



JAVED ABIDI FELLOWSHIP

**“EVERY VOICE MATTERS,  
EVERY BARRIER CAN BE  
BROKEN.”**



**NCPEDP -  
JAVED ABIDI  
FELLOWSHIP**

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# BACKGROUND

Born and brought up in Delhi, Jayant Singh Raghav, is a passionate advocate for disability rights, reflected in his role on the Accessibility Committee of the Delhi High Court. Jayant's commitment extends beyond organizational leadership to direct legal advocacy; he frequently argues cases related to disability rights before both the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court of India.

His legal pursuits address a wide range of issues, including the inaccessibility of infrastructure in educational institutions and public spaces, challenges in housing complexes, and the inclusion of people with disabilities in electoral processes. Jayant's significant legal experience includes personally arguing cases before the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India.

With over five years of experience, Jayant excels in organizing, managing time, and leading teams. His effective communication skills have fostered valuable relationships, reinforcing his impact in the field. He was a founding member of "Sugam," a society dedicated to supporting Persons with Disabilities, and played an active role in the Equal Opportunity Cell at Ram Lal Anand College, University of Delhi, during his undergraduate years.

Currently, Jayant is pursuing an LLB at the University of Delhi's Campus Law Centre. His academic background includes a BA (Hons) in English from Ram Lal Anand College, University of Delhi.

During his time there, he founded Bhumika Trust, a non-profit focused on disability and inclusion. In addition to his work with Bhumika Trust, Jayant is a Javed Abidi fellow at the National Centre for Promotion of Employment of Disabled People. His fellowship research focuses on the "Challenges Faced by People with Disabilities in the Electoral Processes Despite Technological Advancements." Through these efforts, Jayant continues to be a formidable advocate for a more inclusive and accessible society for individuals with disabilities.

Jayant's multifaceted roles and tireless dedication make him a key figure in advancing disability rights and accessibility in India.

# PROGRESS OVERVIEW

## **MAY 2023 TO OCTOBER 2023**

- For his intervention, Jayant conceptualized the theme of “Participation and Representation of Persons with Disabilities in the Electoral Process”. However, as the above theme was a bit broader in scope, he narrowed it down to “Challenges Faced by People with Disabilities in the Electoral Processes Despite the Technological Advancements.” A problem tree was prepared, followed by extensive review of literature and framing of the research design. An indicative plan was prepared along with a gant chart. The methodology chosen for the research was mixed-method, incorporating themes and processes from both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. The total numbers of interviews conducted were 10, 3 focus group discussions were held, and the sample size for the quantitative survey was decided to be 110 participants.
- The scope of the research was restricted to Delhi, and the executives i.e the local administration as well as the concerned departments like Chief Election Commissioner and State election Commissioner of Delhi were informed of the purpose of the intervention. A letter of support was written to seek permission from the District Magistrate on 24th Nov’23 for sample collection.
- A representation letter was also sent to the political parties of INDIA Alliance for supporting the endeavors of the fellow in NCPEDP-Javed Abidi Fellowship on Disability.
- Jayant wrote several articles exploring the paradigms of his research, however, none of them were published. A few of them are listed below:
  1. ‘INDIA’: What You Need to Know About India’s Opposition Alliance.
  2. “भारतीय राजनीति में विकलांग व्यक्तियों का राजनीतिक समावेश”.
- “Challenges Faced by Persons with Disabilities, Key Developments and Success Stories, Policy Initiatives and Legislative Changes.”

