

MOST IMMEDIATE
BY SPEED POST/E-MAIL

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110 001

No. 64/2007-ERS

Dated: 9th May, 2008.

To

The Chief Electoral Officers
of all States and UTs.

Subject: Rationalisation of Polling Stations – Regarding

Sir,

The standard policy of the Commission for setting up of polling stations is that it should be located more or less permanently for electors residing in a well-defined area covered by a part of the electoral roll. The optimum number of electors per polling station was prescribed as 1500 after introduction of EVMs during the last general election to the Lok Sabha held in 2004. In case auxiliary polling stations are required to be set up due to number of electors exceeding the optimum number of electors then that should be have the same serial number as that of the original polling stations but with a suffix “A”, “B” etc. and except in unavoidable circumstances should be set up in the same building.

2. The Commission has been discussing the issue of rationalisation of polling stations with a view to bring the polling stations nearer to even smaller habitations for the convenience of voters and, at the same time eliminating, the scope of intimidation, silent or otherwise, which inhibits free exercise of voting rights.

3. The Commission, after due consideration of the available information received from the CEOs, has decided that for the present rationalisation of polling stations shall be undertaken on the criterion of (i) *each village with its own polling station* provided the village has more than 300 electors and is having a suitable building for setting up of polling station and (ii) on account of any existing vulnerability observed. It is further clarified that villages having less than 300 elector population, but already having an exclusive existing polling station, should continue to have so and need not ordinarily be changed as a part of this rationalization exercise.

4. Further, New polling stations may be necessitated due to bifurcation of electors attached to an existing polling station to different constituencies as a result of delimitation exercise. In the first instance, attempt should be made to attach the electors of such bifurcated polling stations in one of the existing nearest polling station subject to the voter’s convenience and number of electors. In

case the same is inconvenient to electors, then a new polling station within the area covered by the section should be proposed.

5. The rationalisation should be done after **100% physical verification** of the polling station locations and the relevant parts of the electoral rolls. While undertaking the physical verification of polling stations, the points mentioned above and the check list sent alongwith this letter should be kept in view. Further a senior officer designated by the District Election Officer shall do the work of verification. However the overall responsibility of the work of rationalisation of polling stations shall rest with the District Election Officer. For the purpose of uniformity, you may devise a Proforma that should cover the new criterion mentioned above and such additional points that you might consider appropriate. The designated verification officer should sign the Proforma with date after physical verification of each polling station.

6. Under the law (Section 25 of the R.P. Act, 1951) the DEO is responsible for the provision of polling stations and the publication of the list of polling stations. Accordingly, the DEOs of the 24 States/UTs where the electoral roll vis-à-vis polling stations shall be provided as per the extent of the newly delimited constituencies, shall draw up a fresh list of polling stations, publish the list of fresh polling stations in draft, supply copies to local branches of all recognised political parties etc., hold meeting with the party representatives and legislators to discuss the draft and suggestions received, take judicious decisions keeping in mind the convenience of electors and the criterion fixed by the Commission, finalise the draft list and then forward to the Commission through the CEO of the States, along with the scrutiny sheet and the certificates already prescribed. The detailed procedure outlined in para 2.1 to 7.5 of Chapter II of the Returning Officers Handbook should be referred for the purpose. The CEOs may draw a uniform time-table for all the DEOs in their State for drawing up the draft list, after physical verification, and its finalization by the DEOs. This publication of Polling Stations AC wise must be completed before the draft publication of the electoral roll which shall be as per the new polling stations.

7. In respect of the States/UTs where no new delimitation has taken place, they may send the proposal for the changes in the existing list for approval by the Commission.

Kindly acknowledge receipt by e-mail/Post.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-

(Ritvik Pandey)
Secretary

Standard distribution.

CHAPTER – II

POLLING STATIONS

LEGAL PROVISIONS

2.1 Under the law (Section 25 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951), the District Election Officer is responsible for the provision of polling stations and the publication of the list of polling stations. The electoral rolls are prepared part wise. Generally there is one polling station corresponding to a part. However in some cases, there can be more than one polling station for a part. For example in some areas, there are separate polling stations for men and women. Similarly if the number of voters is large, there can be a main and an auxiliary polling stations in the same part. In such cases, where there are more than one polling stations in a part, the electoral roll is still printed part wise. However in the marked copy of the electoral roll which is given to the Presiding Officer at the time of Poll, names of those voters who are not allowed to vote in that polling station are struck off. The polling stations are set up to cover well-defined polling areas. Changes in polling stations may become necessary for several reasons. The list of polling stations is approved by the Commission. Any modification (Except change in nomenclature (when the building is not changed) requires the approval of the Commission. If the same list is proposed to be adopted no fresh approval of the Commission is necessary and Commission be intimated accordingly and /or wherever modifications are proposed, the Commission's approval be obtained well in advance, at least two weeks before the last date for the withdrawal of candidatures

