

4. Urban apathy:

Urban apathy also plays a significant role for affecting voters' turnout not only in urban constituencies, but also in other constituencies having urban polling stations. It has been observed that electors in urban areas show indifference towards exercising their democratic rights. Therefore, targeted interventions in urban areas are also required to be made to motivate people to come out and vote. Reasons for urban apathy and strategies to address them have been given below:

Reasons:

- Non- Himachalis working in different organizations and residing in these areas get themselves enrolled in the concerned ACs for identification purposes, but seldom vote.
- The natives of these areas who have gone out of the district/state on account of their profession have retained their names at their native places but usually do not turn up to vote.
- Some electors cast their votes for Urban Local Bodies elections in Urban Areas but for Assembly Elections they prefer to vote at their native places/rural areas.
- Government officials, form a substantial part of electorate in urban areas, but many of them do not vote and celebrate the paid holiday.
- Jumbling of votes of a family especially when there are 2-3 polling booths in the same locations, causes inconvenience to the voters.
- Tenants have built their own houses elsewhere in the same town and residing there. For proving their occupancy, they retain their names at their rented place of residence, but, do not come out to vote.
- Working class have also been found out not to be voting for the reason of not getting a paid holiday on the day of poll or working far from their place of voting.

Strategies to overcome Urban Apathy:

- "Stop Complaining Start Voting" and "Come Out and Vote" campaigns to be specifically launched in the identified polling stations for motivating the eligible citizens for enrollment and subsequent participation in electoral process.
- Employees belonging to the different states to be educated through the VAFs, the purpose of getting enrolled and owning an EPIC is not for proving the identity but to own their democratic responsibility and ensure their participation.

- EROs to be directed to strictly invoke Section – 20 of RP Act, 1950, whereby a person can only become a voter of a place where he is ordinarily residing, and dual registration is a punishable offence.
- Naming and Shaming, whereby the employees who have not voted despite having been given a paid holiday under the Negotiable Instrument Act, 1881, for the specific purpose, to be asked to inform why they did not vote.
- EROs to be directed to ensure that all the electors of a family have been enrolled in their respective family trees, and not spread over different polling stations.
- DEOs to ensure that all private establishments actually give paid holiday to their workers on the day of poll.
- For Urban Rich: Appeal to privilege and taking initiative to make voting a trend.
- For Urban Middle class: Appeal to rights, responsibility and opportunity.
- For Urban Poor: Appeal to power, voice and choice.
- Services of urban local bodies to be utilized through integrating voter education in their ongoing programmes and by mounting special programmes.
- Social Media and Digital Media applications and platforms to be effectively utilized by special campaigns through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, Koo, etc.
- Resident Welfare Associations to be involved to launch special campaigns.
- Special registration drives and camps for urban poor segments in resettlement colonies and slum areas.
- Utilization of frequent points of contact such as water bills, electricity bills, pollution check certificates, ration shops for dissemination of information on electoral process.