

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001

No. 51/8/INST/2018-EMS

Dated: 28th June, 2018

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
All States and Union Territories.

Subject: Introduction of Braille Signage Features in Electronic Voting Machines.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to refer to the Commission's letter No. 51/8/2009-EMS, dated 12th February, 2009, on the subject cited, wherein the Commission had prescribed the additional arrangements would be made to facilitate visually impaired electors to exercise their franchise. The Commission has revisited the aforesaid instructions. Now, the Commission has directed that the following instructions shall be strictly followed:

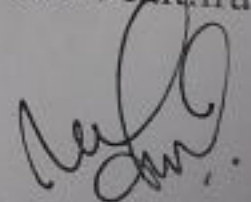
- (i) M2 EVMs (Post 2006 models) and M3 EVMs (Post 2013 model) have embedded serial numbers of the candidates in Braille at the right sides of the blue button (voting button) on the Balloting Units. Hence, no sticker on Braille is required to be pasted at the right of the blue button (voting button) on the Balloting Units.
- (ii) After finalization of list of the contesting candidates, the Returning Officer will immediately send the list of contesting candidates to the Devnar Foundation for Blind/National Blind Association or to any other source available for preparation of Dummy Ballot Sheets which will contain the serial numbers of the contesting candidates, names of the candidates arranged in the same serial order in which their names will appear on the ballot paper on the Balloting Unit. The party affiliation of each of the candidates will be indicated by printing the name of the political party concerned against the name of the candidate. In the case of independent candidates, the word "Independent" will be printed. These Dummy Ballot Sheets will be prepared in regional language (i.e. language printed on actual Ballot Paper) in addition to English. A copy of the Dummy Ballot sheet(s) will be supplied to each of the polling stations.
- (iii) In case number of contesting candidates including NOTA exceed 16 and more than 1 Balloting Unit is used at a polling station, separate dummy ballot sheet shall be printed for each Ballot Unit. The Dummy Ballot Sheets will be prepared in the following manner:
 - (a) Serial Numbers in each Dummy Ballot Sheet shall be from 01 to 16 i.e. If number of contesting candidates are 19 including NOTA, the serial number for

the candidates in first Dummy Ballot Sheet shall be numbered 01 to 16 as mentioned on the Ballot Paper of first Ballot Unit. For contesting candidates at serial number 17-19 of Ballot Unit 2, serial numbers shall again start from 01 on 2nd dummy ballot sheet [i.e. 1 for serial no.17, 2 for serial no. 18 and 3 for serial no.19(NOTA)]. Similarly, in case of more than 32 contesting candidates including NOTA, the serial numbers on the first and second ballot sheets will be 01 to 16 and the serial numbers on third dummy ballot sheet shall also again start from 01 and so on each additional sheet (i.e. serial number on every dummy ballot sheet will start from 01 only).

- (b) In case more than 1 Ballot Unit is used, Ballot Unit-01 shall be printed in Braille on the TOP MIDDLE PART of first Dummy Ballot Sheet and Ballot Unit-02 in second dummy ballot sheet and so on.
- (c) Similarly, Braille stickers "Ballot Unit-01', Ballot Unit-02' and so on shall be printed and affixed on the corresponding Ballot Unit on the TOP MIDDLE PART of the Ballot Unit.
- (iv) The Dummy Ballot Sheets mentioned above will be printed in Braille signage by Devnar School for Blind/National Association or by any other source available for this purpose for Blind under the supervision of one responsible officer of the office of Chief Electoral Officer of the concerned State/Union Territory for which the Chief Electoral Officer of the State/Union Territory will liaise with the Devnar School for Blind/National Association or any other source available for this purpose. The Dummy Ballot Sheets will also have the name of the constituency written in normal script at the top.
- (v) Each such sheet prepared for every polling station will be certified by the Commissioner of Disabilities of concerned State or his authorized representative who will be an official knowing Braille.
- (vi) The concerned District Election Officer and the Returning Officer will hold detailed training and briefing sessions for the Presiding Officers and the Polling Officers to explain to them these facilities for the visually impaired electors.
- (vii) The Chief Electoral Officer will also arrange for wide publicity of these measures through advertisements in newspapers and TV etc. to inform the visually impaired voters of the arrangements being made for them.
- (viii) At the polling station, the visually impaired persons will also be allowed the facility of a companion as provided for in Rule 49N of Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, regardless of the new facility being introduced.

- (ix) Inside the polling station the visually impaired voter will be given the Dummy Ballot Sheet in Braille by the Presiding Officer on his/her request if he/she prefers to cast his/her vote with the help of same. After he/she has studied the contents of Dummy Sheet he/she will be allowed to proceed to the voting compartment to cast his/her vote. Such electors after reading the Dummy Ballot Sheet will be able to cast their vote by reading the serial number of the candidate of their choice on the numeric sticker fixed on the EVM. If the elector so desires, the companion will be allowed to accompany the voter to the voting compartment as provided in Rule 49N of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961.
- (x) After the voter has cast his/her vote, the Presiding Office will ensure that the Dummy Sheet delivered to the voter is returned to the Presiding Officer.
- (xi) After the close of Poll, the Dummy Ballot Sheet shall be sealed in separate cover superscribed "Dummy Ballot Sheets" for the visually impaired and sent to the Returning Officer along with other Non-Statutory forms.
- (xii) The Presiding Officer shall keep a record of all such voters (who avail of the facility of Braille Sheet) in the enclosed **Proforma** and will submit the same to the Returning Officer along with the EVM. These details will be kept separately in the office of Returning Officer. The Returning Officer will consolidate all the information supplied by the Presiding Officers in this regard and submit the same to the Commission through the Chief Electoral Officer after declaration of result.
2. You are requested to kindly take all appropriate steps for the implementation of above directions of the Commission.

Yours faithfully,



(Madhusudan Gupta)
Under Secretary