



WEST BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTION - 2021

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE
AND PRACTICES (KAP),
END - LINE SURVEY
EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2023



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND MAJOR FINDINGS

This study examines the outcomes of a voter education campaign conducted by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer of West Bengal (under the Election Commission of India-ECI) to promote “greater participation for a stronger democracy.” ECI recognised the need to address urban apathy, women’s participation gaps, and indifference of the youth to electoral requirements. Thus, the Commission resolved to place voter education at the centre of election administration and committed the required resources. This is a report on the analysis of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly (WBLA) Elections, 2021, based on data and a sample survey of selected households done in West Bengal.

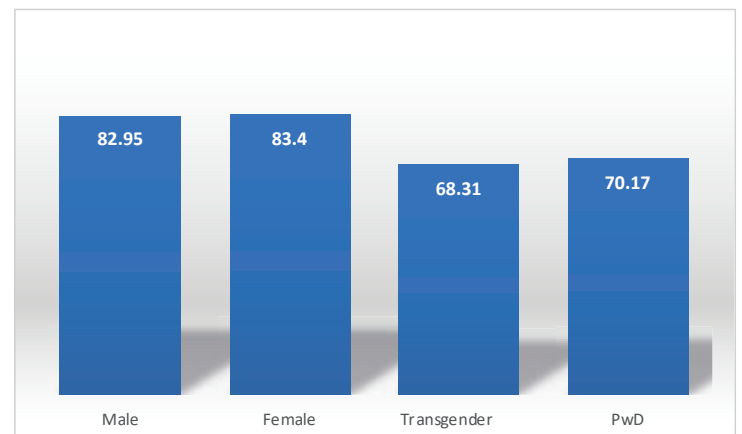
Voter participation, or turnout, in the elections is the first measure that assesses the success of the SVEEP efforts that were made in the West Bengal Assembly Elections-2021, both at the state and district levels, by the ECI vis a vis Office of the CEO, WB. The SVEEP interaction is expected to provide knowledge, empowerment, and ethical election practises to electors. West Bengal is a state that has consistently had a high rate of voter turnout both in legislative assemblies and Lok Sabha elections. Multiple variables, such as heightened voter knowledge, an ardent desire to participate in politics, political mobilisation, and a constantly watchful press, have played significant roles in achieving these high voter participation rates. The COVID pandemic was at its worst when the most recent assembly elections of 2021 were held, and there was considerable anxiety among all parties concerned that voter turnout would not be able to match that of previous elections. Because of this, the Election Commission of India (ECI) and Office of the CEO, West Bengal, coordinated all efforts to at least maintain voter turnout at the same level as that of the 2016 West Bengal Assembly election or the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

West Bengal achieved a voter turnout rate of 82.29%, with men turnout rates of 82.24% and women turnout rates of 82.35% during WBLA-2021 elections. The sample survey results (conducted between July and October 2023) to analyse voter participation rates during WBLA-2021 for different age groups indicate that the greatest voter participation rates (93.90%) are for those aged 18 to 24. It indicates that new voters have generated enthusiasm among themselves to participate in elections. The Election Commission of India’s (ECI) approach of contacting new voters to register them on the electoral roll and encourage them to vote was successful, as seen by the high turnout percentages of such voters. Despite the COVID restriction, large numbers of young people and adults participated in the West Bengal Assembly Election 2021 as

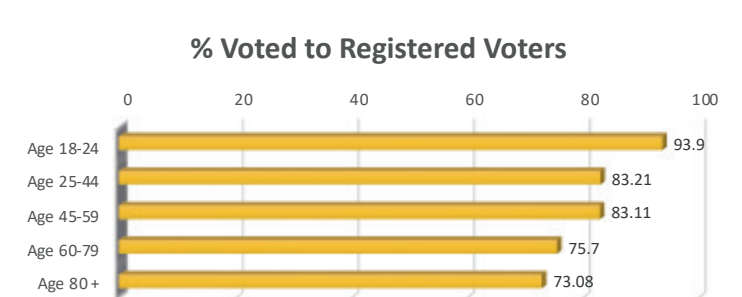
a direct result of the many SVEEP initiatives conducted by the ECI. Despite the limits imposed by the COVID epidemic, many seniors aged 60 and older voted in the elections. The fact that seniors aged 80 and older had a voter turnout rate of 74.08% illustrates their commitment to the electoral process. The ECI has assisted these senior citizens by offering services and facilities such as “absentee voting,” which has greatly increased the senior citizens’ voter turnout rate.

