

NUDGING VOTER REGISTRATION IN MUMBAI*

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Summary

With a view to the upcoming state legislative assembly elections in Maharashtra, one of the key challenges to increasing voter turnout is the low registration rates among age groups 18-29 in urban areas. Project Mumbai, together with the State Election Commission (SEC), and other stakeholders launched the Shambar Takke Shaii (STS) voter registration campaign in order to mobilize registrations over a three-year period in Mumbai city. This report documents results of a novel behavioural intervention aimed at nudging voter registration among college-going youth and employees of corporate offices in Mumbai. We adapted a plan-making intervention to make the process of registering to vote more salient in 20 colleges across suburban and central Mumbai localities. In eight office locations and two housing societies, we test the efficacy of priming a social norm to nudge individuals to register to vote. Colleges that received the plan-making intervention had 33% higher registration on average than colleges that did not have the intervention. Initial data from corporate interventions indicated no clear effect of the intervention, suggesting that more work is needed to activate individuals in this demographic. Implications for intervention design, implementation challenges, and suggestions for phase 2 of the STS are advanced.

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1. Introduction

The State of Maharashtra (the second-most populous state in India, and home to the financial centre of the country, Mumbai city) will witness elections to its Legislative Assembly in October 2019. Maharashtra is certainly not an outlier when it comes to civic activity, and the average voter turnout was 63.84% in the previous Legislative Assembly election (October 2014) and 60.32% in the 2014 Lok Sabha General Election. In contrast, the turnout in urban-only constituents was only 50% on average, suggesting that urban samples are far less active in voting than other constituents. Various factors are associated with this: voter indifference, lack of access to polling stations, and erroneous voter registration data. There is little data on the first two aspects, but proactive changes to voter registration data is something that the Election Commission of India (ECI) is able to implement. In recent years, online voter registration has eased the once onerous process of registration for potential first-time voters as well as those seeking corrections in detail (e.g., change of constituency or name). However, citizen surveys, which are a part of the Comprehensive Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program, reveal that voter indifference is high on the list of reasons not to register to vote, particularly among younger voters. This is best exemplified by the fact that voter registration in the 18-19 years age group is at a dismal 38% of the total population in that age group in 2014 in Maharashtra, which went up to 41.3% in 2018.

How can we nudge citizens to register to vote? It is a widely held belief that young urban voters are indifferent to outcomes associated with voting, thereby having lower registrations and consequently lower representation in their voting. Past studies indicate that there are a range of behavioural factors pertinent to studying youth voter registration (Neri, Leifer, & Barrows, 2016). Among other reasons, students are uncertain about the details and implications of registering and could often

overestimate the difficulty of the process. An astounding 97% of surveyed individuals by ECI said they did not vote because they either did not have a voter ID card or that their names were not on the electoral rolls (Election Commission of India, 2014a). Furthermore, voting is not ‘visible’ on campus and therefore does not encourage students to think concretely enough about registering, creating psychological distance toward a process already perceived to be cumbersome.

One way to overcome such challenges is through the use of behaviourally informed interventions that account for cognitive biases that may be preventing potential first-time voters from registering. This report documents the outcome of a plan-making intervention implemented in Mumbai city, aimed at improving voter registrations among college-going youth. In partnership with Project Mumbai, a non-political, non-governmental organization, the intervention was piloted with 20 colleges in suburban and central Mumbai as part of their larger Shambar Takke Shaii (STS) campaign Phase I. The psychological basis for the intervention comes from the idea that assisting in implementing intentions to register as a voter will boost the likelihood of registration. Similarly, making the commitment to vote can be facilitated by making explicit plans.

Results from this pilot exercise suggest a 33.1% difference in voter registration at colleges where plan-making was part of the intervention campaign relative to those that conducted regular voter registration drives. Our pilot findings also suggest that the motivation and organizational skills of college registration volunteers (also known as college voting champions, or CVCs) are critical in ensuring an efficient voter registration experience. Since the CVCs were nodal points of contact between Project Mumbai and the voter registration portal (The National Voter Service Portal, or NVSP), their contribution to the success of the drive cannot be undermined.

Furthermore, we also document initial evidence for implementing a behaviourally informed intervention to improve voter registration among employees of private corporations based in

Mumbai. For citizens who are not registering for the first time (or older individuals), a different strategy may need to be adopted since citizen engagement is a more complex process given their other time commitments as well as differing reasons for not registering (e.g., shift of location or loss of existing Elector Photo Identity Card, or EPIC). One intervention that invokes social norms has been shown to be effective in improving voter registration and turnout (Gerber, Green, & Larimer, 2010). Thus, simple reminders emphasizing the importance of registering to vote were predicted to be useful in improving potential voter registrations. Although the results from the pilot are indicative of no significant effect of such an intervention, the emphasis on context of implementation is the key takeaway. Private corporations typically operate with a set of company policies that restrict transmission of information as well as the nature of activities conducted on their premises. Thus, implementing the intervention in a uniform manner was challenging and lessons for future iterations of the same intervention are provided.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. Section 2 contains the background of the specific case of voter registration in Mumbai, Maharashtra as well as covers literature on voter registration around the world. Section 3 describes the approach to nudging voter registration and the interventions planned in colleges as well as private companies around Mumbai city. Section 4 highlights the key findings and summarizes the data collected, including observations from the field. Finally, Section 5 concludes, and outlines challenges faced during implementation as well as learnings for Phase 2 of Project Mumbai's STS Mission.

2. Background

As of 2014, nearly 20% of India's population was either nearing voting age or had gained adult enfranchisement. The Election Commission of India (ECI), in a study of voter registration in Maharashtra, found that the voter registration gap among youth voters (aged 18-19) is at 59% as of 2018. They cite the reasons as lack of awareness or lack of motivation to enroll as soon as individuals turn 18 years old (Election Commission of India, 2014a). Furthermore, the report identifies a more than 100% enrolment gap among age groups of 30-59 years as well, suggesting that there are several duplicate registrations or excess entries. This is further compounded by the issue of large agglomerations such as Mumbai and Thane having the lowest voter card coverage in Maharashtra (Chief Electoral Officer Maharashtra, 2014)

Since 2009, the SVEEP program by the ECI has been targeting voter registration with the following specific objectives (CEO Maharashtra, 2014):

- a. 100% coverage of registered voters and reaching an elector-population ratio of 100%
- b. Using a targeted approach for bridging the elector-registration gap in youth (age groups 18-19 and 20-29) and among women
- c. Improving outreach activities and 'removing urban apathy' with the active participation of NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) in India
- d. Boosting the overall voter turnout as compared to the immediately concluded Lok Sabha elections

These are only a subset of the overall objectives that SVEEP continues to target – Phase III of SVEEP is currently underway and seeks to address the same objectives suggesting that these issues continue to persist and are therefore the focus of policy. For example, the gender-gap in registered

electors is still high: only 899 women voters are registered for every 1000 men in Maharashtra (Chief Electoral Officer Maharashtra, 2018). This is much lower than the skewed gender ratio in Maharashtra (925 women to 1000 men), suggesting that women are less likely to be registered to vote.

Constituency-wise analysis shows that many in the bottom 20 lowest elector-to-population ratio lie within the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). Figure 1 plots these, with around eight of the constituencies broadly in the MMR (e.g., Vasai, Ambernath, Palghar, Bhiwandi West). Others that feature in this list are also in the periphery of large urban centres in Maharashtra.

