

ACTION FOR ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS.





STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ON ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS

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STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ON ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS:

The Election Commission of India works on the premise of ‘No voter to be left behind’ and is committed to inclusion of all categories of voters in the electoral process to achieve the desired objective of universal adult suffrage as per its constitutional mandate. The Commission is committed to building an equal access framework for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) supported by the fundamentals of responsiveness, respect and dignity to enhance elector confidence among them; and support initiatives for improved service offerings to enhance their electoral participation.

The Strategic Framework on Accessible Elections is built around sensitization through education and training, community involvement of different sections of society, effective partnership with institutions and originations and creation of facilities to cater to the specific needs of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with a view to increasing their participation. The Strategic Framework shall inter alia include the following components:

Barriers: Continuous Identification and Solutions

Identifying barriers and finding solutions to the same has to be a continuous process. A system of regular, periodic feedback shall be taken up. Well designed approach with strategic interventions including technology integration can help in obliterating barriers.

Voter Registration & Polling :

Database on PwDs, identified through mapping or initial voter registration, shall be efficiently and effectively used for follow up steps in the electoral process and the monitoring system for feedback, evaluation and consolidation. Polling stations shall be made accessible to all Persons with disabilities based on mapping of PwD electors and their specific needs

Inclusive Voter Education :

Customized voter education to cater to the different requirements of PwDs shall be taken up to empower them for electoral participation. All voter education content shall be accessible



format. Focused and need based interventions shall be taken up under ECI's flagship voter education programme SVEEP to engage PwDs and also to sensitize their friends, families, polling officials, security officials and all other stakeholders.

Leveraging Technology for Accessible Elections :

This would essentially include (i) User friendly websites for PwDs of different categories. (ii) Accessible Technological Tools for facilitating PwDs of different categories to cast their vote (iii) Solutions for assisting voters with disabilities through technological innovation, research and integration. (iv) Accessible Media including Social Media Communications.

Research, Study and Knowledge sharing :

A continuous search for best practices, international and domestic, through detailed study and research on all areas of participation by PwDs and sharing of experiences to help formulate enabling policies and interventions, to aid, assist and facilitate the participation of PwDs.

Role of Partner Departments :

To explore and build partnership and commitment with Ministries and Departments to evolve and carry forward the interventions to electoral participation of PwDs.

Role of Educational Institutions :

The Commission has already issued directions for setting up of Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) in educational institutions etc. Setting up of ELCs in educational institutions dedicated to the PwDs shall be expedited and the ELC resources shall be customized to match disability requirements.

Role of CSOs :

To assess the potential of CSOs and assign specific role in assisting equal access and capacity building through well designed partnerships. CSOs' potential to build partnerships should be utilized subject to their non partisan nature.



Role of Media :

Utilize the potential of Media in taking forward voter education and to engage PwD's for increasing their electoral participation. Media can actively contribute to an effective and successful integration of persons with disabilities in the electoral process.

Poll Volunteers :

Poll volunteers from among future voters can organized from educational institutions, and Chunav Pathshala, (ELCs for Communities) and trained to assist PwDs, besides from among NCC/NSS/NYKS and other non-partisan voluntary groups. The initiative will be subject to provisions of Rule 49N.

Training and Sensitization of Staff :

Training and sensitization of the election is important so that they are empathetic to the needs of PwD voters. The training shall be factored into regular training to the staff as also for the registration and facilitation of the PwDs.

Alternative Voting methods :

Alternative voting methods like advance voting or early voting, voting from home, Postal vote, transport assistance to PwDs or mobile polling station concept shall be looked at without compromising on the essential requirements of sanctity and secrecy of vote.

Legislative Initiative :

The scope of assistance to PwDs for participation is wide and diverse. Need for legislation shall be examined for enhancing electoral participation of the PwDs.

Special 4 tiered Committees on Accessible Elections :

Committees shall be formed at National, State, District and Assembly Constituency level with members from departments as well as stakeholders to review implementation of the directions of the Commission on 'Accessible Elections'.



ACCESSIBLE ELECTION PLAN ACTIVITIES

Sensitisation Plan for Officials			
Topic	Target Group	Resource Person	Time Line
Sensitisation of PWD Building Department on accessibility of government buildings	EE/AEE/SDO of PWD Building Department	Nodal Officer Public Works Department	07/01/2019-11/01/2019
Sensitisation of Senior Officers	Supervisory Officers	NO (PwD), CEO Office	Jan, 2019
Sensitisation of Senior Police Officers	Supervisory Officers of Police Department	NO (PwD), CEO Office	01/02/2019-08/02/2019
Sensitisation of Polling Officers	Presiding Officers/ Polling Officers	NO (PwD), CEO Office, DEO Office	March- April, 2019
Sensitisation of BLOs	BLOs	NO (PwD), CEO Office, DEO Office	Jan, 2019

Physical Accessibility Plan		
Topic	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Development of Building Checklist	Nodal Officer, Public Works Department, Goa, NO(PwD) CEO Office	04/01/2019
Inspection of all Election Offices as per Check List	EE(PWD) Concerned	15/01/2019
Preparation of Plan & Estimate for Upgradation of Infra of Election Offices	EE(PWD) Concerned	21/01/2019
Upgradation of Election Offices	EE(PWD) Concerned	20/02/2019
Inspection of Polling Stations	EE/AE/JE PWD concerned	31/01/2019
Preparation of Plan & Estimates	EE/AE/JE PWD concerned	07/02/2019
Upgradation of Infra of Polling Stations	EE/AE/JE PWD concerned	10/03/2019
Procurement of Wheelchairs for Election Offices	CEO/DEO concerned with Social Welfare Department	15/01/2019
Procurement Plan for Wheel Chair for Polling Stations	CEO/DEO concerned with Social Welfare Department	31/01/2019



