

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

NO. 464/INST/2007/PLN-I

DATED: 12th October, 2007

To,

1. The Chief Secretaries of All States/UTs.
2. The Chief Electoral Officers of All States/UTs.

Subject: Drafting of Polling Personnel for election duty – Randomization of Polling Personnel.

Sir,

Since the duties discharged by the polling personnel are vital in the conduct of elections, sufficient care is needed to draft and deploy such personnel in the interest of free and fair election and accordingly, the Commission lays down the following instructions for formation of polling parties:-

- (i) A district database, DEO-wise of all eligible poll personnel shall be maintained in an electronic form, 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) Presiding Officer and Polling Officers are to 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 that 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 Officer of that formation.

(iii) No person will be assigned polling duties in an assembly constituency in which he is posted or in which he resides or the constituency, which is his home constituency.

(iv) In order to avoid any allegation of collusion among the polling personnel in favour 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.

(v) Polling personnel should be drawn both from the State Government departments as well as the Central government offices, as far as practicable Central Government employees should be drawn to the extent possible and may be posted at relatively more sensitive polling booths. The Central Government employees should be mixed with State employees on 50:50 basis if available.

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

(vi) District Election Officers 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 CEO for that state.

(vii) From this full database of officers a list of twice required number of polling persons should be generated (including reserve) randomly, using the software. This is the first of the three-state 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 any other level like subdivision, tehsil, block, assembly

constituency etc. This is only to identify and select the officials that would be given training for poll duties as presiding and polling officers in whichever constituency of that district. In no case, at this stage, the identity of the assembly constituency 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.

(viii) The second stage of randomization exercise should be done in the presence of the Observers deployed in the constituency. At this stage actual polling parties shall be formed on random basis using the randomization software. **The Observer must be present at this stage.** At this stage though the actual polling station will not be known, however, the Assembly Constituency may be known. This randomization should not take place before 4 or 5 days from the day of poll. For the purpose of serving the appointment letters, the DEO can use the services of the sponsoring departments/ authority and/or organize a training programme of poll personnel on that date when final briefing can be given and appointment letters issued to them.

(ix) The third stage of randomization exercise shall take place at the time of dispersal of polling parties when the allocation of polling stations to the polling parties will be done. This third stage randomization for final allocation of Polling Stations to each Polling Party should also be done in the presence of Observers. The actual polling station allotted to individual polling personnel is to be disclosed just before the polling party actually leaves the dispersal center.

(x) In order to ensure that above instructions are complied with strictly, the Commission directs that the District Election Officer shall furnish to the Election Commission through the Observers and

separately to the Chief Electoral Officer of the State/UT a 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 Central Government Offices, PSUs, etc. as far as practicable.

(III) For the purpose of making polling parties complete data base of all eligible employees in the district has been used.”

(xi) It is clarified that the entire randomization exercise except the first stage must invariably be done in the presence of the Observers sent to the constituency. 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.

Kindly acknowledged receipt.

Yours faithfully,

(K.N. BHAR)
UNDER SECRETARY