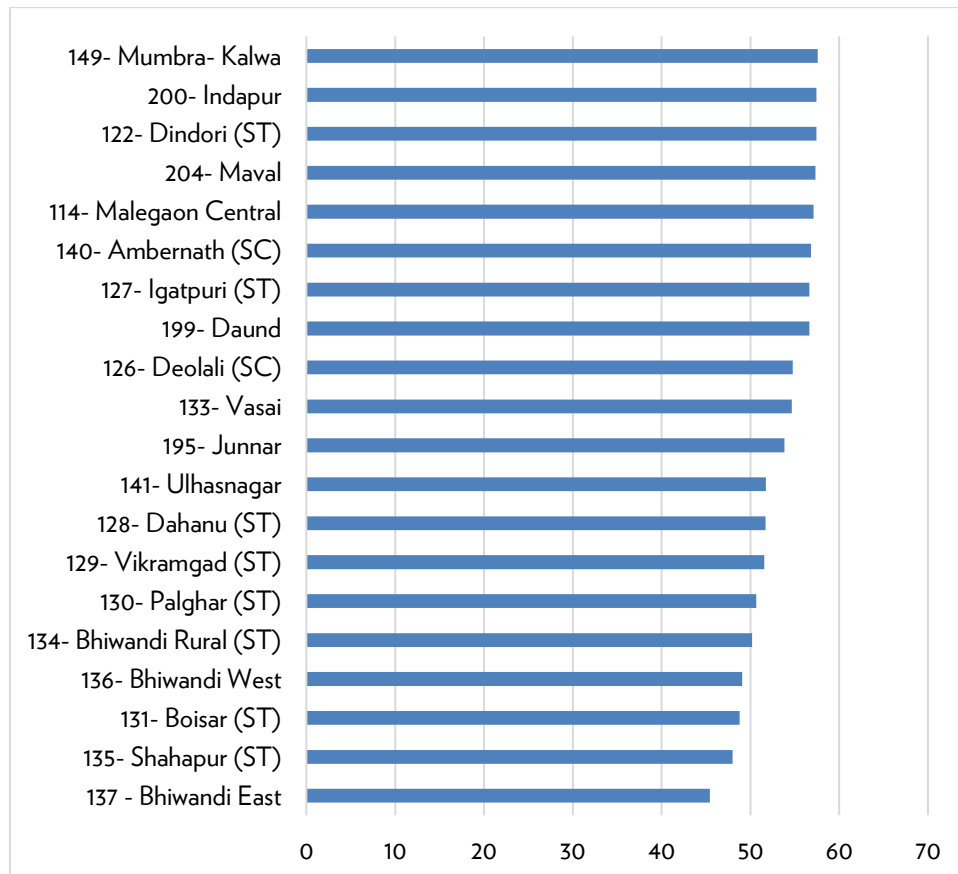


Figure 1: Lowest Elector-to-Population Ratio in Maharashtra constituencies

Source: Project Plan SVEEP-III 2016-20, Maharashtra (2018)

Figure 2 shows the statistics for the lowest coverage of Elector Photo Identity Cards (EPICs) across constituencies in Maharashtra. Here, the lower coverage is evident in many constituencies within the MMR - predominantly in suburban centres that have recently seen a large upswing in residential properties (e.g., Andheri, Goregaon, Versova, Kalyan, Dombivali, etc.). These suggest that efforts to issue EPICs should be targeted towards eligible voters in these areas.

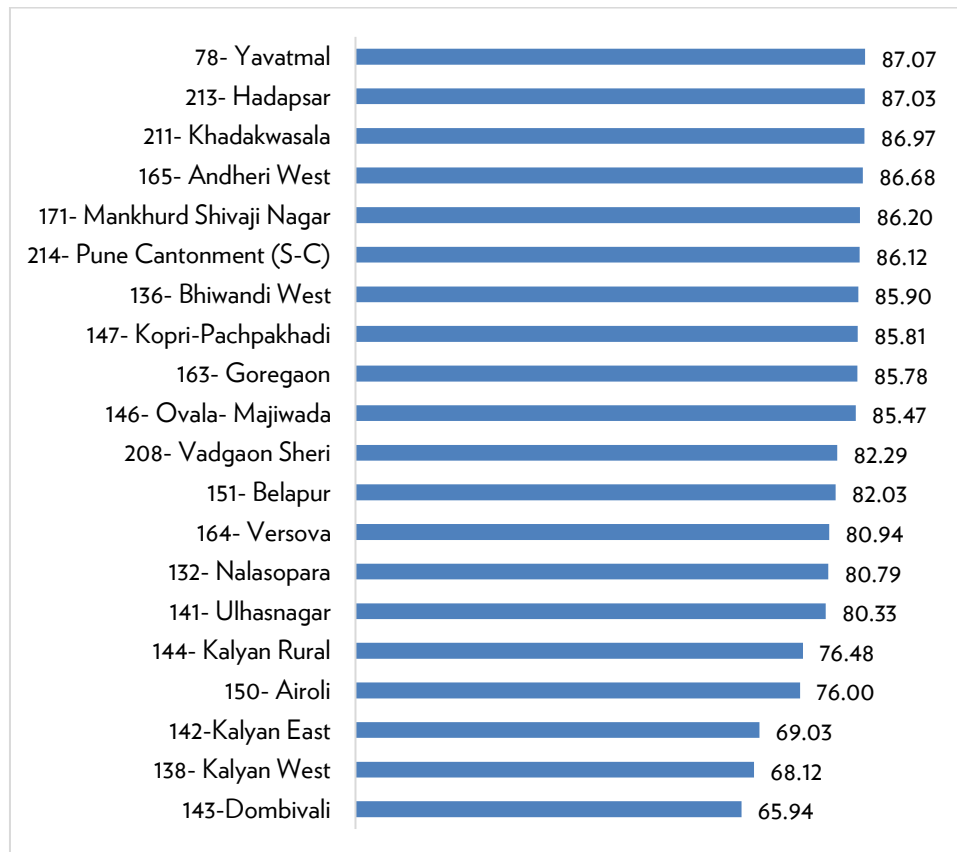


Figure 2: Lowest EPIC coverage in Maharashtra constituencies

Source: Project Plan SVEEP-III 2016-20, Maharashtra (2018)

Finally, lack of voter registration is only the first step of lack of involvement in the democratic process of voting -- the lacunae and gaps in voter registration exacerbate lower voter turnouts, indicating the problem of voter indifference that was first alluded to in Section 1. Figure 3 plots the number of electors with the number of votes polled in the previous Legislative Assembly elections in

Maharashtra (2014). The dashed line indicates the overall trend, and the ideal scenario (red line) is a 1:1 correspondence (i.e. 100% turnout). The fact that both the trend line and almost all dots are above this line means that there are very few districts that are even close to the 100% mark.

