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ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

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Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 464/INST/2023-EPS(Micro Observer)

Dated: 14th June, 2023

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of all States/ UTs

Sub: - Deployment of Micro Observers in Polling Stations and their duties- reg.

Reference:

- i. 464/INST/2014/EPS dated 21.03.2014
- ii. 464/INST/2008-EPS dated 24.10.2008
- iii. 464/INST/2008-EPS dated 10.12.2008
- iv. 464/INST/2008/EPS dated 21.01.2009
- v. 464/INST/2009/EPS dated 18.04.2009

Madam /Sir,

To ensure conduct of free and fair elections, the Commission has directed the District Election Officers to identify critical polling stations so that extra attention can be given to them while making plan for the poll day. Criticality of a Polling Station can be assessed on the basis of incidents of violence, intimidation of weaker sections, abnormally high voting in favour of a particular candidate etc. in the earlier elections. Commission has further directed that at such polling stations on the day of poll, CAPF should be deployed, in addition to use of one or more of non-CAPF measures like Micro Observers, webcasting, videography and still photography etc.

2. Identification of Critical Polling Stations:

The Commission has directed that for identification and finalising the list of critical polling stations, District Election Officers (DEOs) shall follow the objective criteria as provided in the Manual on Force Deployment in Election (*latest edition*). DEOs shall finalise the list of

critical polling stations for the purpose of poll day arrangement in consultation with the General Observers deployed by the Commission.

3. Appointment of Micro Observers at Polling Stations: -

The Commission directs that Micro Observers, as one of the Non-CAPF measures, can be deputed for critical Polling Stations on the day of poll. The Commission further directs that drafting and deployment of Micro Observers shall be as follows:

(a) Categories of employees: - The following categories of personnel will be considered for deployment as Micro Observers:

- Serving officials, not below Group-C of Govt. of India/Central PSUs, can be appointed as Micro Observers in Polling Stations within the district of their residence. However, they should not be used in their home Assembly Constituencies/Segments.
- Retired officials of the Govt. of India and the State Government, **not below to the rank of Group C**, can also be used as Micro-observers in the Polling Stations within the district of their residence. However, they should not be used in their home Assembly Constituencies/Segments. The list of such persons should be prepared in advance by the DEO and their availability, suitability and willingness shall be ascertained.
- Serving State Government officials, **not below the rank of Group C** brought in from other States may also be used as Micro Observer. As this will require logistical arrangements and mobilization, it should be resorted to only in rare cases.

(b) Volunteers as Micro Observers:

- The Members/Programme Officers/Coordinators of National Service Scheme (NSS) and Bharat Scouts and Guides (Rangers and Rovers) can be used as Micro Observers. The CEOs may get in touch with NSS Coordinator to work out and propose the detailed modalities of their deployment.



- Individual volunteers, not necessarily belonging to any NGO, from amongst reputed persons with experience and integrity may be considered for deployment as Micro Observers, in the rarest of rare case, with the express approval of the Commission.

(c) Preparation of Database for this purpose:

District Election Officer (DEO) will prepare a database of all Government of India and Central Public Sector Undertakings employees in the district containing the name, designation, organization, elector details in the electoral roll and the EPIC number. In addition to this, the postal address, telephone number, mobile number and email ID of the Micro Observers should also be included in the database.

In a situation where the district does not have adequate number of Government of India or Central PSU employees to be appointed as Micro-observers, DEO shall get the database of Government of India or Central PSU employees posted in neighbouring districts, with the help from the Divisional Commissioner/CEO.

(d) Deployment in multi phased election:

In case of multi phased election having multiple poll days and in case of shortage of Micro Observers, they can be used for poll duty on more than one poll day. The convenience, safety and logistics of movement must be considered while putting them on duty for more than one poll day.