The study’s findings show that the Election Commission of India and the Office of the CEO, West Bengal, combined their efforts to increase voter turnout during the West Bengal Assembly Election of 2021. These efforts should be continued or even intensified using participatory techniques. An important disparity in voter turnout rates between rural and urban areas persists, according to sample survey results, and this gap needs to be closed by stepping up SVEEP efforts.

PERCENT VOTER TO REGISTERED VOTERS (WBLA-2021) PERCENT VOTER TO REGISTERED VOTERS (WBLA-2021)



Source : Sample Survey Conducted by Datamation – July-October 2022



Source: Datamation Survey of Selected Households – July-October 2022

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE DESIGN

At the aggregate level, the respondents’ gender, age, and distribution between rural and urban areas were consistent

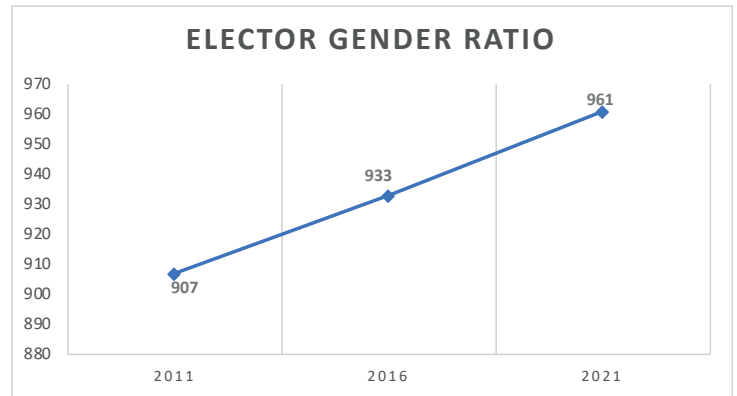
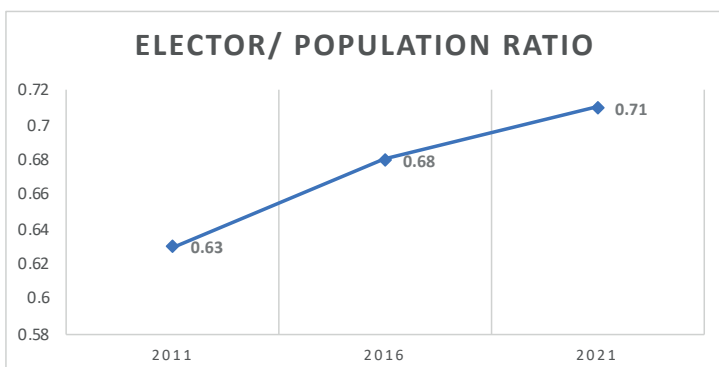
with the population's demographic make-up as recorded by the 2011 Census. Therefore, the individuals selected to respond to inquiries and offer opinions on the conduct of elections are a decent representation of the variety of people who reside in West Bengal. All social strata, including scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward groups, and general population groups, are represented in the respondents' social makeup. This was done to guarantee that the survey's findings were representative of the entire population. The sample accurately reflects the respondents' employment and educational backgrounds.

Based on how frequently respondents accessed various media, it appears that newspapers, WhatsApp, TV, radio, the internet, and social media platforms have been the primary channels for disseminating election-related news to the electorate in West Bengal.

MANAGEMENT OF ELECTORAL ROLLS

Steps were taken to carry out the exercise of matching the photographs to decide on the unmatched, matched, and partially matched photographs for further action after field verification. Confirmed cases of DSEs were removed after obtaining Form -7 from the elector concerned. This aided in the removal of multiple EPICs issued to eligible voters.

The electoral roll was efficiently managed, eligible voters were enrolled, and EPICs were issued to every voter for the West Assembly Elections of 2021. According to Office of the CEO, WB, data, the state has reached 0.71 elector-to-population ratio during WBLA-2021 elections from 0.63 during WBLA-2011 elections, with a focused strategy and careful management during pre-revision operations and SSR 2021. Additionally, it kept PER and EPIC at around 100%. The state also recorded 961 women-to-men voter ratio (Number of '000' registered women voters to men voters) in 2021 as compared to 907 ratio in 2011. Eighty percent of respondents surveyed were satisfied with the work that the



Source: Office of the CEO, WB

Office of the CEO, WB has done in relation to the maintenance of electoral rolls, particularly in terms of offering services for the registration of new and non-registered voters. EPIC cards with photo identification were sent to all registered electorates.