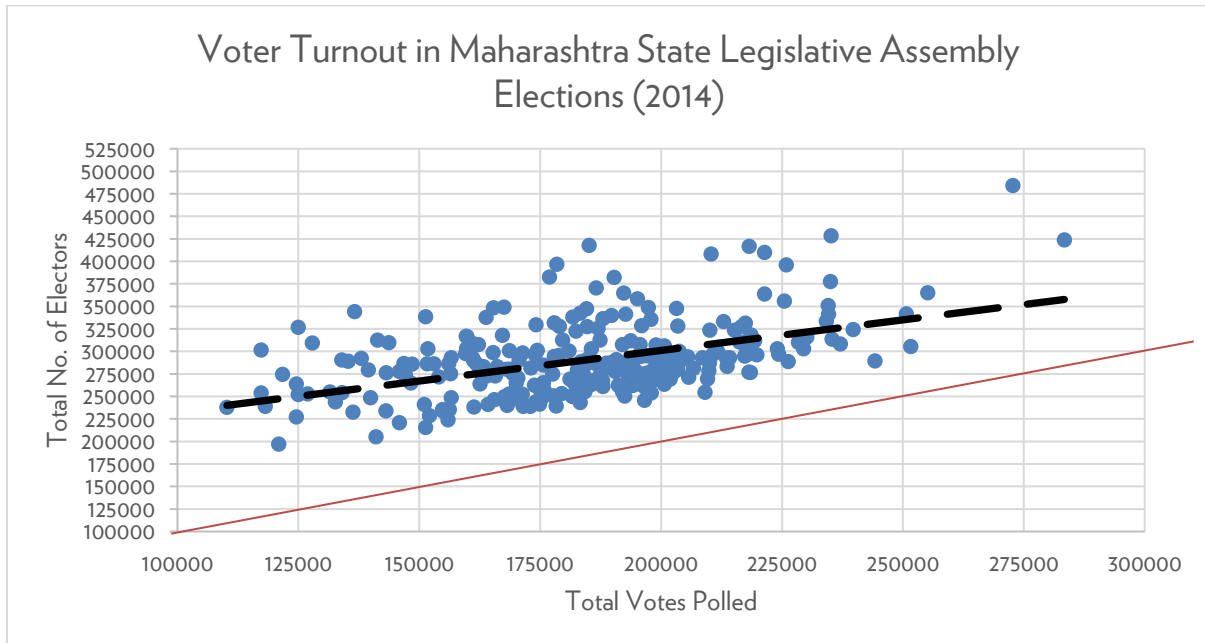


Figure 3: Voter Turnout in Maharashtra State Legislative Assembly Elections (2014)

Source: ECI Data (2014b)

We explore the case of the MMR in Figure 4. Compared to other constituencies in Maharashtra, voter turnout is well below the 60% mark on average in the MMR region, with the lowest turnout occurring in the same districts where the EPIC coverage is also low (e.g., Andheri West, Versova, Kalyan, Dombivali, among others). Thus, the same mechanisms that may be driving a lack of registered voters may ultimately be influencing voter indifference and therefore lower turnout. It can be argued that these are indeed behavioural factors that have not been considered before.

Voter Turnout (Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Elections 2014)

Percentage of votes polled to electors in each constituency

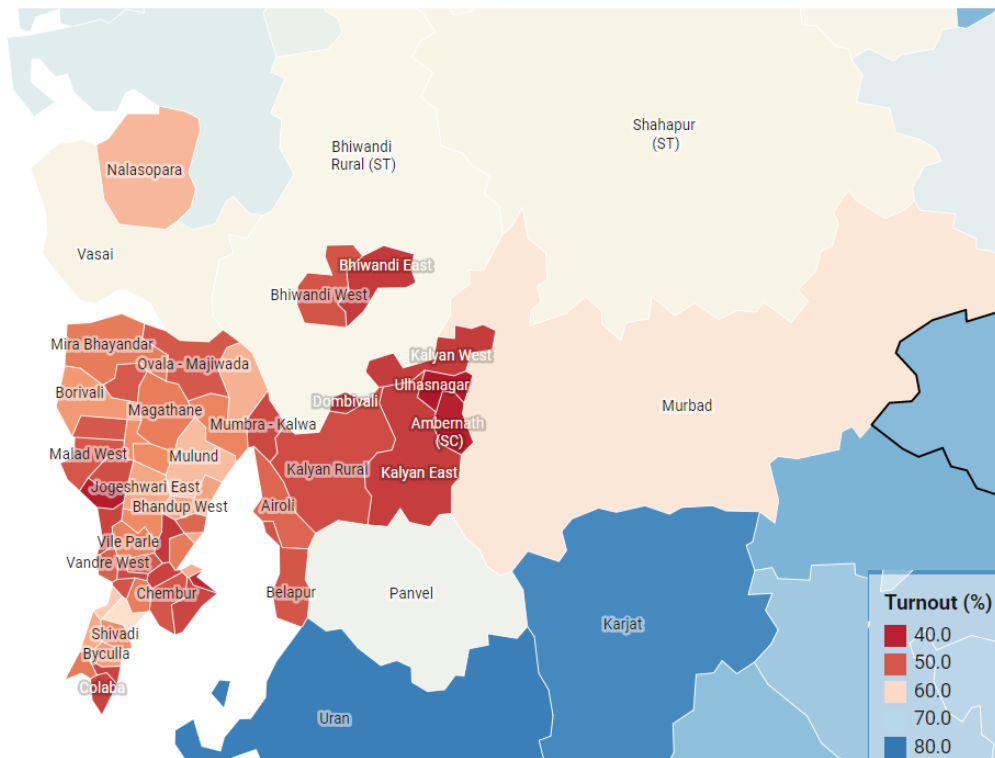


Figure 4: Voter Turnout in MMR (2014 Legislative Assembly Elections)

Source: ECI Data

Outside of mass media communication campaigns, there have been few targeted outreach efforts to ensure that voters are registered and then turn up to vote. Our study therefore proposes to take up a novel behavioural intervention targeted at improving voter registration among the age group with the lowest EPIC coverage (age groups 18-19 and 20-29 years, as identified by the CEO, Maharashtra). The key focus is on making registering to vote more salient and giving it prominence as a regular activity. This is easily facilitated now that services such as the NVSP allow easy registration of voters online by submitting documents, through to providing updates on the status of the EPIC. In the following section, we describe the details of the intervention.

2.1 Shambar Takke Shaii (STS) - 100% Inked Campaign

Project Mumbai partnered with the University of Mumbai, National Service Scheme (NSS), and the State Election Commission of Maharashtra to take on the same goals outlined in SVEEP-III - that of achieving 100% voter coverage. The project is divided into three phases, and is expected to last for three years. Potential voters, who have recently gained adult franchise perceive getting registered to be more difficult than it actually is, and therefore stall the process, or simply lack the motivation to vote. Voting is one of the most important means of participating in a democracy; in order to facilitate the same, Project Mumbai's STS Campaign aimed at easing the process of getting registered by setting up desks in colleges and corporate offices for individuals whose names have never been in the electoral roll, for those who have relocated to a different city or within the same city, and for those with errors in their existing voter ID cards that need correction. STS colleges were spread across city, suburban, and central regions of Mumbai, and nearly 100 colleges and 8 corporate houses were part of the STS Phase-I campaign. Apart from setting up desks, Project Mumbai also aimed at clearing any misconceptions that potential voters could have about the process of getting registered and eventually voting. With its ultimate aim being 100% voter turnout, STS has been unbiased in nature, from the start: it simply encourages the act of voting and never whom should one vote for. Campaign posters from STS Phase-I can be found in the Appendix (D)

3. Methodology

In line with recent work in the behavioural sciences, we implement a 'nudge' (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008) intervention that makes changes to the decision-making environment of potential voter registrants. Specifically, we adapt Nickerson and Rogers (2010) and Neri et al. (2016) to the Indian context to encourage recently eligible individuals (college students in the age group of 18-21 years) to register to vote in Mumbai. We worked with Project Mumbai and the National Service Scheme

(NSS, a government-backed youth public service program) to recruit and train student volunteers to help in setting up voter registration desks. The Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP), implemented across Maharashtra in 2014 for the Lok Sabha elections, had a significant component of appointing campus ambassadors at colleges (and principals as nodal officers). Given that this necessarily reinforces a top-down hierarchy, having independent campus ambassadors with access to limited resources could bring about more registrations.

