

MOST IMMEDIATE
BY SPEED POST/E-MAIL

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

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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.

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.