DRAWING UP OF FRESH LIST OF POLLING STATIONS

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- 2.2 The fresh lists should be drawn up, as far as practicable bearing in mind the following instructions: -
- (a) The optimum number of polling stations to be set up in an Assembly Constituency should be determined by dividing the total number of voters in the constituency by 1000. This number will be average for both rural and urban constituencies. However, the Commission has decided to provide a polling station to every village having more than 300 voters provided there is a suitable building for it.
 - (b) A polling station should be provided for a well-defined polling area, normally covering not more than 1200 electors in rural areas and 1400 electors in urban areas.
 - (c) As far as practicable, the polling station should have a minimum area of 20 sq. meters so that there is no congestion inside the polling station.;

- (d) Halls/rooms should be well-lit and should normally have at least two doors, so that one can be used as 'entrance' and the other as 'exit' for the smooth and orderly conduct of poll.
- (e) Polling stations should be set up in such a manner that ordinarily no voter is required to travel more than two kilometers for casting his vote. In sparsely populated, hilly or forest area this rule may have to be relaxed; but in order to avoid voters having to walk unduly long distances, polling stations in such cases may be set up for a smaller number of voters than usual. Due consideration should be given to the topography and ease of travel
- (f) In urban areas, not more than four polling stations and, in rural areas, not more than two polling stations should be located in the same building as far as possible, in order to avoid overcrowding and to facilitate maintenance of peace and order.
- (g) If the polling station is for both men and women, there should be a separate queues for men and women. For each man entering the polling station, two women should be allowed. Old, infirm, pregnant women and differently abled persons should be allowed to enter the polling station without having to stand in the queue. When separate polling stations are provided for men-voters and women-voters of a particular polling area, these should as far as possible be located in the same building.
- (h) As far as, possible Polling station may be set up within the polling area. If a suitable building is not available in the area, then it may be set up, outside the polling area, as near to its own area as possible.
- (i) Where the polling area for a polling station comprises a number of villages, the polling station or stations should ordinarily be located in the village, which has the largest number of voters. however if another village is more central or has distinctly better facilities, it can be chosen for location of polling station in preference to the village with the largest number of voters.
- (j) Setting up of a polling station in a temporary structure should be avoided.
- (k) All villages in one polling area should fall in one administrative unit like one police station, firka, patwari circle, etc. All polling areas within the constituency should be covered by the proposed polling stations. No area in the constituency should be left out.
- (l) As far as possible, polling stations should be located in schools (Government or aided) and other Government or Semi-Government institutions, as the furniture and equipment required would be available there and could be made use of without any extra cost to the State.
- (m) The location of the polling stations in private buildings or premises should generally be avoided; but where this becomes unavoidable, written consent of the owner should be taken. In case the owner refuses to give written consent, the buildings should be requisitioned under Section 160 of RP Act 1951 if necessary. The private building so

requisitioned should be at the disposal of the Returning Officer at least 24 hours before the commencement of poll and for the period required for the poll. The building and the area around it up to a radius of two hundred meters should be under the control of the Presiding Officer. No watch and ward or other personnel connected with the owner, whether armed or unarmed, should be allowed to remain either at the polling station or within a radius of two hundred meters around it. The security arrangement at the polling station and within the above area on the poll day will be the responsibility entirely of the State Police under the control of the Presiding Officer. Further, after nominations are filed, it should be ensured that the owner of such private building is not a contesting candidate or a known sympathizer or worker of any of the candidates at the election.

- (n) No polling station should be located in police stations, hospitals, temples or places having religious significance.
- (o) There should be no political party office within 200 meter of a polling station.
- (p) As far as possible, to avoid inconvenience to the old and disabled persons, the polling stations should be set up in the ground floor of a building. Ramps should be provided to facilitate entry of physically challenged persons.
- (q) Electricity, separate toilet facilities for Men and Women and drinking water should be available as far as possible.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR VULNERABLE SECTIONS

- (a) Due to manipulative tactics, location of polling stations in some cases is fixed in such a way that the electors belonging to weaker sections are intimidated and prevented from going to polling stations for voting. Commission has issued specific directions to identify the localities predominantly inhabited by weaker sections and locate polling stations in these localities irrespective of the number of electors. Welfare associations or voluntary organizations championing the cause of such weaker sections should also be associated in identifying such localities and locating the polling stations.
- (b) Polling stations may be set up in localities/colonies inhabited by the weaker sections of the society, even though the number of voters may be less than 500.
- (c) The Commission has come across many cases where polling station in a minority locality was changed in such a way that minority people have to go other area where they might be prevented from voting. This should not be permitted. CEO of a state to take care of this when elections are around the corner.