STS Colleges were spread across city, suburban, and central regions of Mumbai, and nearly 100 colleges were part of the overall STS campaign. The coordinating team in each college consisted of a faculty member in-charge of the NSS and a team of up to 10 volunteers dedicated to undertaking voter registration drives. All colleges were issued a formal letter by Project Mumbai requesting permission to set up voter registration desks in the premises prior to the October 2019 Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Elections. Project Mumbai then coordinated with the colleges to select three to five points of contact who led activities within each college. These were then invited to participate in a training and orientation program conducted by the State Election Commission of Maharashtra. Guidelines were provided for registering first-time voters (i.e., those who had never been included in an electoral roll before and did not have an EPIC ID) via the National Voter Service Portal (NVSP), whereas the Voter Helpline smartphone application (available on Android and iOS operating systems) was also used by student volunteers familiar with the interface. Following this, student volunteers coordinated with stakeholders to set an appropriate day for conducting voter registration activities. This report documents a subset of 20 STS colleges, where the efficacy of the nudge was tested. In the remainder of the report, we only refer to these colleges.

A. College Registration Champions (CVCs)

As part of the training, volunteers from 10 colleges were randomly assigned to receive the training for plan-making (treatment group) to improve voter registration drives in their colleges. Ten colleges that did not receive this intervention (control group) were told about the overall STS campaign and care was taken to minimize any communication between these two groups – most colleges in the treatment group were located away from those in the control group, so the likelihood of spillovers was low. Although difficult to ensure in practice, there were only marginal differences in characteristics between the treatment and control group colleges: they had a similar student cohort size, were all situated in urban Mumbai or Thane, and had, on average, the same infrastructure to support the drives. Additional material was provided (FAQs, checklists, and specific information for plan-making) and is presented in Appendix A.

CVCs and their teams then identified slots for voter registration, deciding a maximum number of 5-6 individuals per slot. Once this was done, the NSS chapter in the college issued communication (via circulars or otherwise) specifying the dates and times at which registration desks will be set up.

CVCs first approached each student with a slot, and invited them to register with a set of (scanned) documents. Those willing to register were given a card (a copy of which will be retained with the CRC, see Appendix B) that had the following details: (a) what time they will register (slot); (b) where they would be coming from, and (c) what they would be doing before; and (d) who they will be coming with (with or without slot); (e) what they will be doing afterward. On the reverse of this card, we provided an ECI- and Project Mumbai-approved checklist of documents required for registering. All plans were made one day prior to the days of the voter registration drive.

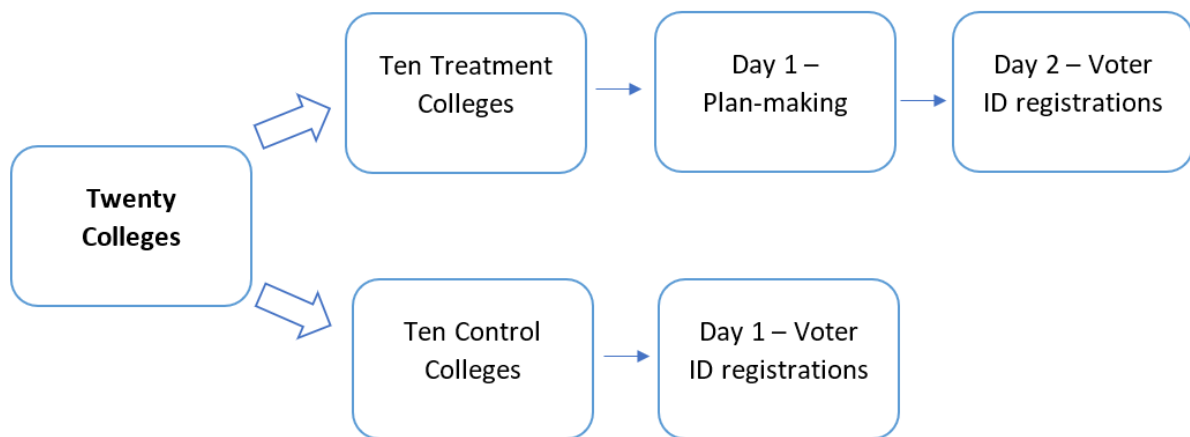


Figure 5: Intervention for Plan-Making in Mumbai Colleges

During the registration days, there were three types of potential registrations: (i) plan-made as per slot; (ii) non-plan-made (but plan-made for other slot/day); and (iii) non-plan made (on the spot, no prior plans made at all). CVCs collected data on categorizing individuals into each of these categories when they approached the desk. CVCs only made plans for on-the-spot registrants if slots were still available. If slots were full, potential registrants were informed that slots are currently full, and were provided guidance on directly applying to the website or app. We then measured whether plan-making was effective in ensuring campus-based voter registration by computing the number of students who fell under categories (i) and (ii).

Due to scheduling and logistical issues, the voter registration drives were conducted in only 16 of the 20 colleges selected for the project. The four colleges where no voter registration drives took place were: Bhavan's College, Andheri; Bhavan's SPIT, Andheri; Thakur College of Engineering, Kandivali, and DAV College, Bhandup. These colleges could be taken up in Phase II of the STS campaign, keeping in mind the challenges faced in implementing the interventions and voter registration drives. Some photographs from the voter registration drives are presented below:



Photographs from voter registration drives at various colleges

B. Corporate Text and Email Reminders

Similar to past studies, we implemented text and email reminders via existing corporate communication systems (that were internal and specific to each company). Of the many corporations approached by Project Mumbai, we planned for a sample of 10 locations to pilot the efficacy of a behavioural intervention in a larger and more diverse pool of would-be voters. These were a mix of large office locations that housed primarily multinational companies (large and

medium-sized).[†] The two housing societies in Goregaon and Bhandup localities where the drive was implemented had approximately 100 and 400 residents, respectively. Although nearly 14 office locations were approached to conduct the voter registration drive, only the first 10 to respond were finalized. Each company received a formal letter requesting their support in implementing a voter registration drive at their offices (varying locations), and were given a list of requirements for conducting the drive (see Appendix C). The research team simultaneously engaged with past student volunteers from the STS colleges campaign to recruit them to manage voter registration desks at these locations once dates were confirmed.

The behavioural intervention involved priming a social norm that has been useful in a variety of other contexts such as encouraging voluntary behaviour by citizens (e.g., paying taxes on time). In providing such a feedback-based intervention, there is always the risk of unintended feedback effects (e.g., reducing the level of voluntary behaviour if found to be higher than the norm), which has been suggested in a few studies as well. However, since there is no prior evidence testing this in the case of voter registration, we aimed to provide a preliminary understanding of the mechanisms through which priming voter registration operates.

Announcements about the voter registration drives were to be sent via the official communication system of the company or premises management in all ten locations. We randomly assigned four locations to receive the additional message priming social norms (see Appendix D). All employees were expected to receive the message in one form or another, so the sample under observation was expected to be the size of the company. The helpdesk days varied between one to three days, depending on the size of the office/company, and were active between 9 or 11 AM to 5 or 6 PM on

[†] Although no precise number of employees are known, each office location varied from nearly 800 to 2000+ employees.

the office premises. For purposes of analysis, we restrict ourselves to analysing results of only the first day of registration as these are consistent across locations.

To conduct and coordinate the drives themselves, the research team had meetings/calls with company representatives (from each office location) to apprise them of the intervention and the proposed schedule. The voter registration desks were managed by a mix of trained volunteers from the STS colleges campaign, Project Mumbai, and Monk Prayogshala.

In terms of implementation, of the 10 office locations, four received the intervention and six were in the control group. Of these, two include housing societies of the Kalpataru Corporation that were included after consultation with their management. In that sense, the differences between them cannot be considered the same as a voter registration drive at an office location as the demographic of potential registrants varies widely.

