

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE ELECTION
COMMISSIONERS ON ROLE OF VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS IN
ELECTION MANAGEMENT
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Paper on Role of various Stakeholders like Corporate, Media, NGOs, Political Parties, Academic Institutions, Civic Society, First Time Voters etc.

Introduction:

The electoral process is an essential tool in the hand of electorate for decision making in a democracy and electing it's representatives. Once the democratically free and fair elections are held, they gain respectability and credibility. Therefore, an election is a foundation of a true democracy whether at Parliamentary level, Assembly level, Municipal level, Panchayat level etc.. Various stakeholders play a major role in smooth and successful conduct of elections, few of them are discussed below:-

1. CORPORATES

Though the role of Corporates is not prevalent and is limited during the conduct of elections, the relevance of their participation is important in the sense that they can educate electors, and public at large to participate in large numbers and use their franchise in strengthening the democratic process. The percentage of voters turnout needs to be increased and for this association of big corporates with their planning, professionalism and advice to the Government Institutions responsible for conduct of elections will help in a big way in this direction. The Government Institutions need not to hesitate in taking help and advice from corporates for finding ways and methods for increased participation of

voters in the elections. For example, software, communication, advertisement, finance companies etc. can help with their professionalism so that increased participation of voters may lead to a healthy democracy in the Nation. The Government / Government Institutions will have to come forward to make the election process simpler, easier and interesting in collaboration with professional corporates and to work out their enhanced participation.

2. MEDIA

In General, media refers to various means of communications e.g. television, radio, newspaper, social media etc.. The role of media may be looked into from the prospects of law and also fundamental institutions for disseminating information from one end to another for the purpose of among others enlightening the community. Media is a powerful mode of communication and spreading information to the masses and moulding public opinion.

A democratic country must ensure that every citizen to act and respect Constitution and thus to participate in the election process to strengthen democracy. For this, every elector will have to use his free and fair franchise in large numbers to give a strong mandate which will help in taking decisions towards nation building. Media has to educate the common people through the simple and easy ways by explaining them that this is their bounden duty and responsibility to exercise their franchise. Its not only the Government / Government Institutions who should educate the masses through media but media should on its own also come forward to use various ways and means to encourage & educate voters to take part in the election process

without endorsing any specific political party or candidate. Media role should be only educative through various means which it has in its command and that will be of great help to the Government / Government Institutions and to democracy as well. The experience attained reveals that some of the media do not analyse the important issues to enable people to ponder over it, rather escalate issues that may in turn lead to unnecessary emotions in the society. Thus they should play a positive role of their own and coordinate with Election Machinery and Government Institutions in helping to conduct free and fair elections increased voters participations in the entire process.

3. Political Parties

A political party is defined as an organized group of people having similar political aims and opinions that seeks to influence to public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office.

Political parties have a big stake in election management. Firstly, the roles of political parties are crucial who give option before the electorate to choose their party/candidates to enable to get a desired working Government / Local Bodies so elected. Without political parties there will be no election. Secondly, political parties determine the smoothness of elections. Political parties are led by people just as any other institutions. Hence, the behaviour of members and or followers of the parties depend to a large extent with a type of leaders and at times their leadership style.

In the Indian context, it is expected from the political parties to nominate candidates who have no criminal backgrounds and purely on merit and not on the basis of caste, creed etc.. Good candidates from any

political parties will be an asset to the democracy. During election campaign, they should be positive & not vindictive and should contest elections on the basis of their policy put-forth in their election manifestos without offering freebies. Any violence and influence of monetary or corrupt means should be avoided to woo the voters.

4. Participation of First Time Voters

First time voters i.e. Youth could be major and important stakeholder in the election process. Such voters shall continue to cast their votes now and also in the future elections and therefore, if they are properly educated and encouraged to participate in election process as their responsibility towards the democratic Nation, it would be a great initiative. They can also be the future leaders of the country, if due interest is generated among them then many may take up this as a profession to serve their constituency, party and country at large. The young voters participation is a welcome step and Government / Government Institutions, Media, Academic Institutions, Political Parties, Society etc. should encourage them to actively participate in the entire election process be it as conscious voter, candidate, campaign agent, media advisor etc. and even at booth level. The process of educating Young Voters will help in strengthening democratic process and subsequently at a later stage could motivate them to be as a probable responsible leader to choose this as career option as well to serve the society. Young voters can be used as brand ambassadors/ role models to propagate and motivate people at various levels and stages to cast their votes for a healthy democracy which country needs for larger welfare of the State.



Conclusion

Election Management is crucial for the attainment of development. Nevertheless, accomplishment of elections management depends on the participants. Firstly, the competence of the electoral management body. Secondly, the ability of elections stakeholders in articulating rules and regulations that govern elections and realising the fact that one among the political parties/ alliance must emerge the winner of the entire election. Every practice that is carried in the process of elections must be weighed against its ability to bring about development. Political parties involved in the elections must realize the fact that beauty of election processes depend solely on the appropriations of rules and regulations. Each political party is good in its own. However, it is the amalgamation of good practices of all the parties that bring forth peace and tranquility on the land to which an election is important instrument to form an aware, conscious, responsible and welfare Government.

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