

"Students of Today Are the Torchbearers of Democracy Tomorrow": CEC Gyanesh Kumar

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1. The Election Commission of India (ECI) organised its third regional conference on "Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELC 2.0) and ECINET" in Chennai today, focusing on strengthening electoral literacy and democratic awareness among young citizens. Addressing the gathering, CEC Shri Gyanesh Kumar said that the students of today are the torchbearers of democracy tomorrow. He added that Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) across India will help strengthen the backbone of the world's oldest and largest democracy.
2. Addressing the participants comprising students and teachers from schools, colleges and universities across Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, CEC Shri Gyanesh Kumar described students as the future of the nation and emphasised that engaging young citizens and securing their trust and informed participation in the electoral process is an investment in the future of democracy.
3. CEC Shri Gyanesh Kumar stated how elections in India are held strictly as per the Constitution of India, law and instructions issued by ECI and are conducted transparently under the concurrent audit of political parties, candidates or their representatives at all stages. He underlined the need for students and young electors to familiarise themselves with India's electoral system, democratic values, electoral registration, polling and counting processes, and the role and functioning of the Election Commission of India.
4. ELC 2.0, with the tagline "Learn Democracy. Lead Democracy.", reimagines Electoral Literacy Clubs as structured, visible and digitally enabled platforms across schools, colleges and universities, encouraging young and first-time voters to understand and meaningfully participate in democracy. Leveraging the extensive ECINet digital platform, which provides all election-related services from roll to poll, the initiative will drive continuous, year-round electoral literacy activities through a dedicated ELC portal, building a streamlined pan-India network of ELCs.
5. The initiative assumes significance in view of India's extensive educational ecosystem, comprising approximately 15 lakh schools with nearly 25 crore students and over one crore teachers. The higher education sector comprises nearly 1,500 universities and around 70,000 educational institutions, with an estimated enrolment of 4.33 crore students.
6. Through this extensive institutional network, ELC 2.0 seeks to promote factual and experiential electoral education, enhance awareness of India's electoral system, and encourage young citizens to become ambassadors of informed democratic participation. The ELCs will also disseminate information on electoral registration, polling, counting, ECINet App and other key ECI initiatives.
7. Earlier in the day, in an interactive session with over 500 Booth Level Officers (BLOs) of Tamil Nadu, CEC Gyanesh Kumar congratulated the BLOs for their service which resulted in smooth execution of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the Electoral Rolls in the State. He also congratulated them for the highest-ever poll-participation in the recently concluded Legislative Assembly elections in the State with 4.93 crore votes polled and 86.03% voter turnout which was the highest ever in the history of the State.

8. The students and the BLOs had a Question-and-Answer session with the CEC as part of the meeting. BLOs had an opportunity to clarify their doubts directly through the interaction.

PK/GDH/RP

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