4. Findings and Results

Our results show that plan-making in treatment colleges increased voter registration by 33.1% on Day 1 of the voter registration drive (Figure 6); however, the sample size is below 30 (we have a comparable sample of eight treatment colleges and eight in the control group). Thus, a non-parametric test is helpful in this regard, and the Mann-Whitney U-test had a z-statistic of 1.72, which implied that the difference is not statistically significant. The trend, however, is in the same direction as the difference between average and total number of registrations in treatment and control colleges (see appendix E for registration data from all colleges). Thus, a larger sample size may be useful in detecting significant differences caused by the intervention, as well as using a regression framework to control for other factors (such as size of college, day of the week of the drive, among

others). The intervention can therefore be seen as a pilot that can be scaled up to include more colleges and provide power to the statistical estimates. In what follows, we detail findings from specific colleges (control and treatment groups), and document the implementation in office locations as well.

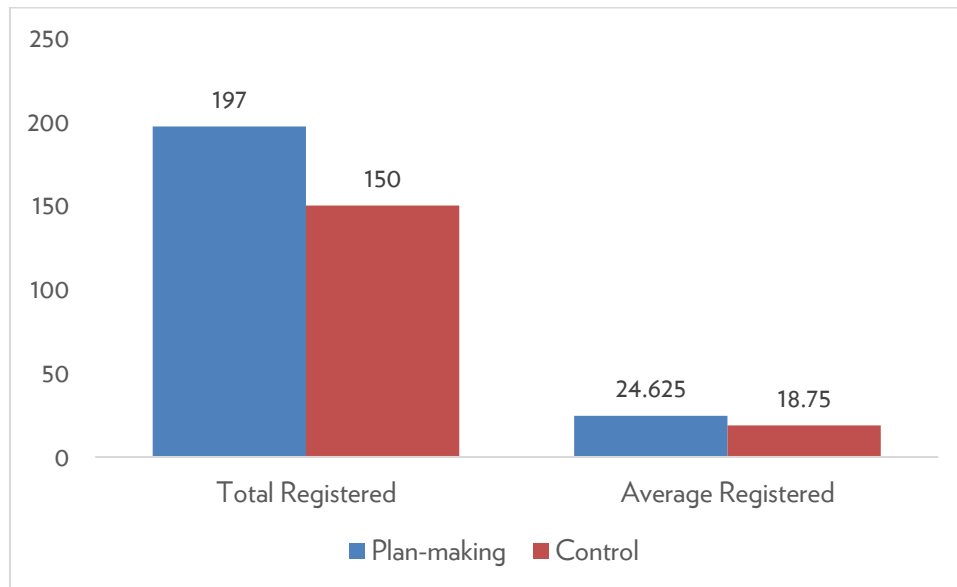


Figure 6: Effect of Plan-making intervention in colleges

4.1 Control colleges (Voter Registration Drive only)

Eight colleges, roughly across Western Mumbai, were covered that received no intervention. The control colleges were - Mithibai College, Kamla Mehta College, Narsee Monjee (NM) College, DJ Sanghvi College, Sathaye College, Dahanukar College, Bhavan's SPCE College, and Thakur College. The process that each college followed to conduct the drive was the same - once the dates were confirmed, eligible students were informed using WhatsApp forwards and classroom announcements. Trained volunteers would then set up the desk on the designated date and start registrations through the NVSP website and mobile app. Sathaye College was the first of the control colleges to start registrations on 21st August 2019, which eventually ended with Kamala Mehta

College on 21st September 2019. One problem common across all colleges, with DJ Sanghvi College as the exception, was poor connectivity due to network interceptors installed on college premises.

Unfortunately, there was little in way of assistance provided by colleges to mitigate the lack of connectivity to the NVSP website/app due to poor Wi-Fi/Internet services. Given the promising number of students interested in getting registered made tending to the desks a little tedious for the volunteers. In colleges such as Dahanukar and Thakur, where the drive was conducted in the computer lab to ease the process, connectivity was still an issue. In certain colleges, slight unpreparedness on the part of the volunteers also played a role in delayed or fewer registrations. Aforementioned unpreparedness manifested in the form of unfamiliarity with laptops/computers, spreadsheets, and the NVSP website/mobile app, incorrect data entry while filling the form, etc. Except in the cases of NM College, Thakur College, DJ Sanghvi College, and Dahanukar College, colleges did not provide laptops or computers to the volunteers, leaving mobile phones as the only option.

The desks at control colleges were either set up in the computer lab or at/around the college entrance. Except in the case of Kamala Mehta College and NM College – Kamala Mehta College's desk was on the same floor as the canteen, and NM College's was on the same floor as the classrooms of those eligible to get registered, i.e., second and third-year degree college students. Potential reasons for zero registrations in Kamala Mehta College could be a lack of volunteers focussed only on registrations. Students in this college had a number of events ongoing or to prepare for, due to which their attention was divided. Besides, unfamiliarity with the app and website, coupled with poor connectivity could have also contributed to no registrations.

4.2 Treatment colleges (Voter Registration Drive + Plan-Making)

In treatment colleges, interested and eligible students were given cue cards, helping them plan to get registered on the following day. To minimize uncertainty in registration dates as well as ensure consistency in implementation, plan making cards contained plans for only the immediately next day, but potential registrants were informed that the desks would be set up on another day as well. In the first treatment college, about 91 cards were distributed, reflecting a high interest among students wishing to register to vote. However, it is possible that this high take up of plan-making cards was due to their novelty and ease of communication, since only 34% of those who made plans in this college actually registered to vote on the following day (Figure 7). It is possible that many of the initial 91 came on the second day of the voter registration desk.

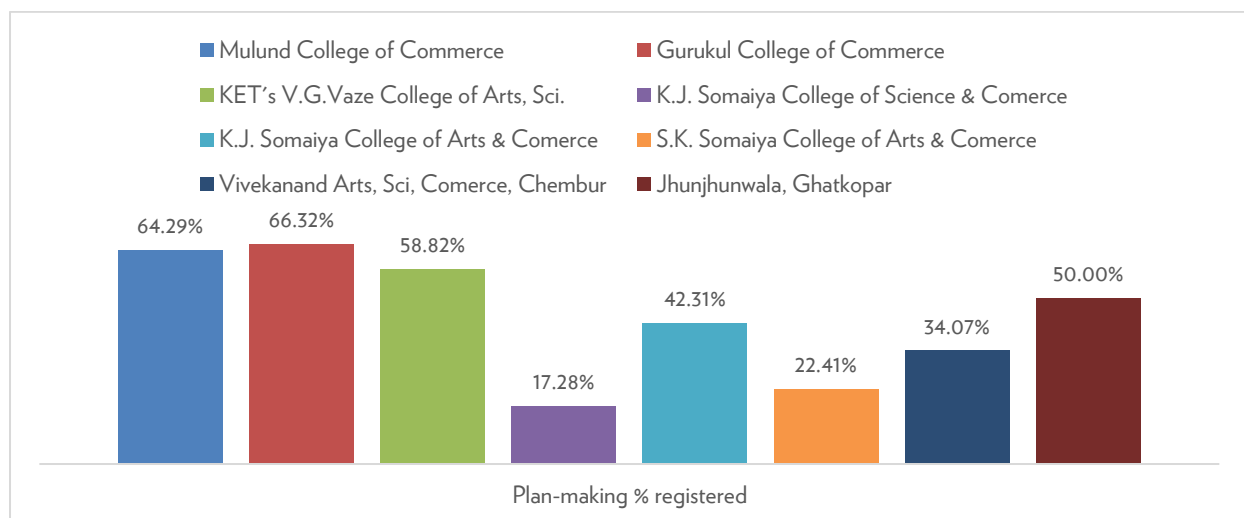


Figure 7: Percentage of Students with Plan-making Cards

Among certain treatment colleges, communicating with college authorities and volunteers seemed to be something of a Herculean task. Given college events, exams, and holidays due to festivals such as Ganesh Chaturthi, coordinating to arrive at a suitable date proved to be difficult, eventually leading to cancelled or mismanaged drives. Besides, a more proactive strategy to spread the word about the registration desks would help increase the number of registrations; for example, in the

case of Gurukul College, CVCs managed to do 65 registrations on Day 1 itself, due to their enthusiasm in encouraging students to get registered. In the case of treatment colleges too, desks were set up near or around the main gate, to attract maximum number of students.