PREVENTION OF INTIMIDATION TO THE VOTERS OF VULNERABLE SECTIONS OF ELECTORATE – MAPPING OF VULNERABILITY:

1. An exercise to identify the villages/ hamlets/habitats and segments of electorate vulnerable to any threat, intimidation or interference with the free exercise of electoral right shall be taken up polling station wise. The sector officers for their respective polling

stations shall do this exercise by visiting the catchments area of the polling stations. The local Thane officer (SHO) and local civil authorities such as BDO / Tehsildar shall also be consulted and their inputs taken into account before finalizing the list. They should identify the source of such threat/ intimidation and identify the names of persons who are likely to spearhead such offence of undue influence. While doing this exercise they shall take into account the past incidents, and current apprehensions.

2. They shall identify some point of contact within the habitat/ community vulnerable for such undue influence so that information related to such developments can be tracked constantly.
3. The Returning Officer of the Assembly Constituency should compile all such information and finalize the vulnerability mapping for the entire constituency, polling station wise in a format (enclosed).
4. The DEO and SP shall initiate all preventive measures to ensure that such intimidation/ obstruction do not really happen on the poll day. They shall initiate confidence-building measures to bolster the voters' confidence about the arrangements for free and fair poll. They shall undertake tours to such locations and meet the communities and explain the arrangements made for the free and fair poll.
5. The DEO/ RO shall interact with the candidates and representatives of political parties to gather regular feedback. The District Intelligence shall give regular feedback on the subject to the DEO through SP.
6. Upon the arrival of the Observers the DEO/ RO shall hand over the details of the polling station wise vulnerability mapping for the relevant Assembly Constituency. The Observer will also visit such locations and interact with the voters and constantly monitor the developments.
7. The DEO and Superintendent of Police of the District should hold a joint review on the subject and finalize a focused action plan to deal with the potential threats and intimidation points identified. The action plan may include, inter-alia, binding the identified trouble mongers under appropriate sections of the law, preventive detention if required, forcing their appearance in local police stations at reasonable intervals to ensure their good behavior, placement of police pickets, regular confidence building visits etc. It has to be ensured that all such measures are undertaken in absolutely non-partisan manner without fear or favor towards any particular party.
8. The Zonal/ and sector arrangements to monitor the events on the poll day shall take such pre-identified vulnerable locations into account for effective tracking. If the normal sector route map does not cover the vulnerable locations special arrangements shall be made for this purpose. The Sector officers shall make regular visits to those villages and hamlets in advance and collect information and keep the senior officers informed.

9. Where there is a cluster of such vulnerable pockets, the DEO shall arrange for dedicated police teams/squads and locate them at convenient locations in the vicinity, to be pressed into service for action on the day of poll without any loss of time. It should invariably form part of the district security plan.
10. On the day of poll, the sector officers shall give special attention to verify whether voters from the vulnerable habitats/ communities are turning up for voting or not. In case, they find (it can be gauged from the marked copy of the electoral roll where voters who have voted are ticked) that some section of voters is conspicuously absent, then they should inform the Returning Officer about this immediately. The Returning Officer and DEO shall dispatch the dedicated squad specifically meant for this purpose, to ascertain, by a visit to the area/hamlet, that there is no hindrance – overt or covert – in movement of that section of voters. They should closely monitor the developments and initiate effective interventions. After the closing hours on the poll day, the sector officers shall submit a special report, polling station wise, in writing to the Returning Officers indicating as to whether voters from the vulnerable habitats were able to vote or not.
11. At the time of Dispatch of the polling parties at the Dispatch Centers the RO should brief the Presiding Officer concerned about the vulnerable locations within the Polling Station area. In the electoral roll the Section within the Part should also be marked for proper monitoring. The Presiding officers shall submit a report indicating abnormally low percentage of voter turnout if any within any section/sections, particularly, with reference to the vulnerable locations.
12. During the poll the Observers and other senior officers while visiting the polling station shall pay a special attention to this problem and find out whether any undue influence, intimidation/ obstruction is being caused.
13. The police patrolling parties should keep track of the vulnerable locations and keep the control room informed. Wherever necessary police pickets shall be established to ensure free access to all voters to cast their votes without fear.
14. The Commanders/Assistant Commanders of the CPF shall be given a list of such vulnerable locations. Wherever CPF arrives in advance for area domination, special attention shall be given for such locations. On the day of poll the Commanders/Assistant Commanders shall make it a point to visit such vulnerable pockets as a confidence building measure. In case they come across any obstruction they shall take note of that and immediately inform any of the electoral officials such as RO/DEO/SP/Observer/Sector Officer and keep a note of the time of their intimidation.
15. If any complaint is received or information gathered from any sources about obstruction/threat to any voter/voters the same shall be enquired into by the local administration without any delay.
16. The Returning Officer shall take the inputs on mass scale intimidation/threat/obstruction if any into consideration while submitting their report after the poll.