- In August, the campaign proposal on "Inclusive Democracy: Empowering Every Voice" was prepared and submitted to the NCPEDP team.
- In August itself, Jayant also prepared an FGD guide, which was a structural blueprint for the focus group discussion questionnaire meant to select stakeholders like people with different disabilities, activists, political party members, etc. for the purpose of the case study.
- A detailed, in-depth interview guide was also prepared to have a proper guide to be used during the qualitative aspect of the study i.e. the interview with accurate steps. In the guide, several sub-themes were identified through deliberate discussion and finalized after expert review. Some of the sub-domains framed were "understanding the voting process", "barriers and challenges", "getting to the polling booth" etc.
- A letter was written to the Chief Election Commissioner on 26th August requesting and highlighting the necessity for adding a Disability Section in Nomination Applications and Affidavits.
- A proposal was prepared to target the political empowerment of PwD . The objective of the proposal was to engage Members of Parliament (MPs) in a comprehensive discussion on the Barriers Faced by Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in political participation to raise awareness, foster collaboration, and identify potential solutions.
- Jayant issued a proposal prepared in collaboration with co-fellows Kavya Mukhija and Sakshi Chauhan, emphasizing the need for conducting a panel discussion on "Breaking Barriers: Inclusion in Politics and Tourism". The primary objective of this panel discussion was to raise awareness about the existing barriers to inclusion in politics and tourism and to generate actionable strategies and ideas for overcoming them. By facilitating a thoughtful and constructive dialogue, we aim to inspire change and encourage greater inclusivity in both sectors.
- A campaign brochure was prepared for the "#AccessToAll" campaign along with co-fellows Kavya Mukhija and Sakshi Chauhan. The "#AccessToAll Campaign" is a comprehensive initiative aimed at ensuring equal access to political spaces and tourist places for people with disabilities in the vibrant cities of Delhi, Jaipur, and Rishikesh.

- During this period, Jayant carried out several case studies, entailing extensive, in-depth research on the struggles and challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the electoral process. Some of these are listed below:

1. Sarah's Struggle During the Election Process.

2. Aisha's Struggle During the Election Process in India

- Conducted a Virtual webinar on the subject “Access to Political Spaces for People With Disabilities: A Lifelong Journey” . The following themes were explored and deliberated on through the webinar: The barriers faced by adults with disabilities when seeking political office or participating in political activities, strategies to make political campaigns and events more accessible, etc.
- Jayant prepared a campaign manifesto for Madhya Pradesh assembly elections 2023. The ultimate aim of such an election manifesto was to create a society where people with disabilities are valued members, enjoying the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. It addressed the structural and attitudinal barriers that currently limit their participation and aimed to create a more equitable and inclusive society for all.
- A letter was issued for Assuring Accessibility of Polling Stations to the State Election Commissioner of Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Mizora. The purpose of this letter was to ensure accessibility in polling stations for people with disabilities, and to make the electoral process inclusive and equitable.
- Letters were written to political parties for “Inclusive Representation in the General Elections 2024.” The objective was to collect information and contact details of each and every political party that will stand for elections in 2024.

- Letters of support were sent to educational institutions in light of the crucial role of academic support in advancing advocacy and awareness efforts for disability rights.
- An online RTI appeal was filed to the Department of pwd. It serves as a crucial reference for anyone seeking information about the rights and support measures available to persons with benchmark disabilities as mandated by the government.



## **NOVEMBER 2023 TO APRIL 2024**

- A follow up letter was sent to the political parties for Inclusive Representation of Disability Section in General Election 2024. Emphasis was laid on allocation of 5% of electoral tickets to candidates with disabilities or adhering to RPWD Act proportions. This highlighted the importance of inclusive representation in democracy.
- A Survey Questionnaire was prepared and administered to collect data regarding the participation of individuals with disabilities in political campaigns, movements, or parties. The purpose was to cover all important aspects of challenges faced by PWD in political area and collecting impactful data
- Awareness Campaign posts were updated on Jayant's social media platforms to educate the public, disabled individuals, and relevant stakeholders about the importance of inclusivity and accessibility in the electoral process. Browse Jayant's instagram profile for more detailed knowledge: [https://www.instagram.com/jayant\\_singh\\_raghav/](https://www.instagram.com/jayant_singh_raghav/)
- Jayant carried out several case studies which critically highlight the scenario of disability rights and issues. Following are the titles of a few of them:
  1. "Breaking Barriers: A Case Study on Accessibility Challenges Faced by John Doe During the Election Process"
  2. "Silent Struggles: A Personal Account of Election Barriers Faced by Sarah Johnson."
- A letter of support was written to Delhi University on 21st December 23 in light of the crucial role of academic support in advancing advocacy and awareness efforts for disability rights.
- Awareness Sessions were conducted on Voting Rights and Inclusivity in different colleges such as IHE, KMC, Miranda House, Hansraj College on 13th, 14th, 21st and 22nd February 24. The aim of the sessions was to make the public aware public about their voting rights, inclusivity and secrecy of vote in general elections.

