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GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
HOME (ELECTIONS) DEPARTMENT

No. IE (A) - 25/2013/ 5744 /Elec. Dated. Bhubaneswar the 24th June, 2013.

From

Sri Jyoti Prakash Das,
Joint Chief Electoral Officer-cum-
Joint Secretary to Government.

To

All District Election Officers & Collectors.

Sub: -

Rationalization of Polling Stations - regarding.

Ref: -

This Department letter No.4253/Elec. dt.26th March, 2013 and
Letter No.5122/Elec. dt.21st May, 2013.

Sir/ Madam,

In view of the forthcoming Simultaneous General Election, 2014 the exercise of polling station rationalization assumes greater importance this year. Election Commission of India has issued instructions on this subject, which has been communicated to you from time to time. The process to be followed in rationalization of polling station is once again explained below:

1. **Physical verification of polling stations** – All existing polling stations must be inspected to find out –

- a. Whether the building is dilapidated or dangerous;
- b. Whether polling station is situated outside the polling area;
- c. Whether voters have to cross river / canals / ravines etc. to reach the polling stations;
- d. Whether voters are not required to cover distance of more than 2 Kms to reach polling station;
- e. Whether the polling station location has more than two polling stations in rural areas or more than 4 polling stations in urban areas;
- f. Whether polling station is in private building. Polling stations should be in Government /Semi Government building, preferably in a school;
- g. Whether polling station is located in police station/ hospital/ dharmasala/ temple or religious place;
- h. Whether polling station is on 1st floor or above;
- i. Whether any political party office is situated within 200 meters from polling station premises;

- j. In localities predominately inhabited by minorities, weaker section of society like Scheduled Caste / Scheduled Tribes, the polling station should be located in such localities in such a manner that such communities are not prevented from reaching the polling station and casting their votes. If required, polling stations may be created in localities inhabited by such communities irrespective of number of electors. The Inspecting Officer should give a special written report in this respect. Inputs should also be obtained from NGOs and CSOs working for their welfare;
- k. Whether the minimum area of polling station 20 Sq meters and whether it is having two doors;
- l. Whether the building has an electric connection;
- m. Whether ramps have been provided for physically challenged persons;
- n. Whether toilet and drinking water facilities exist in the polling station premises;
- o. Whether there is shed to shelter the voters from sun and rain;
- p. Whether the polling station has telephone connection. If yes, what is the phone number;
- q. Whether polling station area has been correctly and fully described in the existing polling station list (if not please do it). Further, to the extent possible, the villages / localities comprised within polling station area should fall within one administrative unit like police station / block/ sub-division etc.

2. **Collection of Information and updating it on Control Table Database** – Information in Para -“1” above should be collected for each polling station by inspection and physical verification. This information should be updated in the polling stations table of ECI Control Table Database, for which a web application has been provided on the ECI website [<http://eci-citizenservicesforofficers.nic.in>] or (<http://ceoorissa.nic.in> / for officer's / officer's login (ECI website)]. Decision for creation of new polling stations can be taken in a rational manner after collection of this information.

3. **Creation of new polling stations** – Following may be kept in mind while preparing proposals for creation of new polling stations: -

- a. Optimum number of electors that can be assigned to a polling station is 1200 in case of rural areas and 1400 in case of urban areas. However, depending upon various issues, the District Election Officers may by providing necessary justification request to approve the lower or higher limit proposed by them.
- b. All existing auxiliary polling stations should be converted into main polling stations by dividing the electoral part.

- c. Some criteria for proposing new polling stations may be –
 - (i) New polling station may be proposed if a village has more than 300 electors and a suitable Government building is available for the polling station.
 - (ii) If it is necessary to do so in view of vulnerability mapping.
 - (iii) If a new colony with a number of dwelling units has cropped up, then new polling station may be created.
 - (iv) Polling area assigned to a polling station should be compact.
 - d. All instructions contained in the Handbook for Returning Officers relating to consultation with political parties and preparation and publication of list of polling stations must be followed scrupulously.
 - e. A Nodal Officer should be appointed by the District Election Officer for verification and rationalization of the polling stations. All complaints and suggestions received from political parties regarding polling stations should be duly inquired into and disposed of with a suitable reply to them.
 - f. After the rationalization of polling stations is done in this manner last minute changes in the location of polling stations should not be necessary.
 - g. Safety of polling teams and police force sent to conduct elections should also be kept in mind while proposing polling stations in Maoist or terrorist affected areas. As far as possible, in these areas, polling station should be made in places which have easy and safe access. It may also be useful if polling stations are provided in a cluster in such areas to maximize and synergise the available force.
- 4. Process of Sending Proposals for approval of the Commission** – In addition to the documents / information indicated in Para 5 of this Department letter No.5122/Elec. Dt.21st May, 2013 the following reports (in duplicate) should be included in the proposal to be sent to the Commission for approval of rationalization of polling stations.
- (a) Report of the Returning Officer and District Election Officer on the process followed in rationalization of the polling stations. The reports should mention all proposals received from political parties and also whether the proposals were accepted or not. If the proposals of political parties are not accepted, the report should mention reasons for not accepting them. The report should have a special section on how it has been ensured that vulnerable sections of society have unhindered access to polling stations without threat or intimidation.
 - (b) The proposal should have copies of the minutes of meeting with political parties in which the subject of rationalization of polling stations was discussed. The proposal should specifically mention which proposals of political parties have not been accepted along with reasons.

- (c) The proposal should specifically mention that no polling station is in a dilapidated building or in a religious place or within 200 meters of the office of a political parties.
- (d) The proposal should specifically mention that all infrastructure i.e. ramp, drinking water, toilet facilities, shed and shelter etc. has been provided in the proposed polling stations.
- (e) **Control Tables in "ECI Control Tables Database" must be updated on the E.CI website, before sending the proposal for approval of rationalized polling station list. A printout of the list of polling stations from the updated "ECI Control Tables Database" must be included in the proposal.**

5. **Time Frame** – The entire exercise has to be done within the time frame given below:

| SL No. | Activity | Time frame |
|--------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Completion of physical verification of polling stations | By 8 th July, 2013 |
| 2 | Draft publication of the rationalized list of polling stations to invite claims and objections and supply of copies of the proposal of modification in the existing list of polling stations to the local branches of recognized political parties etc. | By 12 th July, 2013 |
| 3 | Meeting with political parties, | By 17 th July, 2013 |
| 4 | Disposal of claims and objections and Finalization of rationalized list of polling stations | By 22 nd July, 2013 |
| 5 | Updation of Control Tables in "ECI Control Table Database" | By 25 th July, 2013 |
| 5 | Forwarding the list of proposals along with relevant documents to CEO. (Detailed programme for scrutiny of proposals district-wise will be communicated separately) | By 27 th July, 2013 |

Yours faithfully,

Handwritten signature and date: 21/06/13

Joint Chief Electoral Officer-cum-
Joint Secretary to Government.