17. The Observers shall give their full attention to this issue and verify at every stage (before poll/on poll day) and submit reports to the Commission from time to time. A special mention shall be made about this in their final report. Apart from this they should make an intelligent reading of the Form 17A and the marked copy of the electoral roll used in the polling stations at the time of Form 17A scrutiny, ordered if any, by the Commission after the poll.
18. The Commission directs that accountability of various police and civil officials for vulnerability mapping and follow up at every stage shall be clearly defined with reference to each polling station/constituency. Severe disciplinary action will be initiated in case of dereliction of duty on the part of any police/civil officials in this matter.

AUXILIARY POLLING STATIONS

Before every revision of electoral rolls, polling stations should be rationalized based on expected additions in the roll so that after the final publication, polling stations in urban area do not have more than 1400 voters and polling stations in rural areas do not have more than 1200 voters. This will obviate the need to set up auxiliary polling stations on the eve of polls. However in case, it does become necessary, auxiliary polling stations should be set up subject to following conditions:-

- (a) Auxiliary polling stations shall have the same serial number as that of the original polling station, but with a suffix "A", "B", etc.
- (b) As far as practicable, the auxiliary polling stations shall be located in the same building or premises as that of the original polling station.
- (c) Only when it is unavoidable due to non-availability of suitable rooms, the auxiliary polling station may be located in a separate building, but shall be within the same area as that of the original polling station.
- (d) Separate serial number shall be given to auxiliary polling station even if it is located in a separate building. It shall have the same serial number as that of the original polling station with the permitted suffix "A" or "B" in view of the fact that the original polling station and its auxiliary polling station may be having the electors shown in the same part of the electoral roll.

PROCEDURE FOR LISTING OF POLLING STATIONS

- 2.3 The draft list of polling stations should be drawn up in the prescribed form (**Annexure III**). The demarcation of polling area should be clearly done. The name of each village covered by the polling area and the number of voters in it should be shown in the respective columns against each polling station. **The map of an Assembly Constituency showing polling stations should be** prepared and converted into digital form if possible. By a clear description of the polling area it should be feasible for an

ordinary voter to know to which polling station he should go for recording his vote. In order to ensure that a uniform method is followed in the matter of filling up the columns, the following instructions may be kept in mind:-

Column 1

The serial numbers of the polling stations should commence from the north-western corner of the constituency and proceed in a zig-zag manner to south-eastern corner of the constituency. In cases where there is one polling in a part, the serial number of a polling station and part number of the electoral roll covering the polling area assigned to that polling station should be the same. In those cases, where there are more than one polling stations in a part, the polling station number should be given by suffixing A, B, C etc to the part number.

Column 2

The locality is the name of the area in which the polling station is located. In the case of temporary structures the description of the exact site chosen for the location of the temporary structure should be clearly indicated.

Column 3

The name of the building in full should be clearly described. The use of abbreviations should be avoided. In cases where more than one polling station is located in the same building the location should be made clear by mentioning "North Wing", "South wing". etc.

Column 4

The area of the polling station in square meters should be indicated. The reason for locating polling stations in rooms/halls having an area of less than 20 square meters should be furnished in 'Remarks' column of the proforma against the appropriate entry.

Column 5

If there is a separate entrance and a separate exit 'Yes' may be written otherwise reasons why it has not been possible to locate the polling station in a room/hall with separate entrance and exit may be given.

Column 6

The names of villages, blocks, wards, streets, localities, house numbers and part number of the electoral roll should be given.

Column 7

It should be indicated whether the polling station is for all voters or men voters or women voters only.

Column 8

This column should contain information about the total number of voters assigned to the polling station according to the final electoral roll of the constituency.

Column 9

This column should indicate the distance to be travelled, if the maximum limit of 2 kilometers is exceeded.

Column 10

Where it is not practicable to conform to the Commission's directions in regard to the location or area of a polling station, broad reasons may be given in this column, as far as possible, for the consideration of the Commission, besides any other remarks which the District Election Officer/ Returning Officer may like to make.