4.3 Social Norm Intervention in Office Locations

Figure 8 shows no significant effect of invoking the social norm relative to locations where there was no social norm among the 10 locations (four office locations and one housing society in each of the treatment and control groups, making a total of eight locations in all). In fact, we find a higher rate of registration (179 individuals) in the control group (where no social norm was invoked) than in the treatment group (108 individuals registered). However, there is only a marginal difference in terms of the average number of registrations, with the control group having on average 30 registrations on the first day, while treatment group locations witnessed 27 registrations on average on Day 1.

This finding is also plausibly on account of heterogeneous samples as well as uneven implementation across locations. For example, in three treatment group locations, many registrants provided feedback that they were unaware of the voter registration drive taking place until they saw the desk set up. This suggests that the official mode of communication was either ineffective or absent. Furthermore, in the control group of locations, many locations were managed by Kalpataru, which was proactive in communicating the dates and timings of the drive. This disparity in approaches suggests that more work is needed in finetuning such interventions in the context of an office location. We discuss these as limitations and potential for future work in the following section.

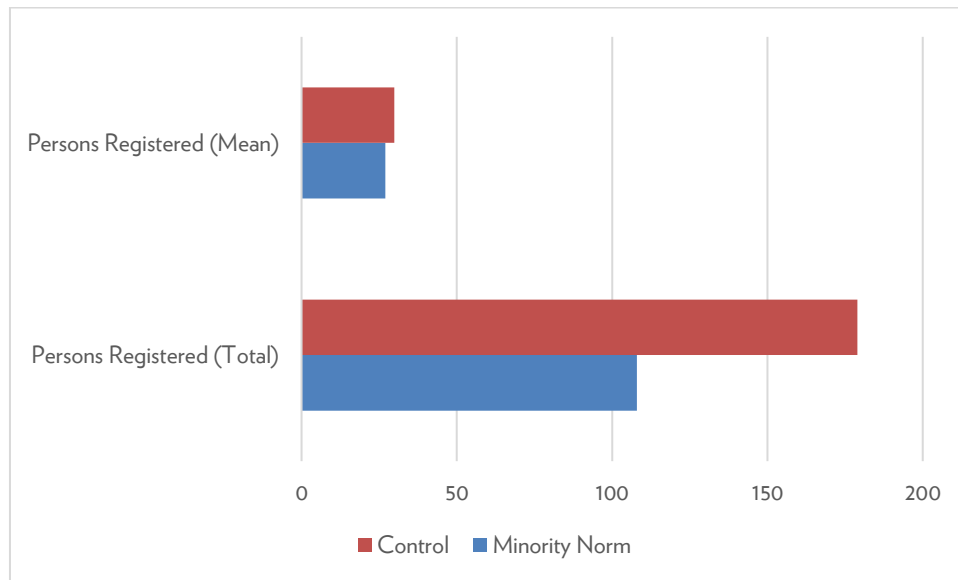


Figure 8: Effect of Social Norm Intervention in Corporate Offices

5. Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The evidence that behavioural interventions can improve voter registration in the case of Mumbai city is promising: while first-time voter registrants responded positively to being nudged by making plans to register to vote, priming social norms to more senior potential voters was not as effective. Although the method of implementation used was considered to be robust (communication channels in both colleges as well as office locations are well developed), there were a few insights from the implementation process that can be used to inform future projects and interventions. These are detailed below.

5.1 Establishing lines of communication

As is evident from implementation challenges from earlier projects, having a clear chain of communication for field-based projects is essential to ensuring that overall coordination is happening in real time. This issue is further compounded if there is communication outside of the

project team to stakeholders (in this case, company personnel where voter registration drives were to be scheduled). Foreseeable and unforeseeable problems arise during a study, pilot or otherwise. Clear communication between all stakeholders is of utmost importance to see the project to a successful end. Assigning one contact person per institution (Project Mumbai, Monk Prayogshala, and respective college authorities), to coordinate dates, and other details of the drive could help reduce delays and implementation issues. In particular, the effectiveness of the intervention in corporate settings hinges largely on their internal communication systems, which project partners may be unable to control. Indeed, institutional support from corporates was critical in ensuring that the outreach plan worked well, as well as troubleshooting any operational difficulties on the days of the drives. One of the prime concerns here relates to making early approaches to companies and office locations with details of the implementation to make the drive more effective. In the case of the intervention at Mindspace Malad, many employees of offices at these locations suggested that they had no prior notice of the voter registration drive taking place. Thus, care should be taken to ensure that there is ahead-of-time (at least a week's notice) communication with respect to intimating potential registrants about the dates, particularly as registration requires access to scanned documents that may take time to prepare. In both corporate as well as college settings, clearly listing the required documents on communication material could help save time on the days of the drive; circulation of WhatsApp messages and classroom announcements could commence in advance, and in greater frequency to reduce time taken at the registration desk.

5.2 Connectivity and supply-side factors

Two intertwined issues, beyond the project team's control were, lack of adequate internet connectivity as well as a slower NVSP registration facility on the website and mobile application. The registration drives across colleges and corporate settings found that tackling this barrier proved

to be the most taxing and time consuming, ultimately hindering the overall process of the drive itself. The latter is a supply-side issue that can only be rectified by raising server capacities at NVSP, which is out of the project team's control, but can be suggested to the ECI with an eye on meeting the enrolment gap. In terms of access to consistent internet connectivity to register individuals, provision of wireless internet facilities (where available) from college authorities could help smoothen the process of registering. Since network interceptors are installed in most colleges, even use of mobile internet hotspots proved difficult. Alternatively, colleges can provide space for registration desks to be set up where internet connectivity is not hindered and designate this specifically for the activity.

5.3 Volunteer availability

At the core of any successfully implemented field trial or pilot are the project staff who ensure that key activities are completed in a timely and efficient manner. In this case, student volunteers of the NSS from suburban and central Mumbai colleges made up the pool of project staff tasked with conducting voter registration drives. Since they were separately incentivized to carry out the drives by Project Mumbai, one could argue that they were sufficiently motivated to see the drives through as efficiently as possible. However, the task of registering a large number of individuals is tiresome, especially when the task is mechanical and repetitive and performed by the same team daily over a long period of time. It's easy for volunteers to burn out quickly if they don't get sufficient breaks; thus, having additional (backup) volunteers, so that there is a revolving door system of work, could help increase overall efficiency of the drives. Given the interruptions to the voter registration drive for factors listed in 5.2, varied allocation tasks among volunteers, based on their strengths, could also help increase the number of registrations. CVCs were well-trained in the registration process itself, but often did not have quick responses to other queries related to voting (e.g., change of address, loss of EPIC, etc.). In this context, it is recommended to organise slightly more rigorous training for

the volunteers (with activities and dry runs), so that they can quickly and accurately attend to the potential registrants' queries and speed up registrations. Dry runs can also help avoid frequent mistakes in data entry, which would additionally help save time. Alternatively, volunteers who are more comfortable with spreadsheets, form filling, and effectively communicating could be designated to work on those specific tasks, while others can work on the registration itself.

