

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW AND JUSTICE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5766
ANSWERED ON:08.09.2011
VOTER TURNOUT
Sayeed Muhammed Hamdulla A. B.

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether according to a survey only 55 per cent youth voted in the 2009 Lok Sabha Elections against the national average of 59.7 percent and the voting was lower among the younger people;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any study has been conducted to know the reasons for this political apathy; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to educate the young voters on participation in the democratic process in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID)

(a) and (b): No such data regarding the percentage of votes polled by youth is available with the Election Commission of India. However, data regarding the percentage of votes polled by male and female electors separately is available with the Commission.

(c) and (d): No specific study or survey has been conducted for the Lok Sabha election, 2009. However, from the Jharkhand Assembly Elections, 2009, onwards Voters' Knowledge Behaviour Attitude and Practices (KABP) surveys are being conducted by the Election Commission in all the election going States to find out the reasons of low voter turn out and take necessary measure to ensure higher participation in voting. The Election Commission launched comprehensive Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign in all the States/Union territories where elections to the States/Union territory Legislatures were held in 2010 and 2011, so far. These campaigns were aimed at improving information and motivation among the electors, specifically the youth and spread awareness about the electoral democratic process, besides increasing the level of facilitation.

A significant initiative was taken by the Commission to launch the National Voter's Day (NVD) on 25th January, 2011. On receipt of a proposal from the Election Commission, it has been decided that 25th January would be observed and celebrated as the National Voter's Day every year. The idea behind this has been to empower the youth of the country, who become eligible to be registered as electors on attaining the age of 18 years, as on 1st January of the relevant year and give them their Elector Photo Identity Cards (EPICs) on NVD. A brief ceremony was organised on 25th January, 2011 at over 8 lakh Polling Stations across the country where these 18+ youth were given their EPIC, administered a NVD pledge and given badges which read " Proud to be a voter-Ready to Vote". As many as 52 lakh 18+ newly eligible voters were covered in the first NVD itself. The NVD pledge reads as follows:-

"We the citizens of India, having abiding faith in democracy, hereby pledge to uphold the democratic traditions of our country and the dignity of free, fair and peaceful elections, and to vote in every election fearlessly and without being influenced by considerations of religion, race, caste, community, language of any inducement."

These initiatives of the Commission had a positive impact on the overall voter turnout in the recently concluded Assembly elections in five States/Union territories and prior to that in Bihar also. It is presumed that the participation of youth in the electoral process also contributed significantly in improving the voter turnout in these States/Union territories. Further, various activities were organised at the District/State levels like debates, slogan-writing competitions, painting competitions, marathons, human-chain, rallies, photo exhibitions etc. in schools, colleges & other educational institutions, during the NVD. Similar activities were also organised in the run-up to the Assembly elections in the five States/Union territories.