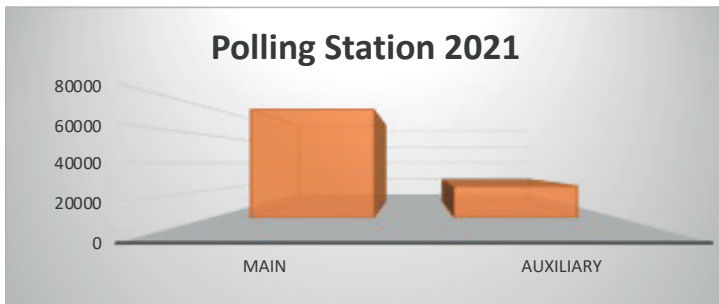
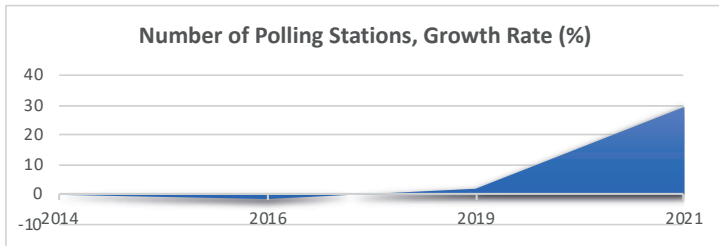
SERVICES AND FACILITIES AT POLLING STATIONS AND BOOTHS.

An overwhelming majority of respondents found the whole experience of participating in the Assembly election of 2021 smooth and easy. According to the results of the study, an effort was made to rationalise the number of polling stations to achieve the optimal level for reaching out to electorates in accordance with COVID protocol. The AMF Deficiency Mitigation Plans for each district had been created and made available to the public before the election. in accordance with the requirements outlined in the instructions supplied by the Election Commission of India.

A collaboration of conventional and nonconventional measures was used to make up for shortfalls in the AMF at polling stations, specifically the provision of a ramp with handrails for the disabled, a facility for providing drinking water, and toilet facilities. Most respondents' satisfaction ratings indicated that they were happy with the AMF generally. ECI officials reviewed existing polling places for AMF to enhance voter turnout. Everyone was notified of the changes. Before the 2021 General Assembly Elections, the Commission moved all voting booths to nearby ground floors. This led to additional voting places and "accessible elections." Additional voting stations were set up to prevent COVID-19 infections. The 2021 assembly elections had 29.33% more polling stations than the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Each polling station is limited to 1,000 voters due to COVID regulations. Polling booths were remapped so voters could access them within 2 kilometres of their houses. Webcasts were used for identification and crowd management at polling stations. Each polling station received a health kit with medications and a "user guide" was handed over

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND MAJOR FINDINGS

to each elector household. ASHA or medical personnel took the voters' temperatures, gave them gloves, and sanitised their hands.



Source: Office of the CEO, WB

All polling stations provided Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF). There were either permanent or temporary ramp facilities with handrails for persons with disabilities (PwD) at the polling stations, as well as access to drinking water and electricity supplies in 97% of the polling stations. 95 percent of polling stations had access to sanitary facilities and 100% Polling Premises had such facilities. The priority voting services encouraged more voters with impairments and senior citizens to cast their votes. Each PS had a separate line for COVID patients, those with impairments, the elderly, and women.

COVID PROTOCOL MANAGEMENT

All voting systems ran smoothly, allowing everyone who wanted to vote to do so despite the COVID outbreak. Field employees' tireless efforts ensured that all safety procedures were followed. Despite the considerable number of COVID case-positives, 7.33 million people cast ballots throughout the course of the eight rounds. The number of polling locations has increased by 30%, in accordance with the directions of the office of the CEO, WB. This was done, so that, not more than 1000 voters are assigned for each polling booth to exercise their voting duties. No modifications were made to the accepted COVID regulations or protocols, and all significant challenges and issues were appropriately resolved. The citizen vigilance app, c-Vigil, became widely used as a means of communication among all stakeholders engaged to ensure free, fair elections with transparency because of the stringent implementation of COVID standards.