SVEEP Plan		
Item	Nodal Person	Deadline
Development of Voter Education Materials	NO(PwD), CEO Office NGOs, SW Department	15/01/2019
Special Identification of PwD Elector Campaign	NO(PwD), DyCEO, CEO Office	21/01/2019- 24/01/2019
Establishment of Special ELC for PwD Electors	NO(PwD) CEO, DEO Office, SW Department, NGOs	25/01/2019
Extensive Voter Education of PwD Electors through ELC	NO(PwD) CEO, DEO Office, SW Department, NGOs	Every Saturday of Feb, 2019
Special Motivational FM Jingles	Election Icons	Feb, 2019 – Voting
Special Graphics for PwD	Election Icons, SVEEP Cell CEO Office	Feb, 2019 – Voting
Special Braille EPIC	GEL	25/01/2019

Polling Plan		
Item	Resource Person	Deadline
Identification of PwD Officials for Polling Duty	DEO, SW Department	25/02/2019
Preparation of AC wise directory of PwD Electors	ERO, GEL	25/02/2019
Transportation/ Movement Plan for PwD Electors	ARO/RO	05/03/2019



Attitudinal Requirements for Accessible Elections Goa 2019

Introduction:

In the light of the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the coming into force of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and the Supreme Court directions of 2004, it is incumbent that we put in place mechanisms to see that these mandates are adhered to and the entire voting process is made accessible to all, including persons with disabilities. Initiatives have been taken by the ECI in the recent past, and much need to be done to make the participation of the disabled in the election process meaningful.

The Election Commission of India has been making sustained efforts to register all eligible citizens as voters and facilitate them to vote at the time of election. The Commission has also taken several special initiatives to facilitate inclusion of those voters who face difficulties in registration or voting. From 2009 onwards, the Commission has set up a full-fledged SVEEP division to give further impetus to this process and facilitate voters in the categories of targeted intervention, namely gender, youth, people living in slums and remote locations and Persons with Disability(PwD). The Commission always paid special attention to the inclusion of persons with disability and instructed for many provisions such as ramps at the polling stations, out of turn voting and need based companion for PwDs, engraving braille font on EVMs, braille ballot paper, and so on.



Foreword

Introduction of information and communication technologies opened more vistas for providing amenities to voters with disabilities. In the SVEEP Plan and Strategic Plan, the Commission laid greater emphasis on further facilitation of Persons with Disabilities.

The Election Commission of India, declared 'Accessible Elections' as the theme for the year 2018 on the 25th January i.e. the National Voters Day. Emphasis has been laid on enhancing participation, strengthening facilitation, moulding public perceptions about the potential of PwDs, including their voice as equal citizens and setting the stage for their social and economic integration. A lot has already been done, and more is being envisaged.

A well designed framework of guidelines has been put in place under the directions of the Commission for facilitating PwDs at every step in the electoral process. Many States and UTs have also done exemplary work by overcoming the barriers and creating accessible and friendly environment for PwDs.

Democracy lies in the representation of all the communities and an indispensable part of nation-building starts with the involvement of all in its electoral process. To uphold the sanctity of free and fair elections, the Election Commission of India has selected 'Accessible Elections' as the central theme of year 2018 while seamlessly integrating with the underlying philosophy of universal adult suffrage and the concept of 'No Voter to be left behind or to be Left Behind', the theme renders a perfect blend of inclusion and the consequent everlasting determination and endeavour for strengthening the democracy in India.



Constitutional and other statutory provisions/safeguards

- Article 324 of the Constitution provides for the Election Commission, its powers and functions for maintenance of the Electoral roll and Conduct of Elections in a free and fair manner.
- Article 325 provides that no person shall be ineligible for inclusion in the electoral roll on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc. not less than eighteen years of age to the voting compartment for recording the vote on his behalf and in accordance with his wishes.
- Article 326 provides that Elections to the house of the People and to the Legislative Assembly of every State shall be on the basis of adult suffrage. Every citizen of India not less than eighteen years of age on such date as may be fixed in that behalf by law and is not otherwise disqualified and shall be entitled to be registered as a voter at any such election.
- Provisions under rule 49N of the Conduct of Election rules, 1961, ECI guidelines, and Supreme Court orders directly address the issue of assistance to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Under rule 49N, if owing to blindness or other physical infirmities an elector is unable to recognize the symbol on the EVM or unable to record vote by pressing the appropriate button thereon, the Presiding Officer shall permit the elector to take with him a companion.
- The rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 Section 11 of Chapter II of the Act (Rights and Entitlements) comment on accessibility in voting stating that 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.

Conditions necessary for realizing the aforesaid safeguards:

- ✓ Polling personnel are to be given appropriate directions and sensitized through training classes about the special needs of the disabled and to be courteous and to provide necessary support to them at the polling station.
- ✓ Permanent ramps to be provided in all public buildings where polling stations are located.
- ✓ Full facility to be provided for such electors to take their wheelchair inside the polling station. Where permanent ramps have not been provided, temporary ramps have to be provided.
- ✓ Sufficient publicity to be given well in advance in print and electronic media about the availability of facilities so that the persons with disabilities are aware of the facilities beforehand, and are thus encouraged going and exercising their franchise.

