



Voter Helpline App

Best Excellence Award for 2019

Background

The Voters never had the convenience of voter centric features delivered through the mobile app. All the services were available either in the physical format or were scattered in various websites and applications. The Voter had to either fill in the physical form or visit the website. Similarly, making the complaint had been an arduous task. As the ECI main website contains the information for all stakeholders, a normal voter had great difficulty in navigation and finding the content.

Introduction

Voter Helpline App is the comprehensive app for Indian Voters to search their name in the electoral roll, submit forms for voter registration & modification, download their digital photo voter slips, make complaints, find details about the contesting candidates and most importantly see the real-time results of the elections.

19 Million (1.9 Crore) users used the Voter Helpline Mobile Application to search their names in the Electoral Roll till date.

With 2,16,81,289 (2.16 Crore or 21 Million) downloads and 1,53,604 (1.53 lac or 153K) user feedback, this national award-winning application has taken roots as a major tool for citizen empowerment. The seed for the Voter Helpline was sown in the year 2016, when



a new website for Election Commission was envisaged. In the process of designing the new website, the concept of Voter Helpline took its humble beginnings. At that stage, the Project was codenamed as 'ECI Citizen App' and the initial objective was to display on the mobile app, the main ECI Website content.

However, soon we identified 5 core but disparate applications which perfectly made sense for all of us in ECI but hardly made any sense to the voter. For us in the ECI every application was as important as the other and every application justified its independent existence. But in-turn we were sending our hapless voters to five different websites to do the transactions.

First, of course, was the ECI Main Website, which contains gargantuan sized data starting from the year 1951. It had everything from History, Elections, Statistics, Photo Gallery, Current News, Press Release and what not. So why don't we provide this information in the hands of every citizen?

The second was the budding new website; ECI SVEEP Portal. When we designed this site, we realised the immense potential it had for Voter Education. States started posting pictures of their campaign, success stories and innovative ideas. So why don't we give wider access to the audience directly? And allow them to dip into such success stories and creative ideas!

The third was, of course, our Citizen Grievance Portal. It had existed for many years and had been very successful for redressing grievances. All States' Chief Electoral Officers, District Election Officers and Electoral Roll Officers are connected and interwoven to receive and respond to grievances. So why don't we bring the functionality of lodging the complaints on the mobile? Why not provide the facility for tracking the complaint and the forward response of their grievance on their mobile?

The fourth was Electoral Search website. This has been a very successful website for searching one's name in the electoral roll. Why not provide an option for electoral search from the mobile app? Why not give the option of downloading the Voter details directly on mobile? Why not link Contact details of the Booth Level Officer, Electoral Roll Officer, District Election Officer and Chief Electoral officers customised to voter area?

The fifth was the submission of Forms. nvsp.in has been in existence for many years providing the facility for anybody to register online, request for transfer, request for a change in details and request for duplicate EPIC Card. Why not provide all the forms in the mobile app? Why not provide the option to upload the required documents directly from mobile gallery or by clicking a picture from a mobile phone? Why not give an option for form tracking? This long chain of questions got us to the drawing board.



It was a mammoth task as always is the case, when we work on integration. Stitching them all together was a delicate and arduous task for my handpicked core team of engineers. They built, they dismantled, structured again but they never stopped.

When the Voter Helpline App was presented before the Commission, it was instantly approved for launch but with a caveat for pre-trials and feedbacks before we launched for the wider public. The app received a hugely positive response and more than 99% of people liked the Voter Helpline App during an anonymous survey.

That momentous day was 8th February 2019, when the app was formally launched. The application came live with 5 disparate technologies into one: Main website, SVEEP website, Electoral Search Website, nvsp forms, and complaint website.

Instantly, it had forms pouring in, complaints getting resolved, voters getting aware about EVM, downloading the latest ECI news and most importantly searching their name on the electoral roll. As we go into print almost 35,59,206 forms have been submitted through the mobile app alone, and we haven't heard the last word on the app's success yet!

It took its shape as 'Voter Helpline', when Hon'ble Commission directed to setup '1950' as universal call centre number and to launch Voter Verification and Identification, (VVIP) Programme. When '1950' was named 'Voter Helpline', the ECI Citizen App became 'Voter Helpline App'.

The Voter Helpline app has been the most important Mobile app of the Election Commission of India. 53 Million electoral searches have been performed through the mobile app.

With the advent of Booth App, the polling station searches have become very easy and fast by the use of QR code. The Photo Voter slip contains the QR code which is scanned by the Polling Officials in the polling station. Now the Voters can also download their digital photo voter slip from the Voter Helpline Mobile App. The process involves linking up their mobile phone with that of EPIC card. The Digital Photo Voter slips can be shown at the polling station instead of physical photo voter slip.

The Voter Helpline Mobile application is available on both the Google Play Store: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.eci.citizen&hl=en_IN and Apple App Store: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/voter-helpline/id1456535004>

Features

- 1) Electoral Search is the paramount feature of Voter Helpline Application, which allows voters to search their electoral roll by entering personal Details, EPIC, or by scanning Barcode. The information can be saved by the voter/ elector to use it as voter slip. He/ she can share this information to their contact list also.
- 2) Forms (NVSP): Submitting the online forms such as New Voter Registration,



SEARCH YOUR NAME, FILL ONLINE FORMS



✓ voter HELPLINE



Update in Details and others, became very easy by the use of Voter Helpline Application.