(e) Deployment at Polling Station location having multiple Polling Stations:

In a polling station location having more than one critical polling station, the Micro Observer shall be responsible for all the critical Polling Stations at that location. The Micro Observer shall divide his time between Polling Stations and visit all the Polling Stations within the same location at frequent intervals. He shall make it known to the polling agents at each Polling Station that he is available in case they want to bring anything to his notice.



4. Training of Micro Observers:

Micro Observers should be given at least two rounds of detailed training by the Observers deployed by the Commission on the rules and procedures of the entire polling process. In addition, they must also be trained on the work of observation, which is expected of them, and the method of filling the report which they are required to submit. Standard training material shall be used during their training sessions.

5. Randomization of Micro Observers:

Based on the decision the General Observers deployed by the Commission to deploy to deploy Micro Observers, randomisation of available Micro Observers will be done in the presence of Observers amongst those identified Polling Stations. It shall be ensured that they are not deployed in the home Assembly Constituencies/ Segments. All efforts should, however be, made to put them on duty in the same Parliamentary Constituency where they are enrolled as voters, to enable them to exercise their franchise through Election Duty Certificates. The exact Polling Station, where they will be on duty, shall only be informed on the day of departure.

6. Roles and Functions of Micro Observers

Micro Observer should be present at the Polling Station at least 90 minutes before the start of poll. If, for certain reasons, it is not possible to reach in the morning, he/she should reach in the evening of the previous day. He will monitor the followings at the Polling Station:

- i. Assess the preparedness for poll at the Polling Station.
- ii. Check the availability of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) at the Polling Station and certify before the start of Polling.
- iii. During the poll day he should regularly note down the important points for his report in the format given at **Annexure-I.**
- iv. It is made absolutely clear that, in no case, the Micro Observer will act as Presiding Officer or the Polling Officer. His task is to



observe that the election processes are being carried out in a free and fair manner and there is no vitiation of poll.

- v. During the process of observation on the day of the poll, the Micro Observer shall specially observe and note:
- a. Mock Poll Procedures: To watch the mock poll and see that it is carried out as per the ECI instructions. Votes in CU are **cleared** and all **slips are taken out from VVPAT** and put in black envelope, after the mock poll and before the start of actual poll. Mock poll certificate is signed by the Presiding Officer, Polling Agents and all Polling Officers.
 - b. Sealing of EVM and VVPAT: Before the actual polling and after poll is over.
 - c. Presence of Polling Agents and observance of ECI instructions with regards to them.
 - d. The observance of entry passes system and access to Polling Station.
 - e. Proper identification of electors in accordance with ECI guidelines; identification and recording procedures for the Absentee, Shifted and Dead voter's list (ASD list)
 - f. Application of indelible ink,
 - g. Replacement of EVM, VVPAT during mock poll and polling, if any.
 - h. Noting down particulars of electors and alternative identification documents shown by them in register Form 17A
 - i. Secrecy of voting, Conduct of polling agents, their complaints, if any, etc.

7. Reports by Micro Observer and its Scrutiny:

- (i) General Observer will supervise the work of Micro Observers and shall be in close touch with them. Micro Observers shall report to the Observer alone and not to other election officials.



- (ii) If the Micro Observer notes any deviation of the Commission's instructions and he feels that the poll is being vitiated for any reasons, he will immediately bring the same to the notice of General Observer through any means of communication available to him including mobile phone, police wireless etc.
- (iii) After the poll process is over, the Micro Observer will submit a report to the General Observer in the format as enclosed at **Annexure-I**. He shall hand over the report (separate reports, if deployed for two or more Polling stations, in same Polling Station location) to the General Observer at the Receiving Centre in a sealed envelope. He shall also orally brief the General Observer on anything of importance that had happened during the day. General Observers will go through the report submitted by Micro Observers and can seek any further clarifications required.
- (iv) Reports of Micro Observers shall also be taken into consideration at the time of scrutiny after poll for taking a decision on re-poll or disciplinary action against any delinquent polling staff. Micro Observers should remain available at the time of scrutiny, for the General Observer to seek any clarifications, if required.