In true spirit of universal adult suffrage- every vote matters, every vote counts. Given this fundamental premise, equal access is vital to participation for PWDs. Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) constitute a special section of society who require affirmative action wherein the



electoral machinery has to reach out to them for registration as voters and provide suitable facilities at the polling stations to enable them to exercise their franchise.

Barriers and redress

The barriers in access to electoral participation that may be perceived by the PwDs relate to the following:

- Difficulties in voter registration
- Inaccessible registration materials or facilities
- Inadequate or inaccessible voter education and related materials
- Difficulties in physical access to polling stations
- Inability to vote independently and privately
- Absence of or inappropriate assistance from poll workers etc.

The list is only illustrative but, in effect entails discouraging PwDs from exercising their franchise. The barriers can be countered if they are addressed appropriately and effectively under a well-designed policy framework.

Directions and Guidelines of the Commission

Directions of the Commission for providing adequate and quality facilitation of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) to ensure their wholesome and constructive participation as also active engagement in the election process focus on the following broad areas of Election Management and Planning. The guidelines have been issued by the Commission via circular NO. 464/INST/2016/EPS and 464/INST/ PwD/2016/EPS.

These include:

- Identification of PwDs including polling station-wise list
- Minimum Facilities (AMF) at Polling Stations
- Priority-based access to facilities at polling stations
- MatdataSahayataKendras and other election offices in the field
- Involvement of NGOs, CSOs/DPOs, RWAs
- System Sensitization and Training
- Use of technology in aid of PwDs
- Cooperation of Political Parties



- Building a Comprehensive Statistical Data Base
- Leveraging the services of volunteers
- Training and sensitization of officials handling the work relating to PWDs

For all this to make it happen in a very successful way, the main factor is the **attitude** on which we would be focusing to make Goa's election process extremely inclusive.

DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

ASK BEFORE YOU HELP

- Don't assume. Ask in a pleasant way whether a person with disability needs support. If the response is yes, ask what kind of support. If your help is requested to hold or handle the person's assistive device, first ask how to handle or hold it.
- Don't assume that any person with disability cannot provide his signature. ASK! Do not grab her / his hand for a thumb impression.

BE SENSITIVE ABOUT PHYSICAL CONTACT

- Arms are not to be grabbed.
- No patting or pampering the individual.
- Don't touch assistive aids - they represent personal space.
- Male and Female volunteers to assist men and women with disabilities respectively; Ask the preference of transgender persons with disabilities.

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

- Speak directly to the individual with disability and not to his / her personal assistant / facilitator.
- Face the person and speak slowly, clearly in a moderate tone.
- DO NOT address questions or comments about the person with disability to his / her personal assistant / sign language interpreter.
- Small talk is fine; simple sentences are preferable.
- Don't speak about the person's disability.
- Respect the privacy and individuality of the concerned person with disability.



- Ask if there is a need for orientation about the activity (enrolment, polling, etc.), and provide the same in simple words if the person with disability prefers the same.

DO NOT MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

- Do not judge the participation or capacity of a person with disability with regard to his/her ability to comprehend, make decisions or to act / perform tasks.
- People with disability are the best judges for themselves.
- A person with visual disability may choose braille facilitation or audio / voice communication or the assistance of a companion or a guide dog.

RESPOND GRACIOUSLY (TO REQUESTS)

- Provide the information asked for by a person with disability.
- Behave in a friendly manner.
- Provide recommendations and guidance if preferred by the individual with disability.
- Provide or guide towards any other assistance asked for.
- Allow more than one assistive device that the person with disability brings along (such as wheel chairs, walker, white cane, guide dog and toilet aid).
- In case the person with disability requests for a repeat or clarification do not shout.
- Always allow the Deaf persons the liberty to decide the placement of the sign language interpreter and setting for the meeting.
- Show persons with disability, specifically those with high support needs, that you are confident in their ability to do things independently.

ACT CONCIIOUSLY & SENSIBLY

- Do not treat any person with disability as a child or an inferior person; Treat him/her equally with due respect of an adult. Always be natural – never be patronizing in your words and your actions.
- Alert the person before you do something unexpected. The person whom you are guiding / assisting, may get startled by a sudden sound, touch, initiation of some action or change in direction/speed.
- Do not separate a person with disability from his/her personal assistant or assistive device (such as crutch, white cane, walker, communication aids).
- Do not ask the person with disability to remove his/her assistive device (such as caliper, crutch, wheel chairs, shoes) from his/her body or proximity.



- Do not allow anyone else to touch or play with a person's assistive devices like walker, white cane, communication device.
- Respect the norms of equal access. Acknowledge that the environmental sounds, informal background conversations, alarms, songs and internal communication systems like voice announcements etc. are not accessible to the deaf.
- Ensure appropriate seating and provide information on seating to rest on the way.
- Ask requirement before offering a seat.
- Provide warning notices at all possible hazards such as wet floors, obstructions from shelves, or open windows, or level changes – if not possible, bring the same to the person's notice verbally.
- Do not try to advise and eventually misguide a person accompanying people with visual/intellectual disabilities or other high support needs, from fulfilling the formalities (like relieving him/her from signing form 49a for blind / infirm voters, out of pity / kindness of heart).
- Do not ask a person with disability to bear the costs of accessibility services.
- Do not tease, laugh, ridicule, insult or use hurting language / gestures at any person with disability.

