

## SVEEP Plan for Bihar Assembly Elections, 2015

### Background of Munger District

Munger District is located in the southern part of Bihar and its headquarters is located on the southern bank of river Ganges. Munger district occupies an area of 1,419 square kilometres (548 sq mi). It accounts for 3.3% of the area of Bihar. Munger District was formed in 1832 out of Bhagalpur.

The landscape of the district comprises of Gangetic plain land and part of chotanagpur plateau. The district has range of mountains of significant height at one hand and stretch of low land known as Tal on the other hand. The Northern plain of Munger district has diaras north of the Gangetic levee. Much part of diaras and tal areas suffer from annual inundation along with the erosion and deposition of soils, while the regions around mountain ranges suffer from draught as well.

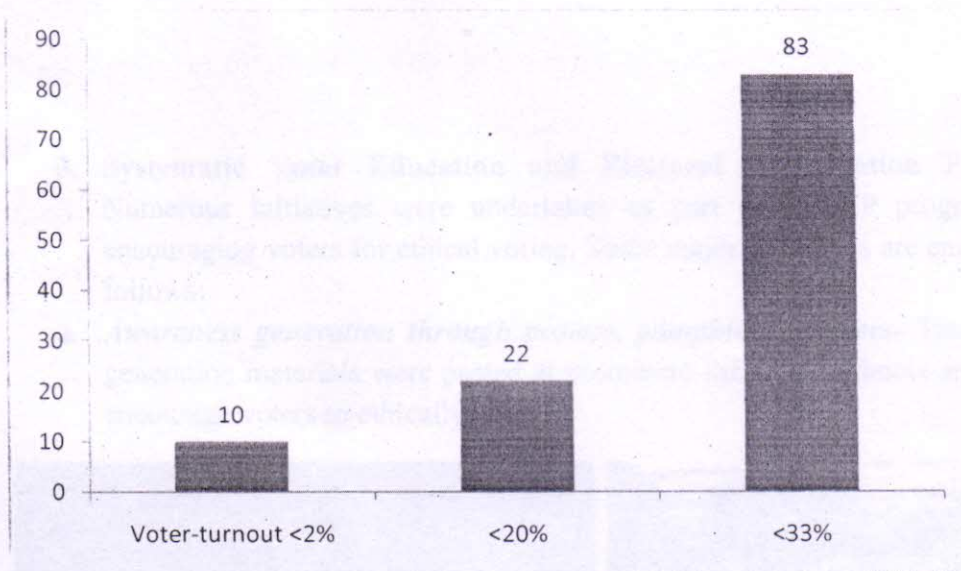
The forest coverage of the district is spread over 17.02% of the geographical area. The district also happens to be part of the Red Corridor i.e. extremism affected.

### Electoral profile of Munger District

Parliamentary Constituency	28, Munger
Number of Assembly Constituencies	3
Total number of polling stations	836
Total Population	1367765 (based on 2011 census)
Male Population	729041
Female Population	638724
Total Electors	876331
Male Electors	477813
Female Electors	398468
Others Electors	50
EP ratio	64.07%
EPIC coverage	100%
Gender ratio	834

### Analysis of voter turn-out in Assembly election of 2010, and Parliamentary election of 2014

The snapshot of Bihar assembly election of 2010 is presented as below: Ten booths had less than 2% voter turnout, and twenty two booths had less than 20%, while 83 booths experienced less than 33% voting.



Major challenges before the administration were naxal threats that either led to complete boycott of elections or very low turnout and inaccessibility for booths lying in 'Diara' region (surrounded by river Ganges). Other miscellaneous reasons for low to below average turn-out included boycott due to local grievances, plying of daily wage laborers, indifference of youth, low participation by employees and their spouse of railway factory, Jamalpur, and low level of participation by females from Muslim majority areas. Therefore, any strategy for increasing voter turnout must combat these problems, primarily of naxal threat and inaccessibility of booths at Diara regions.

### Implementation Strategy for 2014 Parliament Elections

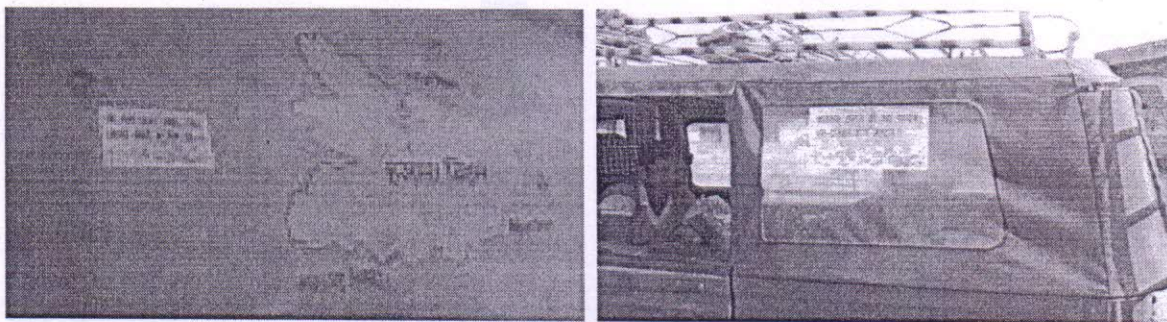
Major strategies adopted by administration during Parliamentary elections, 2014 are delineated below:

1. **Security-** In the last couple of years, administration has made heavy inroads into the naxal affected regions establishing police/paramilitary force camps. During election time, huge forces were deployed in such booths prone to security breach. These measures led to confidence building among masses and render boycott threats from naxals ineffective in spirit.
2. **Rapport Building-** Electors in such sensitive prone areas had moments of disillusionment with the system. They would not turn out to vote if they don't feel system works for them. This is a long time process and cannot happen overnight. The administration recognized this need and organized 'gram vikas shivir' at such affected panchayats. The entire block staff and district level functionaries used to reach out to villagers through these camps and services were offered at their door steps. Encouraging them to vote and accepting applications for issuance of voter I card were integral components of such camps.

These initiatives as mentioned above were successful as reflected in the turn out at election

**3. Systematic Voter Education and Electoral Participation Programs (SVEEP)-** Numerous initiatives were undertaken as part of SVEEP program which aimed at encouraging voters for ethical voting. Some major initiatives are enumerated in details as follows:

**a. Awareness generation through posters, pamphlets, banners-** Thousands of awareness generation materials were pasted at prominent locations, schools and sensitive booths to encourage voters to ethically vote.



**b. Village level training camps-** EVMs usage training and mock poll were conducted on field. Women were the most active participant in such camps.



**c. Social Media campaigns-** Urban apathy is another reason why turn outs are low. Awareness generation programs were launched through face book and twitters, where District Election Officer cum DM posted video message to encourage people to vote.

**d. Pledge letters/ Appeal letters-** One lakh twenty seven thousand pledge letters were signed by school children to motivate parents to vote. Similarly appeal letters by DEO was attached with voter slips.

**e. State/District ICON message-** The audio message by state icon was played at various railway stations to disseminate the message of ethical voting among masses.