All polling places strictly adhered to all COVID-19 guidelines, including keeping a safe distance from others, donning face masks while waiting in line to cast a ballot, using thermal guns to measure voters' body temperatures at entry points, using hand sanitizers before using designated EVM machines, and using gloves to press the button on an EVM. 35 percent of polling places even verified voters' COVID immunisation certificates. Election officials, security officers, party volunteers, and voters complied with the majority of COVID guidelines. Polling stations extended their hours to avoid long lines. Everyone who responded to the survey agreed that voters were given more time to complete their voting duties. Patients with COVID were given a different window to vote (one hour at the end time) to maintain isolation. Even a few COVID patients used the "absentee voter" services made available to them by ECI by using the postal voting paper.

INTERVENTIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY (PWD) AND SENIOR CITIZENS

The ECI has issued guidelines and suggestions to remove barriers, inspire, facilitate, and improve the participation of individuals with disabilities and elderly citizens 80 years of age and older on an equitable basis. To accomplish the goals set up to support these constituent groups, several stakeholders have invested a lot of time and energy. According to the survey, 87% of PwD respondents agreed that BLOs sent election material to disabled people's homes and assisted them in registering to vote and obtaining EPIC with photo cards. They were informed of initiatives to register them and were given assistance in obtaining EPIC. Additionally, they received information on how to use EVMs and check their vote in VVPAT. They were also informed about the "absentee voting" option should they be unable to visit polling stations due to a disability or old age. Thirty-eight percent of respondents reported that volunteer support was offered at the PS, and 50% of the polling stations and booths had sitting facilities for voters with disabilities and senior citizens, while 100% polling premises had such facilities.

ELECTION PREPAREDNESS: AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE, AND ATTITUDE

The registration age requirements were known to all respondents surveyed (completion of 18 years). All respondents were aware of the minimum age requirement for voter registration, although voters from all socioeconomic strata were unclear regarding the qualifying date for registering on the electoral rolls. To eliminate the ambiguity surrounding the voter registration deadline, ECI

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND MAJOR FINDINGS

needs to strengthen awareness related to the qualifying date for registering on the electoral rolls. 47 percent of respondents correctly identified the first January of each year as the start date for voter registration after completing the age of 18. ECI has now introduced four cut-off periods in a year for registering in the electoral rolls to simplify the process.

The fact that 64% of respondents were aware of National Voters' Day shows that ECI tried to raise awareness of its importance among electorates. It was comforting to see that a sizable percentage of electors (65%) were aware of NOTA, if they needed to express their disapproval with the candidates chosen for the election. To ensure that voters are aware of the importance and goals of NOTA, a robust awareness campaign is necessary to make all electors knowledgeable about the use and significance of NOTA.

All social and ethnic groups were aware of the use of EVMs. 87% of respondents were okay with using EVMs in place of paper ballots. It was accepted that EVMs were preferable to paper ballots, since they could not be manipulated and would result in fewer problems during elections. However, because they thought election staff or workers would be able to access the EVMs, respondents were apprehensive about their confidentiality.

The VVPAT, an independent verification technique designed to reassure electorates that the vote they cast is correctly cast in favour of their preferred candidate, was known to 68% of respondents. This recommends that additional efforts be made to inform voters about the VVPAT facility, which enables voters to confirm that their votes for their preferred candidates were correctly cast in the EVMs. Men were more informed about VVPAT (72%), as compared to women (63%). Thus, in the next phase of SVEEP, efforts to make electors (especially women) knowledgeable about VVPAT need to be strengthened.

95% of respondents who used electronic voting machines knew the name of the candidate, but everyone knew the election symbols of the candidates for whom they intended to cast their vote in the EVMs. They were able to vote for their favourite candidate in the EVMs. The responses from the rural, urban, and disabled communities were all similar. Even caste groups had the same response to this question.

To make voting easier for those who are visually impaired, the Election Commission has installed Braille in the ballot unit of the EVM. 36% of respondents knew about this facility; however,

86% of PwD respondents knew about this facility for the visually impaired, as this information was given to them by their respective BLOs. 36 percent of respondents had seen the Braille unit facility available in the EVMs while using EVMs.

87% of PwD respondents were aware of the "absentee voting" option available to people with benchmark disability certificates who can use a postal ballot facility. They said that both during the specific thrust of SVEEP activities and through BLOs, they were given access to this information. Even a sizable portion of senior adults (those 80 years of age and older) were aware of the "absentee voting" facility available to them in case they were unable to get to the polling places due to their poor mobility. To ensure that all qualified electors have an equal opportunity to vote and raise their voter turnout rates, this provision needs to be promoted more during special awareness campaigns.