5.4 Delineating responsibilities for college authorities

College authorities were indirectly responsible for the success of the voter registration drives, and were supported substantially by the NSS units. In the 20 colleges where the voter registration drives were conducted, there were, on average, very few colleges where management and staff were required to intervene to facilitate the drive. The time required for registering each student was expected to be around 10 minutes on average, but in practice took much longer since it required locating documents, verifying information on filled in form, and answering FAQs from students. Moreover, since the drives took place during a time of examinations, college festivals, and public holidays, the responsiveness of college authorities became critical in ensuring seamless implementation of the voter registration drive. Thus, a nodal point of contact to process approvals at each college could go a long way in increasing the total number of registrations: willingness to accommodate the dates for setting up registration desks when they clash with other co-curricular activities, granting students permission to volunteer, encouraging eligible students to get registered, provision of Wi-Fi and/or internet, laptops and/or computers.

With a view of Phase 2 of the STS Campaign by Project Mumbai, taking these potential issues into account can help in ensuring a more efficient process of voter registration as well as engaging with colleges for the drives. The policy recommendation from this project is clear: plan-making has

tremendous potential as a behavioural intervention to improve voter registration among college-going students in the MMR. Future steps include expanding the intervention to other colleges across the city, as well as other cities in Maharashtra. One modification to the card can help in broadening its appeal: translating the content to Hindi or Marathi so that individuals holding the card become aware of its salience. In terms of corporate voter registration drives, our pilot of priming social norms does not show any significant increase in registrations; however, our finding is on the basis of specific implementation challenges unique to the context as well as the small sample size. Expanding the sample size and ensuring streamlined implementation (e.g., the same intervention in a uniform group of office locations, say belonging to a single corporate entity) may help in determining the efficacy of the nudge. Thus, behavioural interventions that nudge individuals in the age group with the lowest representation in the electoral system can help meet the overall objectives of universal voter registration in India.

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Appendix A - Script for Training NSS Volunteers

We are researchers from Monk Prayogshala, Mumbai a not-for-profit academic research organization that is partnering with Project Mumbai and the SEC to implement voter registration drives across colleges in Mumbai. We are here today to help you understand the voter registration process and an additional element that we are introducing to boost voter registration in a few colleges.

<<Introduce MP team members present>>

Now we will walk you through what we have in mind for the voter registration process, from start to finish. If you have questions at any point, please feel free to stop us and ask immediately. There will also be time for questions at the end of the training, if you want to ask us then.

<<Request for four volunteers from audience, join trainer; introduce all volunteers by name >>

<<Volunteer 1 is a student>>

<<Volunteer 2 is the College Registration Champion>>

<<Volunteers 3 and 4 are at the registration desk>>

INVITATION PROCESS

First, a student <Volunteer 1 name> is at college, and will be approached by <Volunteer 2 name>, who is a College Registration Champion (CRC) assigned to that particular college. She/he can ask the following questions to elicit initial interest:

1. Are you aware of the assembly elections happening in October?
2. Do you know what a voter ID is? (If no, explain as: This is an identity card that allows you to cast your vote in the assembly and general elections)
3. Are you a registered voter/do you have a voter ID?
 1. If No, would you like to make one?

1. If Yes, we're setting up stalls to ease the process of making a voter ID. All you have to do is carry a set of documents and we'll do the rest. I will give you a small card to help remind you about the time as well as the documents that you will need to bring. The stalls will be set up on <<abc dates>> and you can come in at <<date and slot time>>.
2. If No, I understand, thanks for your time! If you decide to change your mind, you can always come back to me about this.

<Volunteer 2 name> asks these questions and <Volunteer 1 name> responds. It is your responsibility to ask these questions with the intention of ensuring that every eligible student in your college is registered to vote in the upcoming elections.

>>If the answer to Q3 is yes, then:

Thank you so much. Please step over to the voter registration desk manned by my colleagues <<Volunteer 3 name>> and <<Volunteer 4 name>>, they will take down your details and assign a slot to you.

<<Remove a CRC card and fill out the details in the card as below at the desk:>>

1. Name: Enter the full name of the individual as per their student ID card
2. When will you register to vote?

Enter the date and time as per the slots provided to your college. In your college, the dates are <<College registration dates>> and in each day, you will have one-hour time slots starting at 8 AM till 4 PM. Thus, the first slot is 8 to 9 AM, then 9 to 10 AM, and the last slot is 3 to 4 PM, each day. When assigning a time, be sure to start with the earliest time slot (8 AM), and then work according to the availability of <<Volunteer 1 name>>.

>If they are not available on any of those days, then request them to see if they can adjust their schedules as these are the days when the voter registration desk will be open on campus. Feel free to come back to me if you have managed to do that so I can give you your card.

3. Ask them details of their plan for registering to vote (*refer to Rogers Appendix Scripts E and F*):

1. Where will you be before coming to register, and what will you be doing? (enter a place and time, and activity)
2. Who will you come with? (if by themselves, enter “By myself”)
3. What will you do after registering? (Enter a place and activity; this could even be a lecture they will be attending after registering)

Responses to Questions 1 and 2 must be entered in the spreadsheet accurately and double-checked before passing on the card. Responses to 3 and 4 are not to be entered. <<Volunteers 3 and 4>> check the data entered on the card, and enter responses to 1 and 2 in the spreadsheet. Enter the ID as per serial number (i.e. first person to be given card is given ID of “1”, the second person is assigned ID “2” and so on). ID and Time slot is most important. Write this ID in the top corner of the card for your reference before handing over the card.

> Hand over the filled-out card to the student

<<Show reverse of card>>

<<Volunteer 3/4 name>> : List of essential documents are provided on the reverse of this card, please ensure that you bring all of these on <<DATE>> at <<TIME SLOT>>. You can use the check boxes provided next to the documents to keep track of the documents you have and the ones you need. Please let me know if you have any questions, or if you wish to change your slot in case your schedule changes. Come by and let us know if that is the case!

ON DAY OF REGISTRATION

All volunteers will be stationed at the desk. One person will handle data entry, two will handle students coming to register to vote, with the Form 6 open for registration as per training by SEC.

One person will be the first to greet student visiting the desk (seated at the start of the desk).
<<Volunteer 1 name>> will be this person.

>Student visits desk

>>Volunteer 1: Hi, thanks for visiting our desk. You were given a card by our CRC at the time of invitation, can I see your card please?

>>Presents card

Examine time, date, and ID. Match these with the spreadsheet available, and mark an x where the individual is matched. Otherwise continue search. If name not present, add ID to spreadsheet (all data points in spreadsheet) and then mark x.

>>No card / Don't have one / Lost it / Didn't get it

"That's alright, I can give you one right now, but it will be for a later time as our current slot is full. "

REPEAT INVITATION PROCESS

> Guided to Volunteer 2 or 3 to commence registration process as per SEC process

>> In case some documents are missing or form filling is not done, please invite them again for a later time (change the slot in the card).

Thank you!

FAQs

1. How many students should I allot within one slot?
 1. Try keeping a maximum of 5-6 students per slot so that the registration is completed smoothly.
2. What if someone has not brought their card and cannot come later to register? Can I just register them when they come?
 1. This depends on the rush at the registration desk at that time. In case they are willing to wait, you can register them then itself.
3. What if I stay in a hostel and don't have address proof?