TERMINOLOGIES:

Disabled	Persons with disabilities
Handicapped, Crippled	--do--
Physically challenged, Differently abled, Specially abled, Specially challenged, special people	--do--
Wheel chair bound, Confined to wheelchair	Wheelchair user
Person suffering from CP	Person who has CP
Spastic	Person with cerebral palsy
autistic	Person with autism
Aids victim	Person living with HIV
Deaf and dumb, Deaf and mute	Deaf person, hard of hearing
Mental, mad, lunatic	Person with psychosocial disabilities, persons living with mental illness
Mentally retarded, idiot	Persons with intellectual disability
Downs	Person with Down's syndrome
Dwarf	Short persons
Victim	Person
Patient	Person/client
Mental patient	User survivor, Psychiatry
Inmate	Resident
Special children	Children with disabilities
Severely disabled	Persons with high support needs



WHEEL CHAIR USERS:

- Wheel chair is not just an equipment; It's part of the personal space of the user;
- Do not lean on the wheel chair.
- Do not hang objects on a person's wheelchair or ask her/him to carry your bag or objects; If a wheelchair user does so on his/her own, do not remove his/her bag/object without his/her permission.
- Do not use the desktop attached with wheel chair.
- Do not push / wheel without instructions.
- If a wheel chair user prefers to propel his/her wheelchair, do not force your will / kindness on him/her.
- Without permission and knowledge do not attempt to lift/help the person to transfer to the vehicle and do not attempt to fold the wheelchair.
- Do not station the wheelchair user far away or facing away from or out of hearing and have a conversation about him/her.
- Keep accessible pathways unlocked & unblocked; Ramps should always be accessible. No potted plants blocking top or bottom area.
- Beware of his/her reach limits with regard to objects & visibility.
- Point out the easiest & most accessible route in the building.
- Allow use of private accessible rest rooms.

PERSONS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

- The person may be oriented to landscape or about polling booths and voting which may not be obvious. Ask gently if he/she needs any orientation and act accordingly.
- Be prepared to provide assistance whenever asked for (such as reading, indicating space for signature/thumb impression, accompanying to voting compartment).
- Offer your arm, do not take his/hers; Verbally ask him/her if he/she needs your company & guidance for mobility, in case the answer is yes, ask him/her to hold your arm/elbow if he/she prefers.
- Identify yourself before making a physical contact.
- Introduce others in the group.
- The person can hear you - do not shout; Use the person's name often.
- The person cannot see you - do not nod or point, always give a verbal answer.
- Do not whisper or engage in nonverbal communication with another person in the presence of a person with visual impairment.
- Offer a tour of the campus.
- Describe the setting and obstacles; Notify rearrangement or changes (furniture, etc).
- Give clear directions! Be specific in giving directions. Do not say "over there" or "over here". Instead say "on your left or right" or "immediately behind" or "in front of you". Ask to stop when needed – not shout 'look out'.
- Do not leave a person with visual impairment alone in the centre of a room; Leave him/her near exit/entrance or a point where he/she can touch a table, chair or wall to maintain orientation to his surroundings.



- Let the person know when you are leaving.
- Walk on side opposite to the dog, if the person uses guide dog.
- Do not touch the cane or guide dog while moving.

PERSONS WITH LOW VISION

- Ensure adequate lighting & Contrast colours.
- Notify on rearrangement as well as obstacles on the path.
- Facilitate with large print with appropriate space and font (avoid using “all-upper –case” letters).

DEAF PERSONS / PERSONS WHO ARE HARD OF HEARING:

- Ask the person for preferred way of communication- sign language, gesture, writing, lip reading or speaking.
- You may wave your hands or gently tap/touch his/her shoulder or arm to gain his/her attention.
- Maintain eye contact with the Deaf person.
- Do not obscure your face/mouth while communicating; it helps the Deaf person to gauge the tone, intent and emotion of the speaker by looking at the face and body language, as well as those who are comfortable in lip reading.
- Talk directly to the Deaf person and not to the sign language interpreter or communication facilitator.
- Take turns to communicate, allow the Deaf person to finish their statement (via the interpreter if that is the case).
- Do not assume that all deaf people are lip readers; many a times lip-reading is not accurate.
- Do not shout; it wont help the person to hear.
- Rephrase, rather than repeat.
- If exchange of information is complex, sign language is effective! (Have a pool of sign language interpreters on call, as recommended by the local Deaf persons, who may be able to facilitate communication with a Deaf person in person or through video chat.).
- Be patient; It takes time to translate the message bilingually i.e. from Sign language to English/Hindi and vice versa.
- Allow timely breaks for the Sign language Interpreter.
- Ensure adequate lighting and good visibility.

PERSONS WITH SPEECH IMPAIRMENT:

- Give your full attention.
- Ensure quieter environment.
- Ask the person to repeat if you didn't understand.



- If not clarified, ask in writing.
- Give adequate time.
- Do not tease, laugh or make fun of the person at his/her expression.

PERSONS WITH DEAF BLINDNESS:

- Address a person who is deaf/blind directly, not through someone else.
- Speak by forming the letters of the manual alphabet distinctly while he or she holds one hand lightly over yours to feel the position of your fingers. Be careful to move the fingers directly from the position of one letter to the next and pause slightly between words.
- If you or the person who is deaf/blind is unfamiliar with the manual alphabet, you can print capital letters in his/her palm. Be sure to pause between words.
- You may use the words “see” and “hear” or “blind” naturally, without hesitation in your conversation with him/her.
- Always say who you are.
- Let the person know when you enter or leave the room / setting. Also let him/her know when you are taking him to the polling officers’ desk and/or voting compartment.
- Offer your arm when walking with him/her. Do not push him/her ahead of you; let him/her hold your arm, just below the elbow.
- You do not have to physically support a deaf/blind person who is entering a car or going upstairs. Just place his/her hand on the doorknob or stair rail for guidance.
- S/he does not need you to help him/her sit down; just guide one of his/her hands to the back of the chair so that s/he can judge the position.
- Describe things that are happening – or are about to happen – around you when you are with a person who is deaf/blind.