- 2.4 The total number of electors in the constituency, the total number of polling stations proposed and the average number of voters per polling station should invariably be shown at the end of each list.
- 2.5 The list should be accompanied by a map to scale showing:-
 - (i) All the villages, and wards or localities in towns, with the number of voters in each such village or locality, on the map itself, and where this is not convenient or practicable, in a statement annexed to the map;
 - (ii) The place selected for the location of the polling stations;
 - (iii) The area served by each polling stations, indicated by serial numbers in a systematic manner, preferably beginning from the north-western corner of the constituency proceeding zig-zag and ending at the south-eastern corner. (Such serial numbers should be the same as the part numbers of the electoral roll, which cover the respective polling areas assigned to those polling stations.)
- 2.6 The use of abbreviations in the list should be avoided, as far as possible, and where these are used, these should be explained.
- 2.7 If any local terms are used to describe buildings, etc. in the list, these should be explained.

PUBLICATION OF THE LIST OF POLLING STATIONS IN DRAFT

- 2.8 Under section 25 of the R.P. Act, 1951, the District Election Officer is required with the previous approval of the Election Commission, to provide a sufficient number of polling stations for every constituency, the whole or greater part of which lies within his jurisdiction.

- 2.9 It should not ordinarily be difficult to decide the district in which the greater part of a constituency lies. Where, however, a Parliamentary constituency comprises, say, eight Assembly Constituencies and four of them lie in one district, and the remaining four in another district it may not be so easy to ascertain the district in which the greater part of the constituency lies. In such a case the Chief Electoral Officer should decide the question with reference to the location of the headquarters of the Returning Officer of the constituency, the number of voters of that constituency in different parts in the different districts or of the population of those parts, and communicate the same to the District Election Officers of the districts concerned. The District Election Officer, of the district in which, according to the Chief Electoral Officer, the greater part of the constituency lies, will then be responsible for the provision of polling stations for the entire Parliamentary Constituency.
- 2.10 It is also possible that in the case of a Parliamentary Constituency most of the component Assembly constituency may fall in one district and a portion or portions may fall in another district or districts. In such cases, the polling stations provided by the District Election Officer of the other district or districts should be adopted in whole by the District Election Officer of the district in which the major part lies as the polling stations for the Parliamentary Constituency for which he is required to provide polling stations.
- 2.11 After the list has been prepared on the lines indicated above the District Election Officer/Returning Officer should publish it in draft, in the language or languages of the electoral roll for the constituency, for general information, inviting objections and suggestions by a specified date, allowing a period of not less than seven days. The notice of publication of the draft list of polling stations and places at which it can be inspected should also be given in local newspapers and written objections or suggestions invited for consideration.
- 2.12 Copies of the lists should be supplied to the local branches of all recognized political parties and to the sitting members of the House of the People and Assembly Constituencies concerned or to ex-members of the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly in case the House of the People, or the Legislative Assembly stands dissolved.
- 2.13 The District Election Officer should thereafter call the party representatives and legislators to a meeting and discuss the draft list and the suggestions received. Any bonafide intending candidate who wishes to take part in the discussions at this meeting should also be permitted to do so.
- 2.14 The District Election Officer should then take his decisions, amend the draft list where necessary and finalize the draft list of polling stations for the constituency. He should then forward it, along with the map to the Commission, through the Chief Electoral Officer of the State, along with the scrutiny sheet and the certificate in the forms prescribed in **Annexures IV & V**.

- 2.15 The approval of the Commission will be communicated by the Election Commission direct to the District Election Officer with copy to the Chief Electoral Officer. After the approval of the Commission is received, the District Election Officer should once again check the list to see whether there are any errors and incorporate the changes, if any, suggested by the Commission in the list
- 2.16 When the list is forwarded to the Commission in a language, other than English, it should be accompanied by a translation in English. There is no need to print or cyclostyle the approved list of polling stations in English. However, there would be no objection to this being done if copies in English are required for official use or by the public.
- 2.17 The Chief Electoral Officer, after scrutiny, will forward the list and other enclosures to the Election Commission for approval with his comments. The Commission will then consider and approve the proposed list of polling stations, with any changes it deems necessary. The list finally approved by the Commission should be published as directed below.

