

**STATE ELECTION COMMISSION  
PUDUCHERRY**

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No.1-30(6)/SEC/CE/Dir./2021/ 604

Dated. 9.9.2021

**DIRECTION**

**Sub:** Spreading awareness about EVM voting in Civic Elections.

It is pertinent to note that EVMs are being introduced for the first time in the history of the UT for casting votes by the electors in the elections to the municipalities and commune panchayats. The fact that EVMs have been repeatedly used in all general elections in recent times should not result in EVM awareness being taken for granted, especially because voting using EVMs simultaneously to more than one post [Councillor and Chairman in municipal election (2 BUs); Commune Panchayat Council Member, Village Panchayat President, and Village Panchayat Ward Member in the commune panchayats (3 BUs)] is going to be a novel and also, in many cases, challenging experience for the voters.

There is therefore a need to implement a well-planned and concerted campaign to spread sufficient awareness about the EVM voting to the lakhs of voters in both urban and rural areas.

For spreading EVM awareness among rural voters, various innovative methods can be used but there is no substitute for giving an opportunity to the voter to handle the EVM prior to the election so that the voter has 'hands on experience' about voting using EVM even before elections.

Considering the need for giving a 'hands on training' to the voters on EVMs, the Commission issues the following directions:

1. Accountability for taking EVM to all villages and hamlets should be fixed on a govt. servant at the Municipal Ward / Panchayat Village level by identifying one govt. servant for each Ward / Village who would be the nodal point for spreading awareness about EVM to the electors in that Ward / Village. If the RO/ARO so desires, he/she can create such accountability polling station-wise instead of Ward/Village-wise so that the EVM awareness spread in the entire area coming under that polling station area by the officer responsible for it. Whether the Ward/Village approach is adopted or the polling station approach is adopted, the accountability factor should be very clear.

2. The DEO/REO should fix a time frame for a focused campaign so that the time frame is used uniformly throughout the District/Region. It is relevant to note that such a focused approach in itself will generate its own momentum.
3. The DEO/REO will direct the RO/ARO of the municipality / commune panchayat to identify ward/village-wise or polling station-wise officer-in-charge of this exercise and approve the same. A directory of such W/V-wise or PS-wise nodal officers will be maintained by ARO for his/her respective jurisdiction.
4. The DEO/REO will make the required number of EVMs needed for this campaign for the specific period. The EVM used for this purpose should bear the label indicating "T" (meaning Training).
5. A schedule for this awareness campaign should be prepared by the DEO/REO municipality / panchayat-wise in coordination with the RO, and the campaign should be given adequate publicity by informing the media about the campaign. Leaflets shall be printed in this regard and circulated in the wards/villages.
6. During the schedule for campaign, the nodal officer will carry the EVM and give exposure to the voters by convening Ward / Gram Sabha meeting at ward / village level. The campaign should make use of such locations where the people normally congregate in the rural areas, such as markets.
7. During the campaign period, supervisory officers such as AROs should take test check to find out whether the schedule is being followed by the nodal officers.
8. Simultaneously, before launching of the campaign period, the DEO/REO will identify one officer for each district/region who will be called "EVM awareness observer". This officer should be preferably drawn from various Departments in headquarters. Immediately after the campaign period at the district/region level is over, this EVM awareness observer will be deputed to the field. They should be given independent mobility. These officers will obtain the details of awareness campaign done in a district/region and travel at random in the interior pockets and meet the voters at random in market places/villages and check up with them as to whether they had seen the EVM and whether they are aware about the EVM voting. For this purpose, these officers should also carry one EVM with them wherever they travel. In case of the observer finding that EVM exposure was not done at the ward/village level and the voters were not aware of the EVM voting, they should bring that fact

immediately to the notice of the DEO/REO, and RO/ARO concerned. Simultaneously, they will also inform the SEC office. Whenever such lack of awareness is detected, the DEO/REO should make immediate intervention for creating further awareness, and she should also simultaneously fix up responsibility on the officer who was responsible for creating awareness during the campaign period and initiate, if required, necessary disciplinary action against that officer.

For the purpose of spreading EVM awareness, the Commission shall prepare audio visual campaign materials and circulate to the DEOs/REOs.

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

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**STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONER**

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1. The District Election Officer, Puducherry / Karaikal.
2. The Regional Election Officer, Mahe / Yanam.
3. All Returning Officers / Assistant Returning Officers of Municipality and Commune Panchayat.