According to respondents' responses to questions about their familiarity with various political party manifestos and whether they had an impact on their decision to support a particular party candidate, 23% of respondents were aware of party manifestos, and 86% of respondents who were aware of political party manifestos said they considered manifesto promises while casting their votes.

According to respondents' satisfaction with the criteria of the election process, 72% believe that voting is their right as well as their duty, and 93% believe that every vote in a democracy matters. 91% of respondents think the results obtained by employing EVMs are accurate.

It was reassuring to see that a substantial majority of respondents (72%) felt that women should not be advised by males or elders regarding how to vote but rather should choose candidates based on their own preferences. However, a sizable portion of respondents (28%) believe that before voting, women should respect the preferences of men and older people. Since equality of options is a key component of democracy, this trend needs to be reversed by educating voters during special campaigns.

Electoral politics are incorporating more money and physical force, according to 30% of study respondents. This needs to be stopped by strictly enforcing transparency regulations that candidates and political parties must follow when disclosing their election-related spending.

It was reassuring to see voters expressing complete confidence in

electoral procedures and advancing democracy at the local level. A staggering 92% of respondents declared that they intended to vote in the upcoming election to support effective administration. However, 8% of respondents were undecided and did not react; it is likely that they are exhibiting a wait-and-watch, attitude before deciding whether to vote in the next election. To change the way people, feel and stop this lack of interest, an intervention must be made to make them understand the importance and value of releasing them from their voting duties.

Respondents gave their opinion (satisfaction ratings) with the criteria of the election process: 72% believe that voting should be mandatory, and 93% believe that every vote in a democracy matters. 80% of those surveyed believe that voting is a crucial celebration of democracy. Most respondents agreed that “India’s elections are free and fair.” 91% of respondents think the results obtained by employing EVMs are accurate.

SYSTEMATIC VOTERS’ EDUCATION AND ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION (SVEEP) INTERVENTIONS

Fifty-four percent of respondents recalled the SVEEP interventions for voter education and engagement to ingrain democratic electoral principles among voters. A small rural/urban gap was found for SVEEP interventions, which indicates that both rural and urban areas were evenly covered for the campaign by the ECI. However, more men than women recalled the election campaign (58% of male respondents and 48% of female respondents, respectively).

The taglines “No Voter to be Left Behind” and “Cast Your Vote Fearlessly and Judiciously” were recalled by 36% of respondents. There were few differences between respondents in terms of seeing or hearing the ECI’s election campaign slogan in rural or urban areas, as well as between men and women. Nevertheless, a much greater number of respondents from the transgender person and PwD demographic categories said that they had seen or heard these taglines of the ECI.

Print advertisements were focused on disseminating COVID knowledge and the Commission’s steps for safe voting, as well as Poll Day information, including EVM-VVPAT usage and other pertinent information. 45% of those who took part in the study indicated that the newspaper or a local language magazine was their preferred source of information for seeking election campaign orientation from ECI. The second-most popular and

reliable media source for news and information on elections or other political issues was television. Three-fifths of those who responded to the study considered television to be a significant information source. Radio and FM channels (18% of respondents), commercial materials and billboards (12%), and regional culture programmes (9% of respondents) were all considered key sources of information by the respondents. The traditional radio communication techniques covered topics like reasons for voting, voting messages among women, young people, and those with disabilities, AMF facilities, the Voters Helpline App, and ethical voting. 15% of respondents said the internet and other social media sites, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and SMS, were great sources.

Mass mobilisation with the support of rallies, Prabhat Pheris, and loudspeaker announcements are a few examples of the kinds of events that 9 percent of respondents said were important sources of information. Public announcements were made effectively, and they were accompanied by the distribution of flyers that included crucial election information. Particularly in rural regions, it was an effective and economical mode of communication since it required campaigning with non-motorized vans that navigated the network of country roads.

The responses to these messages were encouraging, with 84% of respondents who had received communications from the ECI claiming to have received information or messages implying that voting is both a right and a responsibility of citizens. 78% of those who participated in the survey said that they had received information about the date of voting and the schedules that were related to it.