FINAL PUBLICATION OF THE LIST OF POLLING STATIONS

- 2.18 The District Election Officer for an Assembly Constituency shall publish the list of polling stations provided by him, with the previous approval of the Election Commission, by making a copy thereof available for inspection, and displaying at his office a notice in the form given in **Annexure VI** at his office and at the office of ERO of that constituency. The DEO shall also, as far as practicable, make a copy of the relevant parts of the list together with the notice in the form appended available for inspection at office of the Collector/District Magistrate/Sub-divisional Magistrate/Revenue Divisional Officer/ Judges and Munsif Courts/Prant Officer/Tahsildar/Amildar/Deputy Tahsildar/Sub-Registrar/Police Stations/Mauzadars or Sarpanches or Union/Panchayat Ghars/Union Boards/District Board/Municipal Committee/Notified Area Committee, and at such other places and in such other manners as he may consider necessary and suitable. On such publication, the list shall be the list of polling stations for that constituency.
- 2.19 The District Election Officer can correct only printing or clerical mistakes, if any, after such publication.
- 2.20 It shall not be necessary for the Returning Officer for a Parliamentary Constituency to publish the list, a second time, except at his office, in a case where elections are being held simultaneously to the House of the People and the Legislative Assembly. He should, however, do so in the case of single election to the House of the People.
- 2.21 The entries in columns 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10 of **Annexure III** and the entries at the bottom of the list relating to the total number of voters, the total number of polling stations and

the average number of voters per polling station, should be deleted before the final publication of the list.

- 2.22 The list of polling stations for an Assembly Constituency shall be published in the language or languages in which the electoral roll for that constituency is published.

MODIFICATIONS IN THE LIST

- 2.23 Every modification as a result of variation in the number of voters within the polling area allotted to a polling station, consequent on the revision of electoral rolls, should be reported to the Commission for information.
- 2.24 Changes in the location of polling stations to new buildings or sites may become has since become a contesting candidate or has strong sympathies for such candidate or political party, or because of any natural calamity that might have befallen on such building. All such changes should be reported forthwith to the Commission for approval.
- 2.25 Once the lists are approved, requests from political parties and individuals for shifting of the polling stations from one village to another or from one site to another should be considered, only in extremely exceptional cases where there are overriding considerations of public convenience for the change proposed. If the District Election Officer/Returning Officer is satisfied, he should consult other political parties and contesting candidates and then only make his recommendations to the Commission in the matter.
- 2.26 District Election Officer should, on no account, make any change in the location of polling stations already approved by the Commission, without its prior approval, as any change may ultimately result in the election being declared void.
- 2.27 Where changes become inevitable and have to be made, such changes should be referred to the Commission for its previous approval. The changes should be fully publicized and all contesting candidates and political parties, etc., informed in writing.

CHANGE IN THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE BUILDING OF A POLLING STATION

- 2.28 After the approval of the list of polling stations for a constituency, if there is any change in the nomenclature of the building in which the polling station is proposed to be set up, for example, up gradation of a Primary School to a Middle School and the like, but otherwise there is no change in the location of the polling station, cases of such change need not be referred to the Commission for its previous approval. However, the Commission should be informed of such change. The political parties and the contesting candidates etc. should also be informed in writing about such change.

SUPPLY OF COPIES OF THE LIST

- 2.29 As soon as may be, after the list of polling stations has been finally published a copy of such finally published list shall be supplied, free of cost, to every recognized political party to whom copies of draft lists were earlier supplied.
- 2.30 Each contesting candidate at an election shall be supplied, free of cost, with three copies of the list of polling stations for that constituency, immediately after the last date for withdrawal of candidatures. Copies should also be made available for sale at the price fixed and may be freely sold to all persons who demand copies.
- 2.31 The District Election Officer should also supply the required number of copies to the Superintendent/Sr. Superintendent/Commissioner of Police, as the case may be. Copies have to be supplied to the Returning Officer/ Assistant Returning Officer(s) for the Parliamentary /Assembly Constituency. One copy should be sent to CEO.
- 2.32 List of polling station may also be put on official website.

LIST OF POLLING STATIONS FOR FUTURE GENERAL ELECTIONS AND BYE-ELECTIONS

- 2.33 Under the existing instructions of the Commission, polling stations should be located more or less permanently, so that the voters have a fair idea about their polling stations where they have to go to vote and that they should not be required to go to different places at different elections. Whenever any General Election or Bye-election is to be held in that constituency in future, the District Election Officer/Returning Officer should examine whether any addition to or alteration in the list of polling stations already approved is necessary on account of the revision of the electoral rolls before that election.
- 2.34 If at any such election, no change or modification in the approved list is considered necessary and the same is proposed to be adopted in to for that election, no further approval of the Commission in regard to that list will be necessary and such list need not be referred to the Commission for its fresh approval before the election. The Commission must, however, be informed of this fact at least two weeks before the last date for withdrawal of candidatures.
- 2.35 Where, however, the list of polling stations already approved by the Commission is proposed to be adopted, with modifications, for the said election, the District Election Officer should call a meeting of the representatives of the local branches of the recognized political parties, and the legislators and after consulting send a fresh composite proposal to the commission through CEO.