8. Facilities for Micro-Observers:

(i) Logistics for Micro-Observers- The District Election Officer shall be responsible for providing logistics to Micro Observers. One Nodal Officer for Micro Observers shall be appointed for each district by the DEO. Micro Observers will reach the Dispatch Centres on their own. Micro Observers will be dispatched along with the polling teams to the Polling Stations. They will return to the Receipt Centre with the polling teams. Each Micro Observer shall be given a photo identity card/entry pass by the DEO to ensure his/her access to the Polling Stations

(ii) Remuneration to Micro Observers-

Payment of remuneration and TA/DA etc to Micro Observers shall be made in accordance with the instruction issued on the subject.



(iii) Exercise of franchise by Micro Observers-

Micro Observers are entitled to EDC or postal ballot like any other person on poll duty. The DEO shall send Form-12 and Form-12A to every Micro Observer along with the appointment order. Micro Observers shall be asked to bring the completed Forms on the day of first training. The completed Forms shall be sent to the concerned Returning Officer by the DEO. The Returning Officer shall issue EDC or postal ballot depending on eligibility and ensure that it is delivered to the Micro Observer on the day of second training. They should be provided facilitation to cast their vote at Facilitation Centre, if postal ballots are issued. All instructions of the Commission on Postal Ballots and EDC for employees on poll duty shall also apply to Micro Observers.

The above instructions are being issued in supersession of all existing instructions on the subject for strict compliance by all.

Yours faithfully,


14/06/2023

(SANJEEV KUMAR PRASAD)
SECRETARY

ANNEXURE-I

MICRO OBSERVER REPORT ON POLL DAY

Sl. No	Point	Remarks
1.	Whether Assured Minimum facilities like Provisions of ramp, drinking water, adequate furniture, proper lighting/electricity arrangement, proper signage, toilets, shade, etc. were available at the polling station?	Yes or No
2.	Whether mock poll has been conducted in presence of micro-Observer?	Yes or No
3.	Whether data of mock poll from the Control Unit was cleared and all slips are taken out from VVPAT & put in black envelop and the EVM count was set to zero after the mock poll and before the beginning of actual poll?	Yes or No
4.	How many polling agents and of which political party, were present during poll?	Yes or No and brief detail
5.	Whether more than one polling agent from the same political party were present inside the polling station at any time?	Yes or No
6.	Whether polling agents were allowed to note the serial numbers of balloting unit and Control Unit and green paper seal?	Yes or No
7.	Whether voting compartment was properly placed to ensure secrecy of voting?	Yes or No
8.	Whether the entry pass system was enforced properly? Whether any unauthorized person was inside the polling station at any point of time?	Yes or No
9.	Whether marking of indelible ink was done properly?	Yes or No
10.	Whether the identification document particulars were being filled up meticulously in Register of Voters (Form 17A)?	Yes or No

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11.	(a) Whether the information of voters issued with Postal Ballot was available with the Presiding Officer & Polling Agents? (b) Did any person already issued with Postal Ballot appeared to vote again in person? (c) Whether any person cast a vote on the basis of EDC?	Yes or No Yes or No Yes or No
12.	Whether events are recorded from time to time as and when they occur in the Presiding Officer Diary?	Yes or No
13.	Whether the Presiding Officer or Polling Officer was going towards voting compartment without valid reasons or giving any undue instructions to the voters?	Yes or No
14.	Whether the scrutiny of voters in the Absentee, Shifted and Dead list was done meticulously by the Presiding Officer in accordance with ECI Guidelines?	Yes or No
15.	Whether sealing of voting machines was done according to instruction?	Yes or No
16.	Whether copies of accounts of votes recorded in Form 17C have been given to the polling agents?	Yes or No
17.	Whether any complaint by polling agent, election agent or any political party was received? If yes, its substance.	Yes or No
18.	Any other incident or issue that you would like to highlight?	Yes or No

(Signature of the Micro Observer)

Name (in Full):

Designation:

Mobile No:

Date and Time:

