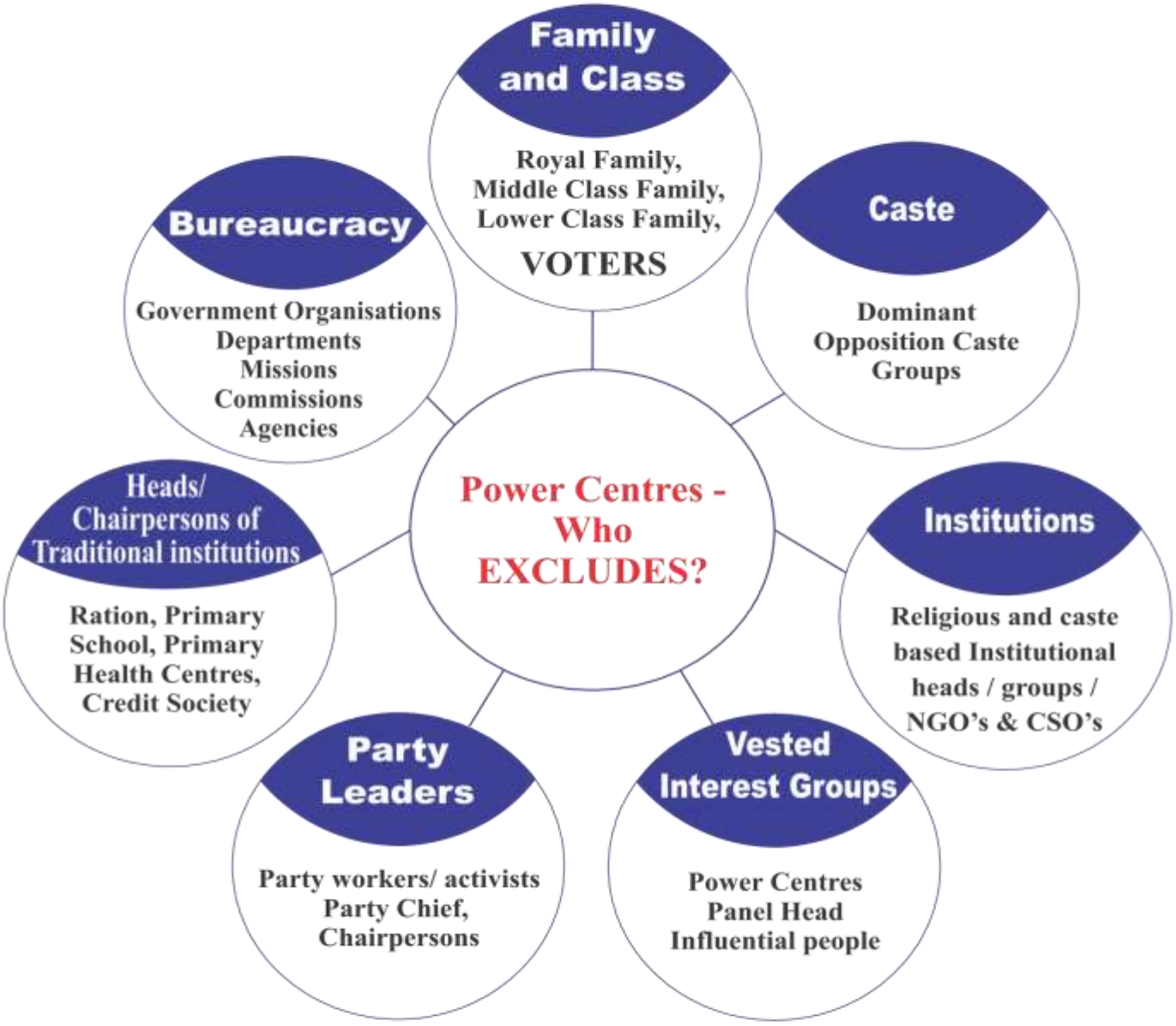
INCLUSION MEANS

"Leave No One Behind"



Stake Holders For Inclusion

International Conference
On
"Better Elections for Healthier Democracy"
(Local Self Government Elections)

Inclusion: "Leave No One Behind!"

Background

Inclusion, as a concept, can be difficult to define as it comes with many different social and cultural semantics. We recognize "that inclusion in politics is one aspect of inclusion in society", (Booth & Ainscow, ২০০২).

Inclusivity is -an intention or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who are learning-disabled, or racial and or sexual minorities◦.

Inclusion can be defined as **"the act or state of being part of something larger".** In a social context, inclusion means **every person has an opportunity to participate fully and equally in all social processes** - right from the beginning and regardless of individual skills, ethnic or social origin, sex or age. **"Inclusion is something which cannot be done to people, it is something in which people are actively involved"** (Norwich, ১৯৯৯). By valuing and respecting human diversity, the practice of inclusion fosters a sense of community and belonging among people, enabling them to participate in every area of life. Inclusive design is about making places that everyone can use. The way places are designed, affects our ability to move, see, hear and communicate effectively. Inclusive design aims to remove the barriers that create undue effort (can we use any other term?) and separation. Inclusion enables everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in an election and governance.

According to National Democratic Institute (NDI) for International Affairs **free, fair and transparent election is the "core" of any democracy.**

In India, for example - The Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) continues its efforts of locating those who have been subject to the phenomenon of enforced or involuntary disappearance in Jammu & Kashmir. Are they part of India◦s democratic process?

NDI indicates its free and fair election design as fair electoral laws for all parties, open registration for all citizens, wide range of political choices, all officials in executive positions of power, equal campaigning opportunities for all parties, fair access to media, honest ballot

tabulation, easy acceptance of electoral results by all parties and peaceful transfer of powers from ruling to opposition.

How to connect the reality of disappeared persons, with the indicator of NDI◦s free and fair elections?

Excluded, first on the agenda…

Democratic institutions flourish when all groups of society are represented. But often vulnerable groups are hindered by barriers which prevent them from exercising their right to vote. Unless the universal suffrage we enjoy as citizens is truly made available to all, we are denying the right to equality to the traditionally underrepresented groups in society. We see various forms of exclusion during the elections. Most of this exclusion is preventable in today◦s age of technological innovations and creative solutions. Political rights cannot be separated from socio-economic and cultural rights. India democracy is facing the crisis of political rights versus cultural and socio-economic rights. Every citizen has one vote but one citizen has in-equal resource and status bin the society. Inclusion is about leaving no one behind and bringing the last person on the priority list. Include everyone.

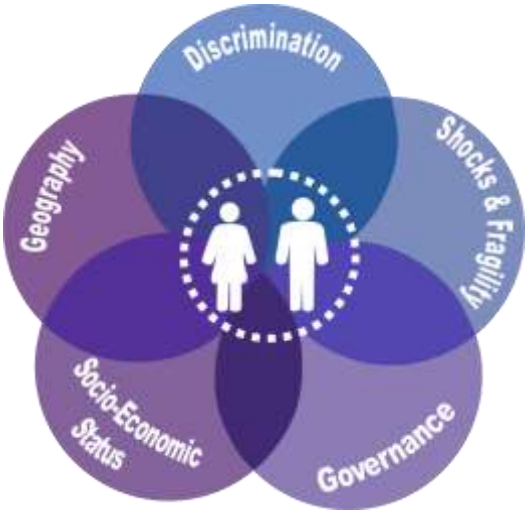
SECTION – I: Definition of Problem

According to UNDP २०१८ report, realizing the pledge to leave no one behind will not be easy. Such person might have been left behind due to discrimination, poor services and geographic isolation. In practice, however, the disadvantages they face may be underpinned by a political economy[९] that perpetuates imbalances in wealth and power; shortfalls in human and institutional capacities; and/or entrenched belief systems. Governments are ultimately responsible for overcoming such underlying constraints; by combating and correcting for stigma, discrimination and exclusion; delivering budgets, policies and services that make their society, political system and economy work for all.

[९] Political economy refers to the interplay of politics, society, culture and economics.

Who is being left behind and why? Five key factors

Establishing a shared understanding of what it means to leave no one behind is an essential first step to formulate an appropriate response. In practice, a country can establish such a shared understanding by discussing key factors that help determine who (Which?) and to what degree people are left behind in their particular contexts.



Above picture suggests five intersecting factors that are essential to understand who is being left behind and why, and give shape to solutions accordingly. The United Nations Development System is determined to put the pledge to leave no one behind at the heart of the support it provides countries to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a UN agency with a broad mandate that crosses disciplines and sectors, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed this framework to guide its own work and help facilitate national efforts to take action to leave no one behind.

1. Discrimination

People are left behind when they experience exclusion, bias or mistreatment in laws, policies, access to public services and social practices due to their identity (ascribed or assumed, and primarily relating to their gender, apart from age, income, ethnicity, caste, religion, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, as well as indigenous, refugee, displaced or migratory status). A person's identity refers to the particular subgroup or subgroups in society to which they ascribe or are assigned; the risks of being left behind increase, where that group or population is marginalized or excluded.

Discrimination towards populations on the basis of one or more such identities may cause a person to be left behind due to stigma, shame, discriminatory actions and/or other human rights violations. For example, a young gay person having HIV is living as a refugee in a country that criminalizes same-sex activities, may face discrimination and multiple barriers in realizing his rights.

An elderly disabled woman may also experience compounding sources of discrimination and disadvantage.

2. Geography

People are left behind and left open to vulnerability and inequity when denied social and economic opportunities, human security and/or quality public services based on their place of residence. Contaminated or degraded natural resources can make it impossible for people to sustain their livelihoods or prevent natural disasters. Legacies of deprivation and/or inequity in infrastructure, transportation and/or public services limit the choices, mobility and opportunities of people in some localities [over others]. Climatic conditions, altitude, desertification and/or proximity to high-risk areas such as floodplains or steep embankments can leave people isolated and vulnerable to setbacks.

People who reside in least developed, landlocked and small island developing countries tend to be disproportionately poor and/or vulnerable. At the same time, a high and growing proportion of the world◦s extreme poor reside in pockets of poverty that may be hard to access, including peripheral settlements, areas affected by explosive remnants of war and/or urban slums disproportionally affected by environmental pollution, crime and violence, including in middle and high-income countries.[২] Where people lack access to justice, equal protection under the law, basic services and/or roads, public transport, broadband, sanitation and energy, physical isolation has a particularly high cost.

3. Governance

People set back by global, national and/or sub-national institutions that are ineffective, unjust, exclusive, corrupt, unaccountable and/or unresponsive; and/or by laws, policies and budgets that are inequitable, discriminatory or regressive. At the global level, high-income countries tend to dominate decision-making, a trend mirrored by the reach and power of transnational companies. Their decisions shape the large-scale economic and political processes that drive

[২] Laurence Chandy, Hiroshi Kato, Homi Kharas, *The Last Mile in Ending Extreme Poverty*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., July 20, 2015, p. 110.

globalization. With limited capacities and leverage to engage and influence global decision-making, poor countries and populations are less able to anticipate and benefit from global trends in technologies, trade and markets. They are less able to prevent and recover from global shocks, manage corrupt and illicit practices or confront transnational organized crime. Inequitable global trade, finance, investment and intellectual property regimes also prevent many countries, particularly smaller ones, from fully engaging in, or benefiting from, globalization.

Poor, disadvantaged and marginalized communities tend to have the least say in the decisions that affect them and are least likely to be included in the data and evidence governments use to allocate resources and shape policies. At the same time, the space for women in power, civic action, fundamental freedoms and meaningful participation of women and those excluded is shrinking drastically in countries around the world[3]. The lack of visibility that results both, reinforces and perpetuates the disadvantages certain groups and people face.

RSCD◦s field case study reveals the relation between women leaders and challenges in inclusion. It also erodes the social contract between the state and the people and makes it harder for governments to identify challenges, enact solutions and build the trust, legitimacy and mutual understanding that are among the basic building blocks of effective, equitable and inclusive role of women in governance.

Women are most neglected citizens in the process of decision-making. Micro analysis of this study shows clear concerns, strategies and outcome of the decision making process in Local Self Governance.

Women Leaders and Inclusion

Level of Exclusion	Core Concerns	Potential Strategies	Assured Outcome
Self-exclusion	• Lack of exposure • Lack of Confidence • Poor self-esteem	❖ Induction Course ❖ Congratulatory Certificates/ letters and	✓ Increases self - confidence and Dignity

[3] Civicus Monitor Data and Updates, Global Findings June 2016-March 2017. Available from https://monitor.civicus.org/globalfindings0417/

	• Lack of participation in decision making • Illiteracy/ gap years in women's education • Lack of knowledge about village politics and Panchayat affairs, • Fear, anxiety and pressure to perform • Restrictions based on caste, class and religious ideologies, • Economic dependence, • Threat of all sorts of Violence, domestic as well as outside	Felicitation program ❖ Women Leadership Workshops and Training of Trainers ❖ Perspective Building Workshops ❖ Ideal Sarpanch Award in Conventions ❖ Information Dissemination ❖ Membership and I card ❖ Crisis Support ❖ Involving women in delegations	✓ Increase in awareness and knowledge ✓ Creates a new Identity in women ✓ Struggle for Value based governance ✓ Change in perspective ✓ Courage to take up issues independently
Exclusion within the Family	• Restrictions on mobility, • Lack of support, • Interference by husband, • Burden of household responsibility, • Doubt on character, • Denial of cooperation, • Ego issues and jealousy	❖ Family Felicitation ❖ Husband-wife joint felicitation ❖ Dialogue with men ❖ Involving family members in activities	✓ Increase their Social acceptance ✓ Interference turn into support ✓ Increase in women's status within family ✓ Increase in family status ✓ Acceptance of women as political actors ✓ More space for women in decision making
Exclusion within the Village	• Strong Traditional Power centers • Patriarchal Stereotypes, • Control and pressure of influential and powerful people, • Domination of Caste, class, religious ideologies, • Political parties, • Vested interest groups, • Women are not a homogenous category, • Corruption and other mal-practice	❖ Appreciation of Village Assembly ❖ Visit to Gram Panchayat Campaign ❖ Ideal Village Award ❖ Youth hearing Campaign ❖ Pre-Election Campaign ❖ Village Branch ❖ Panchayat Raj Women's Association	✓ Change in development agenda ✓ Reaching out to the marginalized sections ✓ Awareness building on new issues ✓ Creation of new support systems ✓ Rapport building and alliance with various stakeholders ✓ Effective and efficient panchayat ✓ Change in power equations
Exclusion within the Institution	• Insensitive functionaries, • Non-cooperation by the higher authorities, • Lack of Support and encouragement • Corruption, • Poor linkage from state to the village	❖ Show us accounts Campaign ❖ Joint House Ownership Campaign ❖ Panchayati Raj Resource Centers ❖ Campaign on 10 % and 15% Reserved Budget ❖ Every Seat, Women Seat Campaign ❖ Convention for women leaders ❖ Delegation programs	✓ Creating new practices to change situation ✓ Cross Section Alliances ✓ Implementation of Government Resolutions and orders ✓ Sensitizing the bureaucracy ✓ Changing the mindset and perspective of

			people
Ref: Based on field Study conducted by RSCD Team			

In countries with wide inequalities, governing institutions can suffer from elite capture, where resources for the benefit of the population are controlled by a few for individual gains. This reinforces an imbalance of power and exacerbates likelihood that economic and social gains are confined to a privileged few[৪]. The result can aggravate social tensions, render governments less effective and increase the chances of violence and conflicts, trapping entire populations in poverty for generations. The drastically shrinking space for civic action in countries around the world makes support for civil society all the more important to hold government and other stakeholders to account.[৭]

4. Socio-economic status

People are left behind when they lack the opportunities and capabilities to earn an adequate income, accumulate wealth or otherwise fully and equitably participate in their economy and society. A person◦s ability to get out and stay out of poverty, in all its dimensions, is shaped by the economic rules, policies and access to public services. Social services determine people◦s ability to stay healthy, get education, acquire skills, stay safe and avoid setbacks. The laws, policies and regulations governing the economy determine people◦s ability to inherit or acquire wealth; own land; find and sustain jobs or livelihoods; demand decent jobs and safe working conditions; benefit from insurance and social protection systems; start, form, finance and formalize small/micro businesses; open a bank account; and benefit from trade and investment. The degree to which tax burdens and budget expenditures are distributed equitably and progressively has profound, differentiated and enduring impacts across different segments of society.

[৪] World Bank, "World Development Report 2006: Equity and Development," 2006. Available from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/435331468127174418/World-development-report-2006-equityand-development

[৭] World Bank, "Horizontal Inequalities as a Cause of Conflict," 2011. Available from siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTWDR2011/Resources/6406082-1283882418764/WDR_Background_Paper_Stewart.pdf

Those living in least developed countries face particularly grave barriers in capacity, capital and human resources that often effectively lock them out of global markets and trade and investment opportunities, as well as prevent innovation and the diffusion of new technologies. The ability of governments to establish and enforce taxation or otherwise generate revenues aligned to the SDGs is often hampered by capital flight, power imbalances with large multinationals and weak global coordination. Although globalization has benefited some, the gains have not necessarily been distributed equitably or inclusively. Leaps in productivity have not consistently translated into higher wages[৫]. Unskilled workers in many economies have lost jobs, particularly in the manufacturing sector, while in the formal and informal sector, many remain vulnerable to job loss, exploitation, low-pay and dangerous conditions. The introduction of new technologies, robotics and fast-moving value chains in the production process have raised the stakes, making it harder for unskilled, "off-line" workers and businesses to compete.

5. Shocks and fragility

People are left behind when they are vulnerable to risks related to violence, conflict, displacement, large movements of migrants, environmental degradation, natural hazard-induced disasters and other types of climate events, or health shocks, such as epidemic outbreaks. The impact of these shocks and situations of fragility can cause entire communities, sub-regions or countries to be left behind, also they can spill over national borders.

Widening inequalities, climate change, protracted conflicts, widespread hazards and environmental degradation, rapid urbanization and the overconsumption of natural resources have driven systemic risks and instabilities to new and unprecedented levels. The result threatens to send human progress into reverse. In ২০১৫, close to ২৫ million people became internally displaced persons (IDPs), ৬০ percent of whom were driven from their homes due to a national disaster[৬]. Among the world's ২৪৪ million migrants, ৪৭ million are internally displaced, more than ২৭ million are

[৫] UNDP, "Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone." Available from http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2016-human-development-everyone

[৬] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, "GRID 2016: Global Report on Internal Displacement," 2016. Available from http://www.internal-displacement.org/globalreport2016/

refugees and ३ million are asylum seekers[८]. Migrants and displaced persons often lack shelter and access to other essentials, legal identity, the protection of the law and the ability to participate fully in the economy and society of host countries. There is also fear of facing discrimination and marginalization due to language, religion, culture or ethnicity, leaving them among the world's most vulnerable and farthest behind.

Extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated among vulnerable groups displaced by violent conflict and within countries and regions affected by conflict.[९] Today, some १.६ billion people live in fragile and conflict affected settings; half of the world's extreme poor live in such contexts.[१०] Fragility, multidimensional poverty and inequalities mutually reinforce each other, as fragility and conflict can lead to the absence of public services, intolerance and limited access to resources, which in turn can provoke grievances resulting in mistrust and conflict. The reality and threat of violence or conflict limits the freedom of movement and economic and social opportunities of deprived and disadvantaged communities and groups, who experience crime and violence at greater rates and with more severe consequences than richer members of society.

Those with fewer assets, information and resources, who are marginalized or disadvantaged are more likely to be affected and more adversely affected by climatic shocks such as floods, droughts or heat waves, as well as the crop failure, price spikes and illnesses they generate. People living in poverty are more exposed to higher temperatures and tend to live in countries where food production is expected to decrease.[११] The World Bank estimates suggest that without urgent climate-smart action, more than १०० million additional people could be living in poverty by २०३०.[१२] Commodity prices have an important impact on public revenues in many developing countries.

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[८] ibid

[९] World Bank, "By the Numbers: The Cost of War & Peace in the Middle East," 2016. Available from http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/02/03/by-the-numbers-the-cost-of-war-and-peace-in-mena

[१०] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "States of Fragility," 2016, p. 16 and p.79. Available from http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/development/states-of-fragility-2016_9789264267213-en#page1

[११] Ibid., p. 39.

[१२] World Bank, "Shock Waves: Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty," 2015. Available from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/22787/9781464806735.pdf

Climate change-driven price volatility can affect the funding available for public investment. Economic growth can also have unintended and adverse impacts on people and their environment if associated risks are inadequately mitigated.

The last general elections in India saw the highest voter turnout of an average of ६६.३८%. This means that one third of the Indian citizenry did not cast their vote. We see two kinds of absentees (self-exclusion and systematic exclusion) from the electoral process. Those who have the access but lack the will or incentive to participate due to various reasons; and those who are denied the very chance to exercise their vote due to circumstances in life. Therefore the three main challenges to inclusiveness in an election become social awareness, making information accessible to all and most importantly providing an easy access to all for voting.

India has around १०० million temporary internal migrants. Scheduled tribes and castes - the tribal and caste groups that are explicitly protected in India◦s constitution because of their historic social and economic inequality - are over-represented in these short-term migration flows. In a state of continuous drift, migrant workers are deprived of many opportunities to exercise their political rights. Because migrants are not entitled to vote outside their place of origin, some are simply unable to cast their votes. A २०११ study on the political inclusion of seasonal migrant workers found that २२ percent of seasonal migrant workers in India did not possess voter IDs or have their names in the voter list. The study noted that "[m] any migrants leave their home at an age as early as १३-१४. The voter ID is issued at an age of १८ or more. When they become eligible to get a voter ID, their work life is at its peak and their trips to home are shortened. Many migrants reported to not have the time to get their voter IDs made ¤ and a staggering ८३ percent of long distance migrants reported missing voting in elections at least once, because they were away from home seeking livelihood options." Because of this, migrant workers are often left unable to make political demands for entitlements or seek reforms. These numbers show that if the ८३% that couldn◦t vote were to be able to vote as well, it could even change an electoral outcome. As per data provided by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI), there are currently १२.५

million active **truck drivers** in the country who are registered voters out of which ९ million are unable to vote. These numbers are staggering and inclusion of this demographic into the electoral procedure may bring the turnout rates much closer to a १००%.

A society is able to reach its full potential in a world in which men and **women** are fully engaged as equal partners in their families, workplaces and communities. India has had an extremely poor representation of women in the Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies. According to the Geneva-based Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), globally India ranks in the bottom quarter, १४८th out of १९३ UN member nations, when it comes to the proportion of elected women representatives in Parliament. There is a systemic exclusion of women from political decision making in India. There cannot be wholesome electoral inclusiveness without contestational inclusivity.

According to the latest census, **disabled people** constitute २.२१% of the Indian population. Even though there are provisions today for a certain categories of disabled people to vote, there are still many that are hindered due to a constitutional provision that disqualifies the right to vote due to **-unsoundness of mind**. For those who can vote, not all polling stations are disabled-friendly and a lot of the electoral processes like campaigning, information dissemination, etc can be made more disabled friendly (e.g. ensuring a slower pace of speech for the audio information, bigger print and use of symbols or sign language)

Another form of exclusion is of the **elderly**. India may be a demographically young country with more than ५०% of its population below the age of २५ years and more than ६५% of the population below the age of ३५ years, but the rate of growth of the elderly population is also rapidly increasing. In states like Kerala, which has almost १३% elders in its population, the chance of a majority of these people unable to exercise their vote is high.

There are more than १० million Indian passport holders living, working and studying across the globe. This means there are more than १० million Indian passport holders who are unable to cast their votes. Though a २०१० amendment for **Non-resident Indians** to cast their vote has been

allowed, the fact that they have to be present in their place of original residence for voting, defeats the purpose.

The rights of the voiceless, voteless and vulnerable are often an afterthought, which is why the significant population of **pavement dwellers** scattered all over the country are overlooked in the electoral process.

While the meagre use of the Postal ballot provision and the high rate of absentees among the affluent sections of the society may be self-inflicted exclusions, they are worth working on and changing. A large number of the postal ballot votes have to be ignored due to instructions not being followed while casting the postal ballot. High spending and use of illegal means to **purchase votes also leads to a very perverse type of exclusion**, where a person with genuine intent but limited means cannot contest elections. This will also encourage voters to sell their vote with no regard for representation.

Section II: Efforts made to improve inclusion

The Indian constitution granted **Universal Adult Suffrage** to all Indians of appropriate age, irrespective of caste, class, gender or religion with certain exceptions. But the realisation of the universal adult suffrage has required a lot of effort by authorities and civil society groups alike.

The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution introduced a 33% reservation for women in Local-self governing institutions (Panchayati Raj Institutions) in rural India, this immediately improved women's participation in elections from 2%-8% to 25%-40%. Seven states even increased reservation to 50%. Various studies have shown that despite the challenges that women leaders might face in terms of education and experience, they work more on the socio-

political issues affecting the village and increase the aspirations and political interests of young girls and their parents in rural India.

Keeping in mind that service personnel on duty during the elections will not be able to exercise their franchise, the Election Commission of India (ECI) made provisions for **postal ballot** for armed forces posted across the country and overseas, to individuals who are on election duty (such as electoral officers, policemen on duty etc). Postal ballot can also be granted to those individuals who are under preventive detention, resulting in their inability to visit a polling booth and cast their vote in person. For those with physical disabilities and other infirmity that restricts their ability to cast vote, an electoral officer will visit them to record their vote. Even online registration, student◦s voter card, Special Services for handicapped and True Voter App § are useful devices.

The State Election Commission, Maharashtra has undertaken numerous studies to identify issues and gaps and has then initiated programmes to bridge these gaps. MSEC commissioned organisations like ADR to **analyse the affidavits of Contesting Candidates** and then publicized it for voter awareness. With curbs on election expenditure and monitoring of illegal money deals, use of computers and software to provide voter search engines and general information regarding elections, launch of mobile applications like True Voter, FAQ and Citizens on Patrol (CoP), the SEC of Maharashtra has managed to improve stakeholder and voter engagement and achieved a spike in voter numbers in cities like Mumbai, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Solapur, Nashik, Thane, etc.

Section III: Workable Solutions & Policy Recommendations

We need to try out all the workable solutions in systematic manner.

Some of the workable recommendations suggested by experts and field activists are as follows:

Proposed Solutions	Why & How?
Linking Aadhar card with voter◦s card	Bogus voting is an issue. Supreme court is re-considering this solution. This will be very effective solution.

IT Returns with Voting Records	Upper class will get some motivation with this voting record. Voting percentage may increase.
Voting not compulsory but as a fundamental duty	Fundamental rights are well-known but voting can be declared and internalised as DUTY. It will have long lasting impact.
२४ X ७ Voter◦s Education Campaign	Pre-election period is not limited as campaign period. Voter◦s education has to be a sustained campaign for all five years. Non-election period is the best time for voter◦s education.
ASHA worker as Election Ambassadors	They are most connected person in each house. ASHA workers may be appointed as village Ambassadors to propagate free & fair elections.
Senior Citizen◦s Election Army	Senior citizens have free time and vast experience of life. They can monitor the election process very effectively.
Gram Sabha Voter◦s Audit	Voter◦s list is a challenge! Perfect voter◦s list, can be evaluated through village Gram Sabha. It will have Accuracy and Trust; because they know each other very well.
Special time Slot for Disabled	Disabled people may vote according to time reserved for themselves, one hour for disabled can manage within the same voting period.
Ground Floor Facility for Disabled citizens	It is very essential to provide possible convenience for disabled citizens. Ground floor voting centre with all facilities will be an excellent solution.

These are the short-term do-able solutions, but we need to work on long term solutions and policy recommendations for the basic electoral reforms.

Policy recommendations

- In the case of the internal migrant workers, the differently abled, the elderly and the non-resident Indians, a major roadblock is the necessity for the voter to be physically present at their hometown polling booth. This can be mitigated through **flexible solutions** like २४X७ reach out centres, that don't compromise on the sanctity and secrecy of elections.
- Since the option of postal ballot is available to a few citizens, it can be made available to a larger demographic that genuinely requires it. ९४ countries in the European Union and the USA also follow this practise. Appropriate guidance should also be given to those using the postal ballot facility and to those handling its logistics. **Advanced ballot** (voting in beforehand) would also be a solution in this case.

- Seventeen countries in the EU have adopted the use of **Mobile polling** units to assist the disabled, the infirm and the elderly. Access to polling stations can be improved by **providing transport assistance** as well.
- Use of technology like **Electronic voting** which is based on WAI (web accessibility initiative) will help solve challenges of voting inclusiveness to a great extent, if adequate measures for security are taken. Estonia already has this system in place. Countries like Ireland, Finland, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Romania and Norway plan to introduce it in the near future.
- In २००८, the government of Maharashtra made provisions to provide **temporary ration cards** to members of certain communities who were pavement dwellers. The SEC can similarly consider long time pavement dwellers of a particular area and issue voter identity cards that have **temporary validity for the election period** only.

- Since the inclusion of the NOTA option in elections, the citizenry's option to protest an election remains available. In such a scenario, the Election Commission can also consider implementing compulsory voting. Assigning a **penalty for not exercising voting** rights will definitely improve turnout. It may also **decrease election apathy**.
- Code of Conduct is not a law. We need **clear cut law** with execution guidelines to minimise self and systemic exclusion.
- **Regular consultation and engagement with civic and field based organisations** that work to improve the participation of marginalised groups and defend the rights of vulnerable people is also extremely important.
- **Best Voting Awards** to individuals and constituencies through Election appreciation Policy will minimise exclusion.
- At least ३३ % women's participation in **Party Election Committee** should be reserved.
- **TASK FORCE** should be made to remove obstacles and problems faced by EWRs for free & fair elections.
- The percentage of **women voters from minority communities** is very low which needs to be increased substantially by way of appointing women staff in an election.
- The reservation for women and other social categories has increased their participation in politics. Hence, all efforts should be made to **monitor and mentor the reservation** and quota system in letter and spirit.
- Except some exceptions, it should be made a voluntary initiative for all the members of Gram Panchayat and other local bodies to **vote in time.**
- **Gram Sabha and Mahila Sabhas which are mandatory** should be organized and they should monitor the **election process** with Government machinery and send review report to Panchayat Samitis, Zilha Parishads.
- Women face several hurdles while campaigning. The Government should take a stock of it and develop **relevant training** guidelines for them.

- **Lack of knowledge and skills** has been stated by women. Hence quality and result oriented **pre-election training and capacity building programme** should be organized.
- Panchayat Women Leaders have been "ill-treated" by their male counterparts; Government should prepare **Elected women leaders protection bill**, as soon as possible.
- We can start **toll free election based counseling** wherein the EWRs can discuss their problems with the counselors.
- **Gender sensitive and Motivated** Government functionary should be appointed wherever there are Mahila Sarpanchs.
- The political party and candidates should be held responsible for non-implementation of schemes, programs and non-utilization of fund; through regular policy practice audit.
- The **training programs organized for the EWRs** (Elected Women Representatives) should be relevant, sustainable and skill oriented.
- The Gram Panchayat can be equally equipped with **infrastructure and technology; for modern election**.
- It can be the responsibility of the **three member's local election committee** (Talathi, Gram Sevak and Police Patil) to maintain the financial and administrative transparency about the work of the electoral Processes.
- There can be **free legal helpline and easy access** to the Lawyers in case of candidates faces any legal problems while discharging her duties.
- Critical and unnecessary procedural mechanism alongwith **two child norms should be scrapped**.
- Implementing **reservation** for women and weakest at all levels of government could be an effective solution to improve the overall participation and inclusion of women in governance. The success of reservations in the local-self governments can be scaled to the national level.

- **Implement reservations within political parties** instead of reservations in government. Countries like Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, and Norway etc, reserve seats for women within the political parties, but do not have quotas for women in Parliament. Pakistan too implemented this rule in २०१७ and since then the highest number of women representatives were elected into office in Pakistan in २०१८.

The prevalence or suspicion of fraudulent voting practices must not be an excuse to deny people their right to vote. There are workable solutions to a lot of the exclusionary problems we face in India, but best solution is passion for Ideal and Inclusive Election.

According to spiritual successor of M.K.Gandhi and Social Reformer **Vinobaji Bhave**, ideal election is the core of democracy. Democracy needs opposition without treating election as a battle; in which successful wins the prize of power and loser gets the opportunity for the service. Both the parties stand to GAIN; whoever wins or loses, remain good friends. Election ought to be held in a Spirit of goodwill, humour and bonds of mutual affection are intact, no matter who wins or loses.

Inclusiveness initiates with "I" which refer to, every individual and institution of this globe. Inclusion is a process that enhances the abilities of "excluded" to challenge & change, the existing power relations which place them in exploitative and excluding positions.

Bhim Raskar,
Director,
Resource and Support Centre for Development (RSCD)
rscd.१९९४@gmail.com, www.rscdgovernance.org

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