CRITICAL POLLING STATIONS

In order to identify the critical polling stations, following objective criteria should be followed by the DEO/RO (Instruction No.464/INST/2008-EPS Dated: 24th October, 2008) :-

1. An analysis of the polling station wise number of voters with EPIC and without EPIC (non EPIC voters) shall be made. The polling stations shall be sorted in descending order in terms of number of non-EPIC voters in order to prioritize.
2. The Commission had recently directed a survey of missing voters under two categories i.e. missing voters with family links and missing voters without family links. Out of these two categories the existence of missing voters without family links offers a scope for misuse and malpractice. The number of voters coming under the second category shall be analyzed polling station wise and the Polling Station with large number of such voters shall be marked. For this purpose the total number of such missing voters without family linkage shall be divided by the total number of polling stations to workout the assembly constituency average. Analyzing the deviation above the average shall identify the polling stations with large number of such voters.
3. During the election the DEOs/ROs may be asked to do a vulnerability mapping of hamlets/villages/electoral segments vulnerable for threat and intimidation. Polling stations identified as having vulnerable pockets shall be listed.
4. The polling station wise election results available in Form 20 with reference to the past general election shall be analyzed. All such Polling Station where percentage of poll recorded is more than 75% and where more than 75% of votes have been recorded in favour of one candidate shall be identified as critical polling station.
5. The polling stations that went for repoll during the previous election due to reported electoral malpractices; the polling stations that witnessed any sort of electoral violence shall also be identified.
6. The DEOs and ROs shall factor all the above inputs while finally identifying the critical polling stations for additional measures. The ECI Observers shall be consulted while finalizing the list of critical polling stations as per the above instructions.
7. The response protocol to be followed with reference to the vulnerable villages/hamlets/electoral segments has been detailed vide Commission's letter 464/INST/2007-PLN-I Dated 12th October, 2007.
8. With reference to polling stations identified as **critical polling stations** on account of other indicators listed above one or all of the following measures shall be put in place.
 - a. The presence of CPF to safe guard the polling station.
 - b. Digital camera or video camera shall be positioned in the polling station. The procedure for deploying such cameras has been given vide letter No.447/2007/PLN-IV, dated 17.01.2007.

- c. The Presiding Officer shall be specially briefed to ensure that the EPIC/approved identification document, if any are properly verified and reflected in the remarks column of Form 17 A.
- d. The list of such polling stations shall be given to the Commanding/Assistant Commanding Officers of CPF so that they can also keep an eye on such polling stations.
- e. Deployment of a micro-observer inside the polling station.

मुख्य निवडणूक अधिकारी, महाराष्ट्र राज्य यांचे कार्यालय

तात्काळ

क्रमांक:संकीर्ण-२०१३/प्र.क्र. १५९/१३/१३

सामान्य प्रशासन विभाग,
मादाम कामा रोड, हुतात्मा राजगुरु चौक,
मंत्रालय, मुंबई-४०००३२
दिनांक : १ जून, २०१३

प्रति,

सर्व जिल्हाधिकारी व जिल्हा निवडणूक अधिकारी

विषय :-विधानसभा मतदार संघाच्या मतदान केंद्राचे सुसूत्रीकरण करणेबाबत.

महोदय,

भारत निवडणूक आयोगाने सन २०१४ मध्ये लोकसभेच्या सार्वत्रिक निवडणूका लक्षात घेऊन सन २०१३ हे वर्ष मतदार यादी पुनरिक्षण वर्ष "Year of Electoral Roll Revision" म्हणून घोषित केलेले आहे. त्याअनुषंगाने दिनांक १.१.२०१४ या अर्हता दिनांकावर आधारित मतदार यादीचे पुनरिक्षण कार्यक्रमांतर्गत १ सप्टेंबर २०१३ रोजी प्रारूप मतदार यादीची प्रसिध्दी करण्याचे प्रस्तावित आहे. त्यापूर्वी मतदान केंद्राचे सुसूत्रीकरण करणे आवश्यक आहे. तरी भारत निवडणूक आयोगाच्या मार्गदर्शक सूचनांनुसार (निवडणूक निर्णय अधिकाऱ्याचे हस्तपुस्तक २०१२ मधील संबंधित प्रकरणाची प्रत सोबत जोडली आहे.) ग्रामीण भागातील एका मतदान केंद्रात जास्तीत जास्त १२०० व शहरी भागातील एका मतदान केंद्रात जास्तीत जास्त १४०० मतदार असणे आवश्यक आहे. तरी या मार्गदर्शक तत्वानुसार आपल्या जिल्ह्यातील सर्व विधानसभा मतदार संघाचे ग्रामीण भागातील १२०० व शहरी भागातील १४०० पेक्षा जास्त मतदार असलेल्या भागाचे सुसूत्रीकरण करण्यात यावे (विभाजन करण्यात यावे) व नवीन मतदान केंद्र तयार करण्याची आवश्यकता असल्यास भारत निवडणूक आयोगाने विहित केलेल्या कार्यपध्दतीचा अवलंब करून नवीन मतदान केंद्र तयार करण्यात यावे. तसेच ३०० पेक्षा जास्त मतदार असलेल्या गावांत मतदान केंद्र नसल्यास नवीन मतदान केंद्र त्या गावात तयार करण्याबाबत कार्यवाही करण्यात यावी व मतदान केंद्राचे सुसूत्रीकरणाचे प्रस्ताव (Rationalization of Polling Station)

