

**STATE ELECTION COMMISSION  
PUDUCHERRY**

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No.1-30(19)/SEC/CE/Dir./2021/ 776

Dated.24.9.2021

**DIRECTION**

**Sub: Drafting of Polling Personnel for election duty – Randomization of Polling Personnel.**

It is the endeavor of the Commission to ensure free and fair elections and towards that end it has been deemed important to issue the present direction regarding the formation of polling parties. The duties discharged by polling personnel in the conduct of elections are of vital importance. They are the face of the Commission in the minds of electorate, polling agents, media and the candidates etc. Therefore, sufficient care is needed to draft and deploy such personnel and formation of unbiased polling parties in the interest of free and fair election.

2. Accordingly, the Commission lays down the following instructions for formation of polling parties:-

- (i) District Election Officer (DEO) / Regional Election Officer (REO)-wise database, of all eligible poll personnel shall be maintained in electronic format, which can facilitate computerized randomization. All relevant particulars like Name, Sex, Place (constituency) of residence, work place, Home Constituency, Designation, Office and Department/Institutions should be entered.
- (ii) The database shall contain, distinctly and separately, the State Govt. employees including Public Sector Undertakings, teachers etc. who can be employed as polling personnel.
- (iii) Similarly the data base shall distinctly and separately contain all Central Govt. Employees including PSU, Bank, etc.
- (iv) Separate database shall be prepared, if required by DEO/REO, of Retired Government of India and State Government officials as well as of Members of NCC & NSS. They shall be used in specified manner only with express prior approval of the Commission.
- (v) The polling parties shall be formed out as far as possible of the State Govt. employees. However, if the DEO/REO finds that more number of polling personnel is

required for the effective conduct of the election, the Central Govt. employees including PSUs and Banks, etc. shall be utilized for constituting the polling parties.

- (vi) Presiding Officers and Polling Officers shall be classified on the basis of scale of pay and their post and rank. As far as practicable, Gazetted Officers will be deployed as Presiding Officers and failing those officials who are working in supervisory capacity only should be deployed as Presiding Officers. The Presiding Officer should be of higher scale/grade in comparison to other Polling Officers of that formation.
- (vii) In view of the issue of postal ballot papers, Constituency No., Part No., Sl. No. of each and every official shall be indicated.
- (viii) In view of urgency with only a limited number of days remaining for the conduct of the Civic Elections, and also the difficulty in timely updating of employee database by Departments with respect of details of employees such as municipal / panchayat wards, etc, the DEO may ensure the randomization in such a way that no person will be assigned polling duties in an assembly constituency (w.r.t. the General Elections conducted by the ECI) in which he is posted or in which he resides or the assembly constituency, which is his home assembly constituency. REOs are exempted from this provision but they will ensure that the Presiding Officers shall be appointed from the officers who are not ordinarily resident in their region as far as possible.
- (ix) In order to avoid any allegation of collusion among the polling personnel in favor of any candidate or political party and to instill confidence in the minds of Political Parties and candidates about free and fair elections, proper mix of polling personnel drawn from different offices and departments at the time of formation of a polling party should be ensured. Two officials of the same serial group/category should not be put together. Further, two members of the polling party should not be from the same department (in case of school teachers, they should not be from the same school).
- (x) A polling party would, in normal course, consist of a Presiding Officer and three polling officers. The First Polling Officer is in charge of the marked copy of electoral roll and responsible for identification of the voters. The Second Polling Officer makes the entries in the Register of Voters (Form 21A – municipal / Form 15A - panchayat ) including EPIC/other identification document details, takes the signature of the voters or the thumb impression ( in the case of illiterate voters ), applies indelible ink on the left forefinger of the voters and issues voters slip to the voters indicating the serial number in which they would be going into the voting compartment to cast vote. The Third Polling Officer is the custodian of the “CU” and activates the “BU” by pressing



“BALLOT” button of the “CU” and allows the voter to go inside the voting compartment for casting vote, in the order of the serial number on the voters slip issued by the Second Polling Officer. Two MTS category staff may be deputed to each polling station; at least one of whom shall exclusively be in charge of ensuring COVID protocol such as thermal scanning of electors, dispensing of sanitizer, supply of mask / gloves, etc.

3. Following procedure should be adopted for formation of polling parties:-

- (i) The software developed with the technical support of the National Informatics Centre, Puducherry as per the directions of the Commission will be deployed for the polling personnel randomization. The URL as well as official login ID will be provided to the DEOs/REOs. DEOs/REOs should obtain a complete database of officers eligible for polling party duties from respective authorities. All relevant information should be entered into an electronic database of the computerized randomization application software approved by the SEC.
- (ii) From this full database of officers, a list of 120% of the required number of polling persons should be generated (including reserve) randomly, using the software. This is the first of the three-stage randomization process. Presence of observers is not required at this stage. It should be noted that this randomized list is DEO-wise and not at RO level. This is only to identify and select the officials that would be given training for poll duties as presiding and polling officers in whichever local body of that district/region. In no case, at this stage, the identity of the local body to which the polling personnel are likely to be deployed will be known. All that the polling personnel will know at this stage is whether he (or she) is a presiding officer or a polling officer and the venue and time of trainings.
- (iii) The second stage of randomization exercise should be done in the presence of the Observers deployed in the Municipality / Commune Panchayat. At this stage actual polling parties shall be formed on random basis using the randomization software. **The General Observer must be present at this stage.** At this stage though the actual polling station will not be known, however, the Municipality / Commune Panchayat and the team composition may be known. The second stage of randomization may be conducted not earlier than three weeks from the day of the poll. The second training of polling personnel may be conducted as per the convenience of the DEO/REO.

- (iv) The third stage of randomization exercise shall take place not earlier than 3 days from the day of poll. This third stage randomization for final allocation of Polling Stations to each Polling Party should also be done in the presence of General Observers.
- (v) In order to ensure that above instructions are complied with strictly, the Commission directs that the DEO/REO shall furnish to the Commission through the Observers certificate to the following effect immediately after the polling parties have been formed for an election:-

“Certified that:-

- (I) The polling parties have been formed by a proper mix of officials drawn from different offices and departments, in presence of Observers, and
- (II) The officers have been drawn from the State Government departments as well as from the State Public Undertaking etc. as far as practicable.
- (III) For the purpose of making polling parties complete data base of all eligible employees in the district/region has been used.”
- (vi) It is clarified that the entire randomization exercise except the first stage must invariably be done in the presence of the General Observers sent to the Municipality/Panchayat. If, by any chance, the forming of the polling parties through randomization (second stage) has been done in the absence of the Observers, then the 2nd stage randomization exercise should be done afresh in the presence of Observers and compliance report should be submitted in this regard. The Observers should make a special reference to the randomization exercise observed by them in their constituencies while submitting the report.

This instruction may be brought to the notice of all concerned and be followed without any deviation.

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**(ROY P THOMAS)**  
**STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONER**

**To**

1. All General Observers of Civic Election
2. The DEOs, Puducherry / Karaikal
3. The REOs, Mahe / Yanam