

**STATE ELECTION COMMISSION,
Puducherry**

No.13 -SEC/Civic Election /2021 /818

Puducherry, Dt. 28-09-2021

DIRECTION

**Sub: - Multiplicity of Candidates at polling stations and counting
Table-Measures to reduce- regarding**

It is necessary and expedient to provide in the interest of purity of elections to the Municipal / Commune Panchayat Councils in the Union Territory of Puducherry and in the interest of the conduct of such elections in a fair and efficient manner, measures to be taken to reduce the multiplicity of candidates at Polling stations and counting table, to avoid over crowd, undue waiting during the COVID Pandemic.

Therefore in exercise of the powers conferred under clause (1) of Article 243-K and 243-ZA of the Constitution of India and Section 9A of the Puducherry Village and Commune Panchayats Act, 1973 and Section 15A of the Puducherry Municipalities Act, 1973 and all other powers enabling in this behalf, the State Election Commissioner directs as follows:-

1. A contesting candidate to appoint one person other than himself to be his election agent.
2. A contesting candidate or his election agent to appoint one polling agent and two relief polling agents a every polling station.
3. A contesting candidate or his election agent to appoint counting agents up to 16 persons including Replacement for every place of counting.
4. Every Returning Officer to allow each contesting candidate to ply on the day of poll (i) One vehicle for his own use, and (ii) one more vehicle for the polling stations where he contest, for the use of his agents.
5. The candidates who put up dummy candidates appoint their own men as polling agents and counting agents in the name of such dummy candidates whereby they get additional manpower, and often muscle power, at the polling stations and counting agents. These dummy candidates also help in getting extra policemen by way of security personnel provided to candidate. The Election Officials should aware of the administrative problems created due to the over-crowding of polling stations and places of counting due to the agents of dummy candidates.
6. If at any stage during the process of election after the last date for the withdrawal of the candidatures, a candidate publicly announces that he is retiring from contest in favour of another candidate or for any other reason, whatsoever, or publicly announces, extends

or solicits support for any other candidate, the Returning Officer shall direct forthwith the concerned police and other authorities to withdraw all such facilities like personal security permits to ply vehicles, etc., as have been extended to him under any of directions or the instructions of the State Election Commission.

7. In case the said candidate refuses to give such a statement in writing, the Returning Officer will cause such a refusal to be widely publicized in order to eliminate the impact of his unfounded statement on the free and fair contest. (ii) If at any stage on the day of poll, the Returning Officer, on a complaint or a report or otherwise, comes to the conclusion that any vehicle authorized to ply for the personal use of a particular candidate and/or his agent/s is being used by any other candidate or for any purpose other than the authorized use of the said candidate or his agents the Returning Officer shall direct the District Superintendent of Police or any other competent authority to impound the said vehicle/ s and shall not release it till the end of the process of polling.
8. Announcement of retirement from contesting after the last date of withdrawal of candidatures has no validity in the eyes of law and such candidate continues to be a "contesting candidate". Facilities to appoint election agent, Polling agent and counting agents which are available to contesting candidates under the law cannot be withdrawn.
9. The seating arrangements at the polling stations and Counting Halls for the polling agents and Counting Agents respectively of candidates shall be guided by the following categories of priority:
 1. Candidates of National Recognized Political Parties;
 2. Candidates of recognized State Parties;
 3. Candidates of recognized State Parties of other States who have been permitted to use their reserved symbols in the Constituency;
 4. Candidates of registered-unrecognized political parties;
 5. Independent Candidates
10. If at any stage in the process of election, a complaint or report is received that any candidate is allowing the security personnel provided to him for ensuring his personal security to be used by any other candidate or for any purpose other than the purpose of providing security personnel so provided shall be withdrawn by the police authorities concerned in consultation with the Returning Officer.

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(ROY P THOMAS)
STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONER

To

1. District Election Officer, Puducherry/Karaikal.
2. Regional Election Officer, Mahe/Yanam.
3. All ROs/AROs.
4. Nodal Officers Counting Centre Puducherry/Karaikal/Mahe/Yanam