PERSONS WITH AUTISM

- Address the person with autism directly.
- Ask if s/he needs help before offering to help.
- Do not speak about the person with autism as if she/he were invisible or not attentive to your comments.
- Speak directly to the person; speak to the facilitator (if one is there) only if so indicated.
- Do not use patronizing childlike tone.
- Use concrete direct language; avoid idioms, metaphors, etc.
- Provide extra time if required.
- Provide an undistracted environment.
- Treat a person with autism as equally as others.



PERSONS OF SHORT STATURE

- Be aware of the person's reach limits.
- Treat equally and seriously.
- Do not pet or kiss.
- Maintain the height level during communication.

HIDDEN DISABILITIES

- Consider strange requests.
- Facilitate to sit rather than stand (medical conditions).
- To write/draw instead of speech (learning disabilities).
- To speak simple sentences (at a written information).
- To explain with simple examples, pictures & videos (intellectual disabilities).
- Clients / guests may need help in understanding (brain injury).
- Give an undistracted environment.
- Allow their time.
- Avoid noise as well as loud music or conversation.
- Avoid using sprays /fummy products.
- No-smoking regulations to be emphasized.
- Protect the person's head during seizures and assist towards medical treatment.
- Provide private / quiet space when required.
- Ensure good ventilation.
- By simple conversation, convey that his/her requirements are accepted.

PERSONS WITH PSYCHO SOCIAL DISABILITIES:

- Ask what will make him/her comfortable and act accordingly.
- Respect his/her needs.
- Give him/her the required space and time.
- Repeat instructions gently with patience to the candidates who come to vote.
- In crisis, stay calm, be supportive and ask how you can help.

PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY DISABILITIES

- Use simple and concrete words rather than concepts.
- Use pictograms for communication and direction within the building.
- Treat him/her as an adult.
- Respect his/her decisions.
- Do not change his/her routine; if changed, inform in a simple way.



EMERGENCIES:

- Consider planning for persons with disabilities in any emergency program.
- Accompany a person with disability and assist him/her to follow directions.
- Get to know first responder protocol for minor falls, slips etc.
- Gain information about / be a liasoning agent to any medical assistance during a medical emergency including seizures, accidents etc.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:

- Be flexible, creative, willing to listen, encourage and ensure open communication.
- Use mediator if required.

Conclusion:

The attitudinal changes which make a positive and mindful difference of approach when incorporated by all shall go a long way to make our state a model in inclusion in the country.

SO LET US BE INCLUSIVE, LET US BE POSITIVE AND LET US BE THE CHANGE MAKERS.



Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Government of India

ACCESS FOR ALL

Access is creating and maintaining environments in which people can participate in ways, which are equitable, dignified, maximize independence, conserve energy, are safe and affordable.



SIGNAGE

Signature include direction and information signs, signs naming the building, signs of locality, street names and room numbering, maps etc.

All signs should be visible, clear (easy to see and understand), concise (simple, short and to the point) and consistent (signs meaning the same thing should always appear in the same manner), non shiny and properly lit at night. Information should be supplemented with pictogram which benefits everyone, including persons with hearing impatient.

External:

Should be mounted 2000mm above the floor level, to be easily distinguishable from 2 – 3 meters distance. The smallest letter type should not be less than 15mm.

Internal:

Should be mounted on wall, between 1400mm and 1700mm from the floor level.

The individual characters between 15mm – 50mm tall, raised by 1 – 1.5mm, bold & colour contrasted with their background and also in Braille.

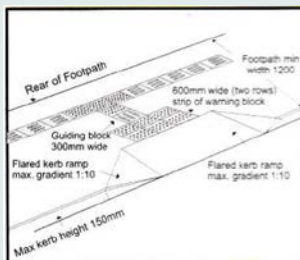
Accessible places and facilities should be clearly identified by the International Symbol of Accessibility.



KERB RAMP

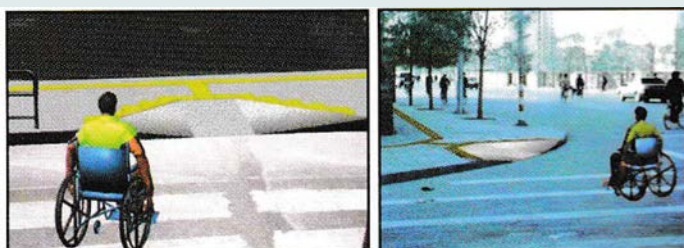
Width should not be less than 1200mm. If width (x) is less than 1200mm, then slope of the flared side shall not exceed 1:12.

Useful for a smooth transition, specifically at pedestrian crossings and in the vicinity of building entrances.



Footpath should be dropped, to be flushed with roadway, at a gradient no greater than 1:10 on both sides of necessary and convenient crossing points.

Warning strip to be provided on the kerb side edge of the slope, so that persons with vision impairment does not accidentally walk onto the road.



FOOTPATH

Must be easy to follow, obstruction-free for the convenience of all users.

Surface should be smooth and level, continuous, firm, non-slip and even.

Height of the footpath should not be more than 150mm from the road level.

Consistency in heights and continuity of the footpaths should be maintained.

Every change in level on the footpath (a step, curbs or road-works) should be made clearly visible through the use of bright contrasting colours.

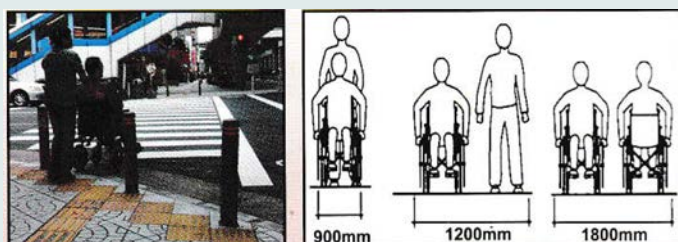
Width of the footpath should not be less than 200mm and minimum clear unobstructed path should be 1200 mm.

Street furniture should be placed outside the path of travel, preferably along a continuous line and should be easy to detect.

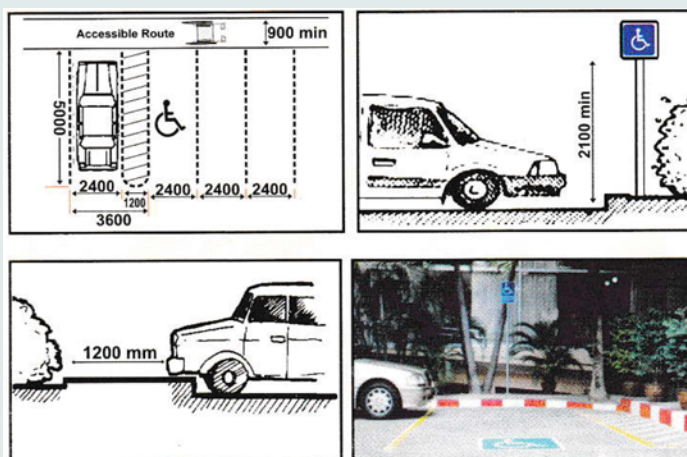
Resting Places should be provided along travel routes.

Protruding elements should be avoided.

Bollards should be 1000mm high, painted in contrasting colour stripes with clear minimum gap of 1000mm.



PARKING



Parking should be within 30 meters of the main entrance of the building.

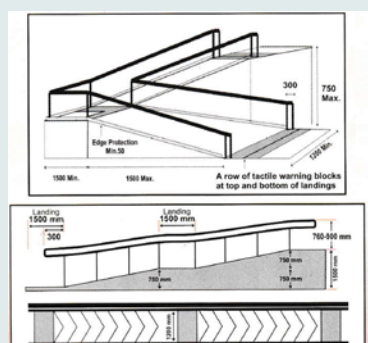
Two accessible parking lots with overall minimum dimension 3600mm x 5000mm, should be provided.

It should have the international symbol of accessibility painted on the ground and also on a signpost/board.

There needs to be directional signs guiding people to the accessible parking.

Wheel stoppers to be provided to avoid vehicles to occupy space on the pedestrian pathway.

RAMPS



Gentle slope : 1:15 max.

Landing : every 750mm of vertical rise.

Width : 1500mm or more.

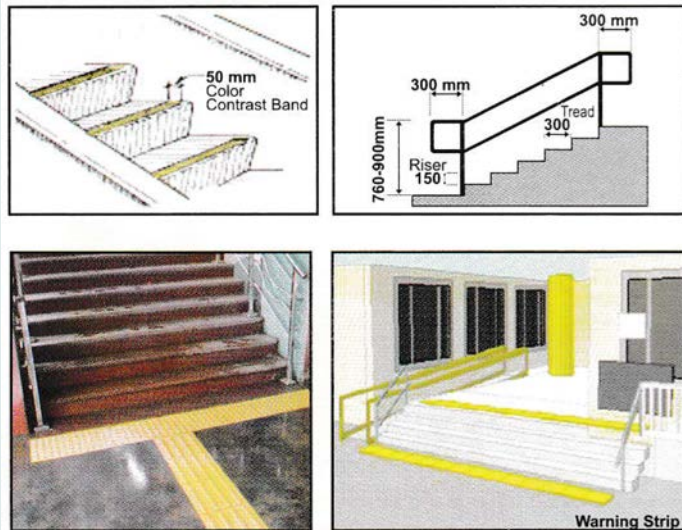
Handrails to be on both sides and at two levels – 760mm and 900mm. Both ends to be rounded or grouted and extend 300mm beyond top and bottom of ramp.

Surfaces (ramp + landing) should be slip resistant.

A ramp should be accompanied by a flight of easygoing steps.

Warning strip should be placed at 300mm before and after the ramp edges.

STEPS AND STAIRS



Uniform risers: 150mm and tread: 300mm.

Stair edges should have 50mm wide, contrast colour band.

The maximum height of a flight between landings to be 1200mm.

Landing should be 1200mm deep, clear of any door swing.

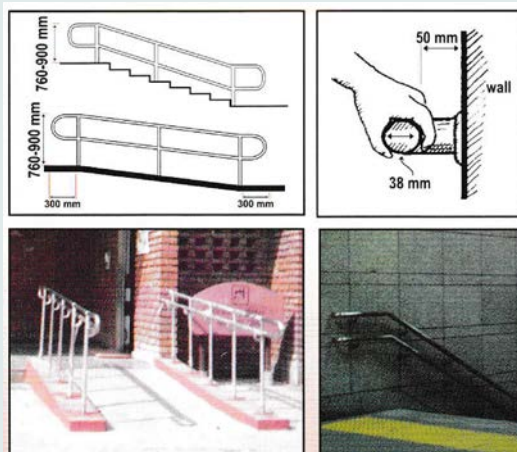
The steps should have an unobstructed width of at least 1200mm.