In addition, 45% of the total respondents said that they were told to “go and register” on the electoral roll at some point during the summary revision process. 37% of respondents said that a message informing them of the many ways to register for the electoral rolls was sent to them. Another 37% of respondents got the message about validating their status on the voter list. The message that we should vote according to our own preferences without being influenced in any way was received by 36% of respondents. 35% of respondents also got the message regarding the use of the Voter Helpline 1950/Voter Help Line App.

A total of 28% of respondents have received information connected to the services and amenities that were offered at voting polling stations for various demographics of the population. 26 percent of

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND MAJOR FINDINGS

respondents reported receiving a message intended to urge them to take part in the elections. This message informed them that older citizens and people with disabilities would be given priority in voting.

Other messages that respondents got included a code of conduct that voters should follow (26% of respondents), steps taken by ECI to run a free and fair election (24% of respondents), a list of documents that could be used to vote (23% of respondents), and how to file complaints using the NVSP web portal and the C-Vigil app (7% and 12% of respondents, respectively).

It is interesting to note that just 44% of respondents were able to recall national celebrities, icons, and personalities who were projected as brand ambassadors with the intention of energising voters. This result is not encouraging in any way. This was the outcome even though they were appearing on television as well as through other communication platforms from time to time. Mary Kom emerged as the most influential figure among the icons and stars. 44% of people responded. She was followed by the cricketers M.S. Dhoni (20% of responses), Saina Nehwal (18% of responses), Amir Khan (15% of responses), and E. Sreedharan (3% of responses).

State and district icons and stars of West Bengal were the most compelling reasons for the electorate to get interested in election processes. Some of the state icons/stars referred to during the survey were Smt. Jeeja Ghose, Abbas Ahmed, Dhananjay Das, Ms. Sunita Sarkar, Ankit Pradhan, Montu Mondal, Nadun Bhutia, Sujata Rai, and Kalpataru Guha.

It was encouraging to learn that 36% of those who participated in the survey had visited the NVSP website either on their own or with the assistance or support of members of the community to search for information about WBLA-2021 elections. As expected, a much higher percentage of people in urban regions accessed the website than those living in rural areas (68% and 28%, respectively, for urban and rural areas). The gender disparity in internet access was further shown by the survey results, which showed that 32% of women visited the website compared to 38% of males. On the other hand, 69% of transgender organisations had visited the website to get information on elections. Even 41 percent of people with disabilities have visited the website. The findings of the survey of respondents' experiences with accessing the website were varied, with 31% of respondents indicating that they were entirely pleased, 9% indicating that they were somewhat happy,

and 60% not replying to this question, indicating that they took help from others to access the website to resolve their issues.

According to the responses, the most common purpose for visiting the NVSP website was to look for names and other information associated with electoral rolls (68 percent of respondents). While 32% of respondents visited the website to obtain the registration form, another considerable number of respondents visited the website to register for EPIC and other identity-related features. 27 percent of respondents consulted the website to learn more about the poll's specifics. An impressive 24 percent of respondents used the website to register or make updates online for the electoral rolls.

67% of respondents gave high or somewhat high satisfaction ratings for visiting the website, which is positive in terms of the overall experience of problem resolution via the national portal. 18% of respondents were not happy with the way their difficulties were resolved, and 15% of respondents did not want to answer the question, which most likely indicates that the settlement of their issues took a lot of time.

The ECI has provided voters with several options for filing complaints about the efficient administration of the West Bengal assembly elections in 2021. Among the modes used by the electorate were mobile-app-based voter helplines, the National Grievance Portal, the C-Vigil Portal, the Telephone Service Helpline using 1950, and other modes. The findings of the survey show some hopeful outcomes, such as the fact that 6% of respondents had used one of the IT options mentioned above to lodge a complaint. Although the percentage is low, looking back at previous records reveals that it is a significant step that electorates have begun filing complaints, which is something that needs to be supported. The fact that all communities, gender categories, and geographic locations, both rural and urban, have utilised these IT techniques to express their grievances, is the feature that is most pleasing.

The app-based voter helpline was used by 45% of respondents, the 1950 telephone service was used by 34% of respondents, the National Grievance webpage was used by 9% of respondents, and the C-Vigil app was used by 5% of respondents. Most of the concerns that were recorded by the respondents were in relation to law and order (73% of the respondents), followed by the distribution of alcoholic beverages (12% of the respondents), and the distribution of money and other favours (both 4% of the respondents).