- i) Types of Forms
 - a) Apply Online (New): It allows the new users (Overseas also) to fill the application to register themselves as a Voter.
 - b) Transfer/ Shifting: It allows swift transfer/ shifting from one constituency to another to the users.
 - c) Deletion: This form helps the users for objecting inclusion or seeking deletion of name in the electoral roll.
 - d) Correction Of entries: It allows the voters to change electoral particular through their mobile phone only.
 - e) Transposition: It allows the convenience of the relocation of habitation in one constituency from one place to another.
 - f) Duplicate Epic
In case of correction in electors details or change in address the user can request to issue a duplicate Photo identity card (EPIC) with his/ her new details.
 - g) Status
Real time status of the application can also be viewed by the users on their phone by entering the application id. Each and every step is shown to provide transparency.
 - h) Save Form
An option to save the form is also available in the application, to allow ease of access to the users on the later date.

3) Complaints (NGSP)

The facility of lodging the Grievances online makes the Voter Helpline application more viable and imitating. A Universal Helpline Number 1950 has also been included in the app for those users, who prefer to call and register their complaints.

- i) File Complaints
Registering a complaint has never been this easy, but the Voter Helpline App made it a piece of cake for its users. With the convenience of simple clicks, users can file all the Elections or Non- Elections related complaints.
- ii) Status
The real-time status of the complaints gives transparency.

4) Candidate

In order to facilitate the voters/ electors, the application has been

expanded and now offers the facility to view all the details of candidates such as Profile, Affidavits, and others. The user can bookmark their favourite candidate to see the step-by-step progress.

i) Candidate Profile

It allows the user to view and download the profile of the contesting candidates in their mobile phones.

ii) Affidavit

Original Affidavits can also be downloaded by the users, which have been uploaded by the candidates.

iii) Bookmark

App allowed the user to bookmark their favourite candidates to track their progress and get personalized results.

iv) Share

The voters can download the profile of the candidate and share the details to their contact list.

5) Result

Displaying the real-time result on the mobile phone for the first time, was one of the crucial features of this application. It allowed the users to see the authentic results directly on their phone from anywhere. The user can also view the real-time results of his/ her constituency by scanning the barcode of the EPIC card.

6) Search your Polling Officer

The application also has an option to search the Booth Level officer, Electoral Roll Officer, District Election Officer, and the Chief Electoral Officer and can make a direct call to them from the app

i) Call Directly

ii) Schedule of Elections

iii) Navigate Polling Station

7) Selfie Campaign

The Selfie campaign has been introduced this time to encourage the voters to go and vote. ECI used the social media platform to spread awareness and made it a full-blown phenomenon.

8) Elector Verification Programme(EVP) Campaign
Electors verification Programme allows electors to verify their details, family tagging and collect feedback on polling stations using Voter Helpline App and Electors



need to link their mobile number.

9) Personal Vault

The Voter Vault facility was provided in the Voter Helpline mobile application by which QR code-based booth slips were available digitally. The voter could display the digital QR code in the polling station and cast the vote.

Process Flow

To use the features of the Voter HelpLine mobile app, voters open the app in mobile and login in the app using mobile number and OTP functionality. The voter can select the feature by clicking on the Home screen as mentioned below -

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| <p>1) Electoral Search
 By Barcode
 By Personal Details
 By EPIC id</p> <p>2) Forms(NVSP)
 New Registration
 Transfer Shifting
 Deletion
 Correction of Entries
 Transposition</p> <p>3) Forms(NGSP)
 File Complaints
 Track Status of Complaint</p> <p>4) Results
 Party-wise Results
 Constituency wise
 Constituency wise trends</p> | <p>5) Electoral Verification Programme
 Linking of Mobile with EPIC
 Mobile number verification
 Search your details
 Correction of entries &
 Verification
 Build family Tree</p> <p>6) Candidate Nomination Status
 Parliamentary Constituency/
 Assembly Constituency
 Contested
 Accepted/ Rejected
 Withdrawn</p> <p>7) Selfie Campaign</p> <p>8) Personal Vault</p> |
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Technology

Core-Java for Android app development & Swift for iOS App

REST API: Laravel framework(LAMP)

Database: Maria DB

Third Party integration for App notification: Pusher, SMS & Email

SSL, AES-256 CBC encryption

Outcome

The two innovative ICT applications of Election Commission of India i.e. 'cVIGIL' and 'Voter

Helpline App' developed in-house have won the eGovernance 'Award of Excellence' for the year 2019. The award was presented at KiiT, Bhubaneswar. Dr. Kushal Pathak, Director ICT & CISO, ECI and Chief Electoral Officer of Odisha, Sh. Sushil Kumar Lohani received the award on behalf of ECI. These awards were given by Computer Society of India (CSI), Special Interest Group on e-Governance (CSI SIG e-Gov) at KiiT, Bhubaneswar on 17th January 2020.

The statistics speak of its volume and success. Recently, the Election Commission of India solicited voters to actively verify their name in the Electoral Roll and get it corrected. This program was a major success with the following statistics

Electoral Verification Program through Voter Helpline App

Status of EVP program is as follows from 1st September 2019 to 1st December 2019
(*For states excluding J&K, Maharashtra, Haryana & Jharkhand)

Number of days for which the EVP Program was implemented	91 days
Total Number of electors	77,07,90,304
Total Number of requests received	76,22,95,111
Average Requests received per day	83,76,869
Percentage of request received (%) vs Total Electors	98.90%
Number of correct entries reported	73,00,50,926
Percentage of correct entries	95.77%
Number of incorrect entries reported	3,23,19,692
Percentage of incorrect entries	4.23%
Number of form 8 received	2,05,24,549
Number of Unenrolled electors reported	7,31,213
Number of prospective electors reported	6,24,581
Number of Form-6 received	4,926,961
Number of Form-7 received	6,881,784
Number of Form-8 received	41,077,979
Number of Form-8A received	497,243

The Voter Helpline app is a single-stop solution for Voters in India and will grow further with more such voter centric features being added in the app.