1. For students: Students, if otherwise eligible, living in a hostel or mess or lodge more or less continuously, going back to their normal home or place of residence only for short periods, can be held to be ordinarily resident in the place where the hostel or mess or lodge is situated. Such students who want to enroll themselves at the hostel / mess will have to attach a bonafide declaration duly certified by the Headmaster / Principal / Director / Registrar / Dean of the educational institution with Form 6 (as per the specimen of Annexure IV).
4. I don't have <XXX> document for proof of address, what else can I bring?
 1. Proof of address: A copy of any of the following documents should be attached as a proof of ordinary residence: - 8. 9. Bank / Kisan / Post Office current Pass Book; or Ration Card; or Passport; or Driving License; or Income Tax Assessment Order; or Latest rent agreement; or Latest Water / Telephone | Electricity | Gas Connection Bill for that address, either in the name of the applicant or that of his / her immediate relation like parents etc.; or Any postal letter / mail delivered through Indian Postal Department in the applicant's name at the address of ordinary residence
5. I don't have <XXX> document for proof of age, what else can I bring?
 1. Proof of age: Birth certificate issued by a Municipal Authorities or district office of the Registrar of Births & Deaths or Baptism certificate ; or Birth certificate from the school (Gola. / Recognized) last attended by the applicant or any other recognized educational institution; or if a person is class 10 or more pass, he should give a copy of the marksheet of class 10, if it contains date of birth as a proof of date of birth; or Marksheet of class 8 if it contains date of birth; or Marksheet of class 5 if it contains date of birth; or Indian Passport; or PAN card; or Driving License; or Aadhaar letter/Card issued by UIDAI

Appendix B - Voter Registration Plan-Making Card


Name: _____


1. When will you register to vote?
DATE: ____/08/2019 TIME: _____ AM/PM

2. Where will you be before coming to register, and what will you be doing?


3. Who will you come with? _____

4. What will you do after registering? _____

 monk praqogshala
ID: _____


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People. Purpose. Positive Change.

Reverse

 monk praqogshala

List of essential documents (scanned copies)

- ☐ Age proof (e.g. Passport / Driver's License / PAN Card / 10th or 12th Passing Certificate / Birth Certificate / Aadhar Letter issued by UIDAI)
- ☐ Address proof (e.g. Passport / Driver's License / Electricity Bill / Phone bill / Gas bill / Water bill / Rent Agreement)
- ☐ Photocopy of family member's voter ID
- ☐ Passport size photo

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Appendix C - Corporate Voter Registration Drive Logistics Note

Corporate Voter Registration Desk

The voter registration helpdesk at private companies will serve two purposes: (a) to resolve frequently asked questions and concerns related to the voter registration process; and (b) to facilitate and support registration interested and eligible employees on the NVSP website. To these ends, Monk Prayogshala will coordinate with point(s) of contact at each office and/or corporate entity to ensure that voter registration desks are set up and running for specific time periods.

Requirements for Helpdesk:

A. Infrastructure/Equipment:

These are essential infrastructure needed for setting up and drawing attention to the desk.

1. Long table with seating capacity for at least three persons
2. Four chairs
3. Plug point for charging phones / laptops (extension cable will be ideal)
4. Wireless Internet connectivity; Stationery

B. Location Preferences:

These are essential to ensure that the helpdesk is accessible and does not interfere with business as usual

1. Common-access area: The location of the desk must be in a common area that all employees of the company are able to access without restriction. Ideally, the reception lobby or close to the reception will suit this purpose.
2. Adequate size: The desk must be located in an area that can comfortably seat and host at least 5 persons at any given time. Are around the desk should have place for at least 10 persons to walk through at any point in time (i.e. as part of a larger space, e.g. cafeteria).
3. Movement: Presence or operation of the desk should not hinder movement of any other employees (or potential registrants) at any given point in time. If a queue is required to be formed, then desk should be placed in an area such that queue formation does not affect general movement in the area.
4. Safety: The presence or operation of the desk should not be in contravention of any fire safety norms imposed in the premises.

Announcement System:

Monk Prayogshala will work with point(s) of contact to draft and agree to an email message or text message announcing the running of registration desks. Researchers will provide a draft to company representatives who will edit it as per company communication policies. Following this, the mailer and/or text message will be disseminated at least three days prior to setting up the voter registration desk. Minor modifications to the text can be discussed with company representatives as required.

Appendix D - Poster Priming Social Norm



The poster features a central illustration of a hand dropping a ballot into a box, set against a background of red and blue horizontal stripes. Logos for 'monk prayogshala' and 'PROJECT MUMBAI.org' are in the top corners. The text is in white and red on a dark blue background.

**VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE AT
KALPATARU REGALIA & PINNACLE**

REGISTER TO VOTE

We at Kalpataru are asking all residents who are 18 and over and Indian citizens to register to vote. Our goal is 100% registrations on 20th September, 2019

**NEARLY NINE OUT OF TEN CITIZENS IN MAHARASHTRA
BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 TO 49 ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE. IF
YOU ARE NOT YET REGISTERED, YOU ARE IN A VERY SMALL
MINORITY!**

Dates: 20th September, 2019
Venue: Club House
Time: 10 AM to 6 PM
Required documents (scanned copies in .jpeg format, < 2MB in size per file):

a. Photo: Passport Size Photograph	b. Any one Age Proof and Address Proof:
	1. Indian Passport - Age /Address
	2. Driving license - Age /Address proof
	3. Aadhaar (Full Letter)- Age/ Address
	4. PAN card - Age proof
	5. Passing certificate - Age
	6. Telephone / Electricity / Water / Gas Bill - Address proof
	7. Ration card -Address
	8. Recent Bank Passbook - Address
	9. Rental agreement - Address

c. Voter ID Number / EPIC Number of any family member / neighbour: So the names are included in the same list.

THANK YOU FOR REGISTERING TO VOTE!



 in partnership with 

"This country is going to the dogs."

But will your stray opinion make a difference?

Don't Postpone. Become A Registered Voter Today!

If you wish to get registered to vote or want our Voter Registration Counters set up in your office, log on to www.projectmumbai.org.

Mission #ShambharTakkeShaaai



Support partners:





In
partnership
with



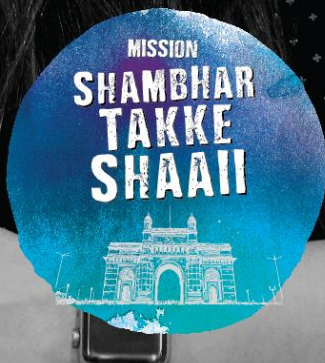
"The system sucks."

But do you have
your system in place?

Don't Postpone. Become A Registered Voter Today!

If you wish to get registered to vote or want our
Voter Registration Counters set up in your office,
log on to www.projectmumbai.org.

Mission #ShambharTakkeShaaai



Support partners:





 in partnership with 

"Nothing has and nothing will ever change in India."

But when will you change your attitude?

Don't Postpone. Become A Registered Voter Today!

If you wish to get registered to vote or want our Voter Registration Counters set up in your office, log on to www.projectmumbai.org.

Mission #ShambharTakkeShaaai



Support partners:



Appendix E - List of Colleges

Treatment Colleges -

College	Number of plan making cards distributed	Number of registrations on day 1
Mulund College of Commerce	14	9
Gurukul College of Commerce	95	63
KET's V.G.Vaze College of Arts, and Science	34	20
K.J. Somaiya College of Science & Commerce	81	14
K.J. Somaiya College of Arts & Commerce	52	22
S.K. Somaiya College of Arts & Commerce	58	13
Vivekanand College of Arts, Science, Commerce	91	31
Jhunjhunwala College	50	25

Control Colleges -

College	Number of registrations on day 1
Bhavan's College, Andheri	22
For Bhavan's College, SPCE	
M.L. Dahanukar College	4
Sathaye College	16
Mithibai College	7
NM College	9
DJ Sanghvi College of Engineering	71
Thakur College of Science and Commerce	16
Kamla Mehta College	4