The edutainment resources that were developed by the ECI, which had both instructive and amusing content, were widely disseminated, and circulated in urban as well as rural areas. This was done to increase adequate information about the relevance of voting in democracies, which is important for picking the right people to govern. This was done by raising awareness about the significance of voting in democracies.

One of the most satisfying findings was that 47% of those who participated in the survey liked a picture post with the caption “Proud to be a Voter.” It seems that 31% of respondents played the computer game “Ready, Steady, Vote,” which placed it in second place behind the animated film “Masti, Dosti, and Matdhan,” which was commended by 42% of respondents. A comic strip titled “Election Wah” was another one that twenty-five percent of respondents found to be entertaining. In the same vein as the previous example, it was said that 12% of respondents watched the video titled “Board game: Vote ki Baazi” (obtaining, establishing a vote). According to this data analysis, the involvement of SVEEP has had a considerable influence on boosting the awareness levels of the voter education materials. To guarantee that these instructional materials reach the greatest possible audience, it is necessary, but not sufficient, to choose a medium that is both suitable and effective in this regard.

ELECTORATE PARTICIPATION AND TURNOUT RATES

The voter turnout in the West Bengal Assembly Election of 2021 was 82.29%, up from 81.59% in the General Election of 2019. A comparison of voter turnout rates by district for the assembly elections in 2016, 2021, and 2019 shows that overall voter turnout rates have been fairly maintained. The Election Commission of India (ECI) and the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal, should be applauded for sustaining voter turnout in 2021 despite the COVID epidemic’s height. All key parties worked hard to create favourable conditions that allowed electorates to overcome their fear of a COVID outbreak and vote in large numbers.

Women voters’ participation in the 2021 assembly elections was 82.35%, which was higher than male voter participation (82.24%). Voter turnout was high in 60% of West Bengal’s 294 assembly constituencies (more than 82%), medium in 25% (75–82%), and low in 15% (less than 75%).

The highest voter turnout (93.90%) is among the 18–24 age group. It suggests new voters are excited to vote. The Election

Commission of India’s (ECI) method of registering new voters and encouraging them to vote was successful, as seen by their high turnout percentages. Despite the COVID constraint, young people and adults have participated in the West Bengal assembly elections of 2021 in large numbers because of the ECI’s SVEEP efforts. Despite COVID limits, many 60-plus-year-olds voted. 80-plus-year-olds had a 74.08% voter participation rate, demonstrating their engagement. ECI has offered older people services and facilities, including “absentee voting,” which has increased their voter engagement.

The motivating punchline for 52 percent of voters to vote was “Voting as their right and duty” to support democracy and ensure effective governance. “My Vote Matters” garnered a 48% response rate. Effective education and raising knowledge about voting during elections, as well as enhanced services and facilities at polling stations, earned 42% of the overall response from rural respondents and 38% from urban respondents. 42 percent of respondents were happy with these electoral arrangements. A suitable candidate in the race was another reason for voting for 42% of respondents. Voters were also motivated to vote by the accessibility of polling places (32%).²³ percent of respondents claimed they “became enrolled in the voter list and received an EPIC card and voter slip at home,” which prompted them to vote. 35% indicated their relatives, friends, and political parties influenced them to vote. 24 percent of respondents said the ECI’s strict safety safeguards prompted them to exercise their voting rights. 20% of respondents said COVID protocols at polling booths motivated them to vote.

Absence from the assembly constituency (22% of respondents) was a demotivating factor for not voting in the WBLA 2021 elections. 5% of those surveyed admitted that they had misplaced their EPIC or other identity card and were unable to obtain a replacement in time for the election. According to 11% of voters, the distance was too far to travel. 13 respondents did not vote because there were not enough deserving candidates. 13% of voters were discouraged from voting by local and religious authorities. 5% of respondents stated that long lines discouraged them from voting. 7% of respondents said that they felt insecure because of recent violence. 2% of respondents said they had trouble finding the locations of the polling places, and 2% said they were uninterested in the political system as it was now.

21 percent of respondents stated that they had been influenced

to vote for a certain candidate who belonged to a political party. Major influencers for those who were influenced to vote were family members (59%), community and caste leaders (18%), relatives and friends (11%), and religious leaders (10 %).

None of the respondents advocated the use of either material wealth or brute physical strength as an influencer. Compared to urban respondents, who were more influenced by family members, respondents from rural regions were more likely to be influenced by community or caste leaders. Families, friends, and relatives were also more likely to have an impact on PwD and transgender groups.