

# Residents of 50 housing societies pledge to vote

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**Pune:** Fifty cooperative housing societies — mainly from areas recording a low voter turnout — will take steps to ensure an improved polling percentage in the civic elections on February 21.

A recent study commissioned by the state election commission, and conducted by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, found that NIBM road, Balewadi, Vimanagar and Kothrud had low turnouts in the 2012 elections.

With the SEC enlisting the housing societies to help increase voting percentage, the society members — mainly from NIBM road, Wanowrie, Salunke Vihar road and Fatimanagar, have decided to take the lead.

They have decided to reach out first to the areas with low turnouts, and move to other parts of the city and Pimpri Chinchwad.

There are 18,000 housing societies in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad.

In this regard, the societies have also decided to ask their members take a pledge to vote, on Republic Day.

"We are asking various society representatives to take the initiative and ensure their members go vote," said Radhikesh Uttarwar, who started the 'Pledge to Vote' campaign.

The first such meeting had participation from 50 societies, which resulted in 10,000-15,000 members deciding to take the pledge. The meetings are being held with the support of the department of cooperation, coordinates with society members from different parts of the city. More such meeting are planned, with the chairmen and secretaries of the societies seeking authorization letters.

The members will also obtain the voters' list from the civic bodies, and tally the names as per the wards.

"This is going to be a cumbersome process because many a time, the names and addresses will not match. With the four-member panel system, there is bound to be more confusion," added Uttarwar.

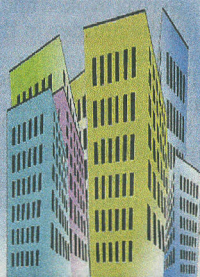
"We will urge each and eve-

## ELECTION DRIVE

A government resolution (GR) issued in October 2016 by the department of cooperation defined the role of cooperative housing societies in civic elections

### WHAT THE GR STATES

- Societies' chairmen and secretaries as booth-level volunteers
- Officer-bearers to assist election officers
- To ensure that names of society members are in the voters list
- Managing committee must to attend at least two meetings under the Department of Cooperation and Election officers



### STUMBLING BLOCK

The biggest hurdle in achieving the 70% target is the voters' list, as highlighted by the Gokhale institute study. Missing names are the top reason for not voting

### QUOTE HANGAR



“ I voted for the first time in 20 years in the Assembly elections, as my name was missing for the Lok Sabha elections. After filling up forms and updating our names, we managed to get the voters' ID card. So we are hoping these issues are not there this time around. We are also motivating others in our society

**Manoj Manshiramani** | SUKHWANI COMPLEX, BHAVANI PETH

“ I have voted in all elections. As a key member of my society, I have been reaching out to all other members to vote. We will be constantly sending messages and motivating others. Fortunately all our members' names are in the voters' list. Last elections, our society members had shared on Facebook and other social media after casting their vote

**Vijay Sagar** | GOLDCRAFT SOCIETY, VISHRANTWADI

“ I am a member of the Pune district housing cooperative federation and I will be getting trained on how to motivate voters for elections on January 18. I would be doing the same in my society. We have 28 members who voted in the last elections, unless they were out of town

**Seema Bhakre** | WID RAJGAD COOPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETY, KOTHRUD

“ Fortunately, my name is in the voters' list and I should not have a problem. I have been able to vote in the last elections too

**Arad Asif** | CITADEL HOUSING SOCIETY, HADAPSAR

“ There are 425 quarters in my colony with nearly 2,000 voters who are all working people. Ahead of the elections we do reach out and encourage each other to vote. We didn't get our ID cards, but we are told that if our name is in the voters' list, not having a card should not pose a hurdle

**M Waikar** | R & D COLONY, ALANDI

ry one to vote, provided their name is there," said Col B C Joglekar (ret'd) from Salunke Vihar society, which has nearly 2,000 voters. State election commissioner J S Sahariya is strongly in favour of housing societies

taking on a more proactive role in the process. If all societies are active participants, Sahariya said, it would definitely help in improving the voting percentage. The SEC is aiming for 70% voting this time around.