EC all set to introduce ‘accessibility observers’

80% hospitals in India don’t have psychiatrists, says Dr Vatwani

Banking sector needs to focus on ethics: Lavasa

For Disabled Voters

The election commission of India has for the first time advocated 'accessibility observers' to check and ensure that people with disabilities are able to cast votes. The move is aimed at ensuring wider participation by people with disabilities as they have been in the past where such people could not vote.

Speaking at the National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM) here on Monday, election commissioner Ashok Lavasa said: "Observers will ensure that necessary infrastructure is available to each booth where people with disabilities can vote."

Chhattisgarh will be the first state in the country to hold disabled-friendly elections this year, Lavasa said.

As part of making the polling booths more accessible to disabled people, booths will have ramps where wheelchair-bound voters can cast their votes. Lavasa added that equipment and facilities for deaf and speech-impaired people would also be provided at polling stations.

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Dr Bharat Vatwani, who founded Shradha Foundation, has united more than 7,000 mentally ill patients and their families. He said that mental illness is curable and there is a need to create greater awareness about the problem.

"People opposing our Mumbai centre went to court, which ultimately gave verdict in our favour," said Vatwani.

“Today the banking sector in India has its share of problems. There is a need for Institutes like NIBM to introduce courses on ethical banking. I would say we are not asking enough about ethics in the way we work,” said Lavasa.

Referring to the growing NPAs that banks are dealing with, Lavasa said while NPAs will continue to happen, there is a need to go into the causes of why it is happening. "While going into the causes, the diagnosis might point to the fact that there was a compromise. Not all NPAs can be bad," said Lavasa.