



## Baroda Management Association

### Much Ado about Elections... And why not!

Our country is currently in the process of conducting elections for the 17th Lok Sabha and apart from the IPL (which is going on currently) all you hear about is the elections. Whenever you meet someone, one question unfailing is "Who do you think will win"? We have campaigns of different sorts running in the media not only by the political parties about achievements of their candidates, plus promises they make, but there are campaigns by the Election commission urging people to come out and vote. One print media also ran an awareness campaign about LOST VOTES.

The Election Commission (EC) goes through a long meticulous process to conduct the elections in a fair, safe and smooth manner. Every democratic country does it, so what is the big thing about conducting the elections in India. There must be lots of things you already know, but to understand the magnitude of the process from a management point of view, we need to look a little closely. One of the major challenges is the sheer large number of registered voters ---- almost 897 million, (in the 2014 election this figure was only 816 million- a significant increase!)

This number, by the way happens to be larger than the entire population of Europe and Africa. The EC has always been in the fore front of the technological change to handle this humongous task. First the EVMs designed by an IITian were introduced and now recently the VVPATs and GIS mapping are some examples.

The author of the recently launched book "EVERY VOTE COUNTS" Shri Navin Chawla who was the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) in 2009 said:

"The EVMs which have been manufactured by two public sector companies for the EC cannot be tampered with." And this time we have a VVPAT machine attached to every EVM. The VVPAT is a Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail – a method of

providing feedback to voters using a ballot-less voting system. For 7 seconds the machine displays the name and number plus symbol of the candidate one votes for and then the printed slip falls into a safely sealed container which is part of the unit. These machines were introduced to save time in counting and be more accurate, however currently certain opposition parties are before the SC seeking random cross verification of 50% of polling stations in each LS and assembly constituency instead of 5% checking.

Shri Chawla also feels that erstwhile CEC, Shri T. N. Sheshan was very strict and upright about the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and he laid down certain rules and precedents which have made things easy for the subsequent CECs and feels that Sheshan's contribution in cleaning up and streamlining the system are immense.

Sometime ago the New York Times carried an article written by a senior correspondent V. Mitchell, reproduced here are some parts of that. It is worth reading how others view the elections in our country: *"It is truly the greatest show on Earth, an ode to a diverse and democratic ethos, where 700 million+ of humanity votes, providing their small part in directing their ancient civilization into the future."*

*It is no less impressive when done in a neighborhood which includes de-stabilizing and violent Pakistan, China and Burma.*

*Its challenges are immense, more so probably than anywhere else, particularly in development and fending off terrorism—but considering these challenges and its neighbors, it is even more astounding that the most diverse nation on Earth, with hundreds of languages, all regions and cultures, is not only surviving, but thriving.*

*The nation: where Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism were born, which is the second largest Muslim nation on Earth; where Christianity has existed for 2000 years; where the oldest Jewish synagogues and Jewish communities have resided since the Romans burnt their 2nd temple; where the Dalai*



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*Lama and the Tibetan government in exile reside; where the Zoroastrians from Persia have thrived since being thrown out of their ancient homeland; where Armenians, Syrians and many others have come to live; where the Paris-based OECD said was the largest economy on Earth for 1500 of the last 2000 years, including the 2nd largest, only 200 years ago; where 3 Muslim Presidents have been elected, where a Sikh was Prime minister and the head of the ruling party a Catholic Italian Woman, where the past president was also a woman, succeeding a Muslim President who as a rocket scientist is a hero in the nation; where a booming economy is lifting 40 million out of poverty each year and is expected to have the majority of its population in the middle class already, equal to the entire US population, by 2025; where its optimism and vibrancy is manifested in its movies, arts, economic growth and voting, despite all the incredible challenges and hardships; where all the great powers vying for influence, as it itself finds its place in the world.*

*Where all of this is happening, is India and as greater than 1/10th of humanity gets ready to vote, it is an inspiration to the entire world."*

In spite of this we are aware that very detailed and full proof arrangements have to be made. Considering the magnitude of the task, it has to be carried out in phases. All of Gujarat went to polls on the 23rd of April and some parts of the country, including the national capital will only be voting on the 12th of May. From Kanyakumari to the remotest islands of Andaman and Nicobar, to the deepest jungles of the North-East to the highest peaks of Jammu and Kashmir, to the arid deserts of Gujarat and Rajasthan polling officers have to reach with all the paraphernalia-even though there may be only one registered voter for any particular booth, while in most booths in the city there are upto 1000 voters on an average and the arrangements are the same and very elaborate.

This year I got a chance to observe these arrangements from very close quarters as I happened to be appointed a polling officer, so I am sharing some personal experiences, which I observed from the sheer view of a management person.

First all government and semi government organizations are contacted for details of their employees. Next the collectorate sends letters to individuals through their work place appointing them as presiding officers, polling officers, peon etc. as the need be. You may have observed that every booth has to have a minimum 4-5 people to function smoothly. All these people are randomly picked up from different offices and need to be trained for the job.

There are 3 to 4 rounds of training. The first one is more of an orientation about all the functions. In the second round you are taught how the machines are to be set up, how to connect them and how they function.

There is a full session of how to conduct the mock poll of 50 votes before polling starts in the presence of the observers of the candidates. This exercise is to ensure that the

machines in every booth are functioning properly. Just for your information, almost each training session lasts for 3-4 hours. In this extreme heat, the administration had tried to ensure the supply of drinking water but of course to get food or snacks in any nearby places even by paying your money it was next to impossible.