Have continuous handrails on both sides including the wall (if any) and at two level – 760mm and 900mm.

Warning strip to be placed 300mm at the beginning and at the end of all stairs.

Nosing should be avoided.

HANDRAILS



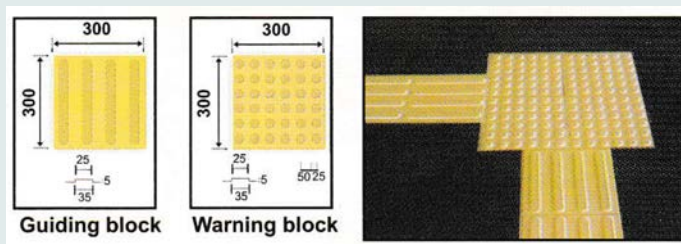
Handrails should be circular in section with a diameter of 38mm, at least 50mm clear of the surface to which they are attached, at two levels – 760mm and 900mm from the finished floor, extended by at least 300mm beyond the head and foot of the flight and ramp, in the line of travel and grouted in the ground or in the wall.

TACTILE SURFACE

Ground surface of a different texture allowing for guiding/ warning tactile signal for persons with vision impairment.



Line-type blocks indicate the correct path/route to follow, **Dot – Type blocks** indicate warning signal, to screen off obstacles, drops – offs or other hazards, to discourage movement in an incorrect direction and to warn of a corner or junction, should be placed 300mm at the beginning and end of the ramps, stairs and entrance to any door.



CIRCULATION AREA

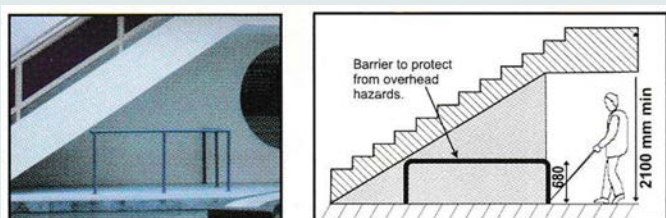
Corridors should have an unobstructed width of 1800mm and to be well lit.

Level differences should be bevelled.

Thresholds and gratings should not be more than 10mm.

Protruding objects (more than 100mm from the wall) to be placed either in a niche or above 2100mm from the floor.

Open spaces below ramps, escalator and stairs should be blocked out completely by protective guard rails, raised curbs or marked with a tactile surface.



DOOR

Should provide a clear opening of 900mm min.

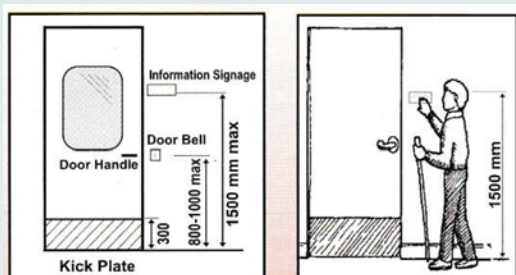
Be fitted with lever action locks and D shape handles of circular section, between 800mm and 1000mm from the floor level.

Also be fitted with vision panels at least between 900mm and 1500mm from the floor level.

Be colour contrasted with the surrounding walls and should not be heavier than 22N to open.

A distance of 400mm to 600mm should be provided beyond the leading edge of door to enable a wheelchair user to maneuver and to reach the handle.

Kick plates are recommended 300mm from the bottom to resist wear and tear.



Accessible toilet

A minimum of one toilet compartment should have enough floor space for wheelchair users to enter and exit.

Minimum clear floor space of 2000mm x 2200mm.

Provide a door of clear opening of at least 900mm with the doors swing outwards or be folding or sliding type.

Should have slip resistant flooring

Door should have horizontal pullbar at least 600mm long inside and 140mm long on the outside, at height of 700mm.

Water Closet (WC)

An unobstructed space 900mm wide, should be provided from the edge of the WC to the washbasin/wall, to facilitate side transfer, together with a clear space of 1200mm in front of the wc

The top of the WC to be 450mm to 480mm from the floor

Have a back support.

Grab bars should be provided. On the transfer side U-shape movable type and on the wall side L-shape grab bar is preferred.

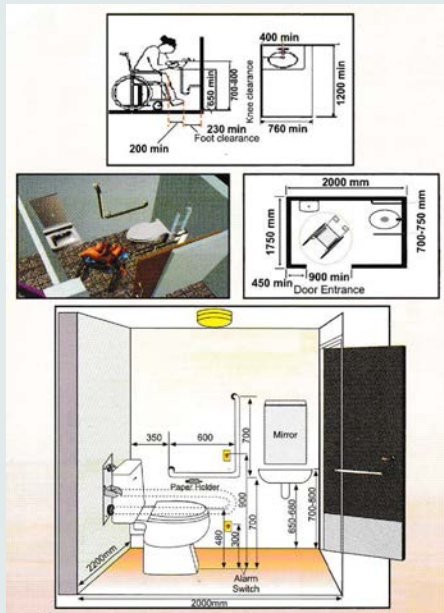
Washbasin

Be of dimension 520mm and 410mm so mounted that the top edge is between 700mm-800mm from the floor. It should have a knee space of at least 760mm wide by 200mm deep ny 650mm-380mm high.