- The [Baseline Report](#) was finalized and its inferences were analyzed. Some of the primary conclusions drawn from the report are:
  - 1.The survey findings underscore a prevailing sentiment among respondents, with a resounding 79% expressing a shared belief that the government falls short in its efforts to sufficiently encourage individuals with disabilities (PWD) to actively participate in the realm of politics.
  - 2.A significant 51% majority expresses concern about unequal access to political information.
  - 3.The survey reveals that a substantial 62% of respondents report no communication challenges with election officials.
  - 4.A substantial 41% openly admitted to having their voting decisions influenced by external factors.
  - 5.A concerning 48% of participants expressed the belief that polling stations are entirely inaccessible for individuals with disabilities.
- A comparison study was done between India and other countries such as Brazil, Philippines and South Africa on the [status of participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral process](#).
- Another comparative analysis of the [Best Practices for Inclusion of Person with Disabilities in Elections and Political Parties](#). It was observed that progress has been made in promoting political inclusion for PwDs.
- An email for support was sent to mainstream media houses to [collaborate with media outlets and disability advocacy groups](#) to conduct workshops and training programs. This was done in recognition of media's pivotal role in shaping public opinion and contributing to the success of disability advocacy initiatives.
- Jayant drafted a [manifesto](#) in collaboration with CPI ML. This entailed defining the needs of different PWD, conducting background research, identifying causes and effects, and prioritizing key issues faced by them.
- Conducted an Awareness Sessions on [Voting Rights and Inclusion during electoral process](#) on 18th April 24 at Bharti College. The session was joined by approximately 100 participants and positive feedback was received.

- Another Awareness Session was conducted on [Diversity and Inclusion in the electoral process](#) at Kirori Mal college on 24th April 24. This session, too, had similar success.

# ACHIEVEMENTS

- This research stands out as a pioneering study, exploring a previously unexamined theme with a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. Its novelty lies in addressing an untouched and under researched area, offering a fresh perspective in the field.
- This study identifies unique challenges and gaps in the electoral process faced by people with disabilities, despite advancements in technology. It highlights areas that have remained unaddressed and provides new insights into the electoral experiences of this demographic.
- As a significant outcome of this research, the demands of people with disabilities were incorporated into the manifestos of five major political parties for the 2024 general elections, marking a notable achievement in advocating for inclusive electoral policies.



# EXPERIENCE IN THE FELLOWSHIP

During my time in the Fellowship, I gained invaluable insights into the challenges faced by people with disabilities in the electoral process. This experience allowed me to deepen my understanding of the systemic barriers that persist despite technological advancements. I learned the importance of a holistic approach in addressing these issues, considering the diverse needs and perspectives of people with disabilities.

The fellowship provided a platform to engage with experts, policymakers, and activists, enriching my knowledge and broadening my perspective. I benefited greatly from the collaborative environment, which fostered critical thinking and innovative problem-solving. This experience underscored the importance of inclusivity in electoral processes and equipped me with the skills and knowledge to advocate for meaningful change.

Overall, the fellowship was a transformative experience, enhancing my research capabilities and reinforcing my commitment to addressing the challenges faced by people with disabilities in the electoral process.

# RESOURCES

**Follow Jayant's work on their social media**