So- although polling takes place for one day, all those involved in the process have to report at 7 am on the previous day – when teams are finally formed and the booths or the polling stations are allotted – usually areas far away from your residence. Mostly all the men on duty and the women appointed for 'Sakhi booths' have to brace themselves for almost a 48 hour duty without going home for the night as they have the custody of the EVMs, VVPATs and other materials of their booths. The safety of the machines and materials now lies with each team headed by the presiding officer. It is a job of great responsibility and risk. Of course police personnel are also there but the ultimate responsibility is of the presiding officer of each booth.

There are of course CCTV cameras fitted everywhere but some of the schools did not even have adequate ventilation and fans. People usually spend the night on classroom benches, sleepless and uncomfortable due to mosquitoes and the heat, but one doesn't complain after all one is sacrificing a little bit for the country.

The mock poll starts at 6 am and has to be closed before 7 am. The team better know the job well. Surprisingly at our booth-a polling station on Waghodia road, people had lined up from 6:30 onwards to cast their vote-many of them morning walkers. Loved the enthusiasm. By 8 am there was a long serpentine queue, we thought it was good people wanted to finish their task before it gets too hot, but it was the same story the whole day, people kept coming at 2pm-3pm also. Great after all we want people to come out and vote.

Our first voter was a young boy on a wheelchair, a first time voter- he was so excited- but there was no ramp his chair had to be carried in. His hands were not normal, he could not press the button on the EVM- what to do in this condition? Thanks for the training, we knew what to do!

Later in the day we got a blind person and one from the third gender-after all, the long and boring sessions of training were proving useful. The only challenge I did not get a chance to face as a lady polling officer was to verify the identity of a burqa clad voter! Believe me, in certain sensitive areas it can be a daunting task.

The NOTA button also has its side effects. What if NOTA polls more votes than any of the candidates? You have to have a re-poll. After all this, can you imagine that situation? Worrisome surely. Well lets pray we finish the elections countrywide peacefully and gracefully and may the best man win.

- Malti Gaekwad



## Baroda Management Association

Elected Managing Committee Members for the Year 2019 - 20

### INSTITUTIONAL CATEGORY



**Mr. Vikas Vaze**  
Shroff Foundation Trust



**Mr. Rajesh Umatt**  
Gujarat Life Science (P) Ltd.



**Mr. Varghese Joy**  
Sunrise Industries (India) Ltd.



**Mr. Keyur Parikh**  
Vadodara Enviro Channel Ltd.



**Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Chaturvedi**  
Jewel Consumer Care Pvt. Ltd



**Mr. Hemant B Shah**  
Transpek Industry Ltd.



**Ms. Minaxi T Vaishnav**  
VMC Project Technologies Ltd.

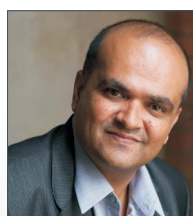
### PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY



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**Mr. Arjun Tandon**



**Mr. Ashish Parasharya**



**Mr. Neeraj Haathi**



**Mr. Vikas Chawda**



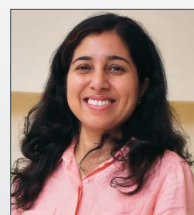
**Mr. Dilip A Pandya**



**Mr. Hemang Vahia**



**Ms. Sheetal Thomas**



**Ms. Sarita Sinha**

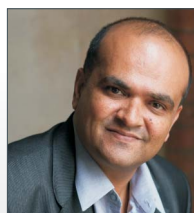


**Mr. Udham Singh**

### OFFICE BEARERS



**President**  
**Mr. Anand Majmudar**



**Vice President**  
**Mr. Ashish Parasharya**



**Hon. Secretary**  
**Mr. Hemang Vahia**



**Hon. Treasurer**  
**Ms. Sarita Sinha**



## CEO- Introduction



**Divya Jaggi - CEO**

A Post-Graduate in Advertisement and Public Relations.

A Multi-faceted training professional with a rich 23 years of enriching experience in areas like Training, Insurance, Sales & Marketing, Public Relations, Recruitment, Event Management & Educational Sector.

## From the desk of Editor

Dear Friends,

The BMA year is coming to an end and a new team has been elected. In this issue meet the new office bearers. BMA also has a new CEO, here we also introduce you to her- Ms. Divya Jaggi.

There have been few activities as many people were busy with the elections and with the model code of conduct in place, there were restrictions so some programmes had to be postponed. Everyone is talking about elections and its side effects so there is an article on the management of elections.

The Board results are out and the youngsters seem to be doing better and better and it's time to celebrate! Enjoy your summer break.

We'll be back soon.



**Malti Gaekwad**

## Friday Evening Talks

Sr	Date	Topic & Speakers
1.	03.05.2019	Journey of a Social Entrepreneur (Sustainability through Solar Energy) by Mr. Deepak Gadhia
2.	10.05.2019	Can Surmount – My many battles with Cancer and Blindness by Mr. Parimal Gandhi
3.	17.05.2019	An evening with BMA (A Group Discussion session where everyone can participate. Topic will be given on the spot)
4.	24.05.2019	Leadership is to bridge GAP Professionally and Socially by CA Manish Baxi
5.	31.05.2019	Drum Circle by Mr. Paulom Mistry

Venue : BMA, Guru Narayana Centre for Leadership, 2nd Floor, Anmol Plaza, Old Padra Road, Vadodara.

### Publication Committee:

Ms. Malti Gaekwad - Chairperson

### Editorial Team:

Mr. Ashish Parasharya - Hon. Secretary

Ms. Malti Gaekwad - Editor

Ms. Divya Jaggi - CEO

Ms. Naisargi Shah - Sr. Manager



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