Lever type handles for taps are recommended

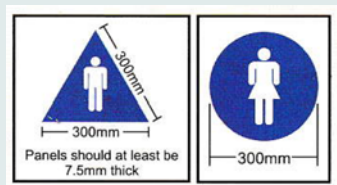
Mirror's bottom edge to be 1000mm from the floor and the mirror may be inclined at an angle.





Alarm switch/pull cord which activates an emergency audio alarm (at the reception/attendants desk, etc) should be provided at 900mm and 300mm above floor finish close to the side wall near the WC and 750mm away from rear wall.

All toilets to have pictogram (male in triangle and female in circle), marked on plates along with Braille & raised alphabets put on wall next door at 1400mm-1700mm.

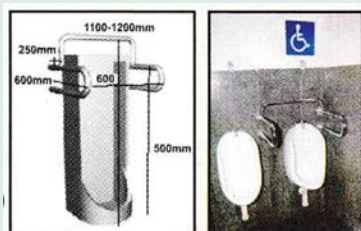


A distinct audio sound (beeper/clapper) may be installed above the entrance door for identification of the toilets.

Urinals

At least one of the urinals should have grab bars installed on each side and in the front to support ambulant person with disabilities (for example bi-lateral crutch users).

The front bar is to provide chest support, the sidebars are for the users to hold on while standing. Urinals shall be stall-type or wall-hung, with an elongated rim at a height maximum of 430 mm above the finish floor.



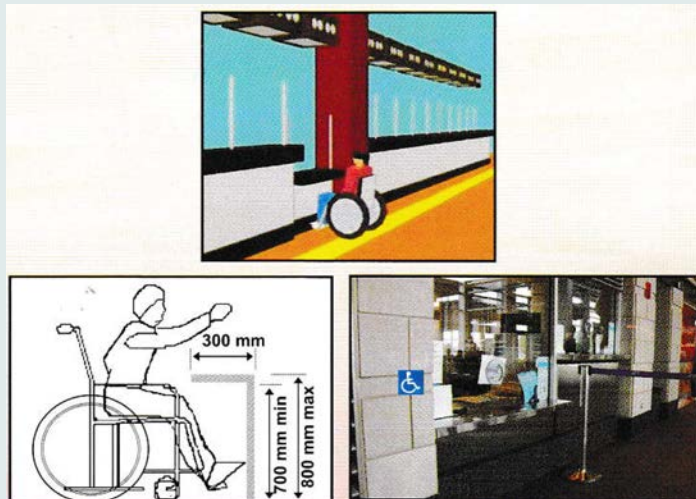
A clear floor space 900mm by 1200mm should be provided in front of urinals to allow forward approach.

Urinals shield (that do not extend beyond the front edge of the urinal rim) may be provided with 735mm clearance between them.

Public Dealing Counters

Should not be more than 800mm from the floor, with a minimum clear knee space of 700mm high and 280mm -300mm deep.

Lighting should be positioned to illuminate the receptionist and the desk top without creating glare.

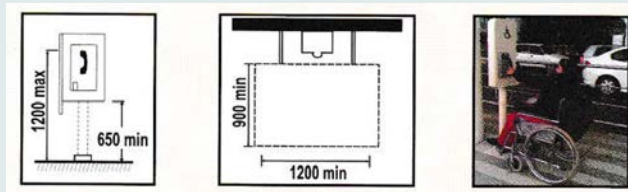


Lighting should be positioned to illuminate the receptionist staff obscuring facial detail and making lip reading difficult.

Reception area acoustics should be carefully planned and controlled as a high level of background noise is confusing and disorienting to person with hearing impairment.

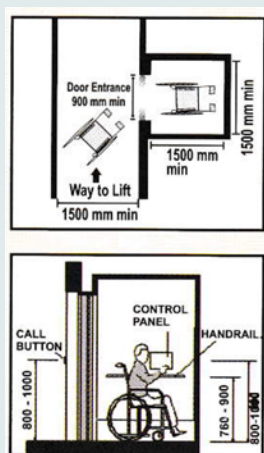
Staff manning the counter should know sign language.

PUBLIC TELEPHONE



Maximum height of the highest part of a telephone : 1200mm, Maximum height of a telephone (knee space for wheelchair user) 650mm-680mm, Minimum floor/ground space: 1200mm x 900mm, Guiding path to be provided to guide persons with vision impairment to public telephones.

LIFT



Floor: Minimum space for wheelchair users 1500mm x 1500mm.

Doors: 900mm wide and closing mechanism to be adjusted to give adequate entry time.

Control Panel: Inside the lift to be on both the sides.

Call Button & Control Panel: At reach of 800mm-1000mm at least 450mm from any corner.

Key plans, orientation signs and push buttons in lifts should have a text in Braille and raised letters.

Audio and visual indicator, review mirror & kick plates should be fitted.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Audible fire alarms to be supplemented by flashing lights to alert persons with hearing impairment. Clear, well illuminated signage indicating escape routes is essential.

Fire Refuge Area at the landing of a fire escape staircase, quipped with two-way communication gadgets with clear signage, flashing bulbs & auto signals should be provided to facilitate emergency evacuation.

OTHER POINTS TO REMEMBER

Induction Loop System/FM System should be provided for persons with hearing impairment in public dealing, service and information counters, classrooms, auditoriums, cinema halls, conference rooms etc.

Tactile map should be installed near the entrance/reception to orient persons with vision impairment. The letters and signs should be raised at least 1-1.5mm from the background.



Switch and Socket in contrasting colour, should be mounted between 450mm-1000mm from the level.





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