१)नवीन मतदान केंद्राचे प्रस्ताव

२)मतदान केंद्र विभाजनाचे प्रस्ताव

३)मतदान केंद्राच्या नावाच्या बदलाचे प्रस्ताव

४)मतदान केंद्राचे ठिकाण बदलाचे प्रस्ताव

तरी अशा प्रकारे प्रस्ताव तयार करून पुढीलप्रमाणे दोन स्वतंत्र प्रस्ताव सादर करावेत.

१)ग्रामीण भागासाठी १२०० व शहरी भागासाठी १४०० मतदार याप्रमाणे एक प्रस्ताव व

२)ग्रामीण भागासाठी १४०० व शहरी भागासाठी १४०० मतदार याप्रमाणे विहित तरतूदीचा विचार करून असे दोन प्रस्ताव तयार करून हे दोन्ही प्रस्ताव दिनांक २५ जून २०१३ पर्यंत या कार्यालयाकडे सादर करावे, ही विनंती. विधानसभा मतदार

संघनिहाय १२०० व १४०० पेक्षा जास्त मतदार असलेल्या भागांची यादी तसेच मतदान केंद्राच्या सुसूत्रीकरणाबाबत भारत निवडणूक आयोगाच्या मार्गदर्शक सूचनांची प्रत यासोबत जोडण्यात येत आहे.

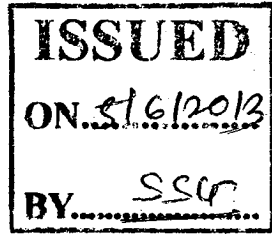
१.१.२०१४ या अर्हता दिनांकावर आधारित मतदार यादयाच्या आधारे लोकसभा व राज्यातील विधानसभा मतदार संघाचे मतदान होणार असल्याने मतदान केंद्राचे सुसूत्रीकरण अत्यंत अचूक होणे आवश्यक आहे. त्यासाठी भारत निवडणूक आयोगाने विहित केलेल्या कार्यपध्दतीचे काटेकोरपणे पालन करण्यात यावे.

आपला,

अ.ना.वळवी

(अ.ना.वळवी)

अवर सचिव व उप मुख्य निवडणूक अधिकारी
महाराष्ट्र राज्य



CHECK LIST FOR SETTING UP OF POLLING STATIONS

1. Whether the polling station is located in a permanent building or a temporary structure? If in a temporary structure, the reasons therefore.
2. Has the polling station an area of 20 Sq metres or more? If not, the reasons therefor.
3. Whether there is a separate entrance and exit? If not the reasons therefor.
4. Whether the room/hall selected is well-lit and well ventilated? If not the reasons therefor.
5. Whether the maximum distance that a voter will have to travel to reach the polling stations is 2Kms or less? If more than 2Kms the reasons therefor.
6. Whether in case of polling stations catering to the electors of more than one village the polling station is located in the village having the largest number of electors; if not, the reasons therefor.
7. Whether separate polling stations have been set up in areas, electors of which are predominantly from minority or other weaker sections of the society; whether it has been ensured that no such area has been either left out or linked with areas where electors predominantly belong to other communities? If not, the reasons therefor.
8. Whether all the polling areas within the constituency have been covered in the list? If not, the reasons therefor.
9. Whether any polling station is proposed to be set up in a temple, church, mosque, gurdwara or a public or private building which has any religious significance or in respect of which any section of the public may have any legitimate objection to enter;
10. Whether it has been ensured that the polling area does not contain villages on opposite sides of a big river or stream or in different hills in hilly areas? If not, the reasons therefor.
12. Identify all such polling station buildings that have become dilapidated and locate them in a new Govt. or semi-Govt. buildings that might be available now within the polling area;
13. Identify all such polling stations where the voters have to walk unduly long distances for casting their vote and explore ways and means for convenience of electors to set up polling stations at a nearby place for a smaller number of voters than usual to reduce the distance.
