ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No.464/INST/2008-EPS   Dated: 24th October, 2008

To

1.   The Chief Secretaries of
      All States/UTs.

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

Subject:-   Identification of critical polling stations and measures to be taken
             to ensure free and fair elections

Sir,

        In supersession of Commission's instructions contained in its letter No. 464/INST/2007-PLN-I dated the 12th October, 2007, I am directed to say that in order to ensure free and fair elections the Commission has decided to deploy CPF in all polling stations. However, in order to identify the critical polling stations, which may require some more additional measures, it is necessary to spell out certain objective criteria to be followed by the DEO/RO as under :-

1. An analysis of the polling station wise number of voters with EPIC and without EPIC (non EPIC voters) shall be made. The polling stations shall be sorted in descending order in terms of number of non-EPIC voters in order to prioritize.

2. The Commission had recently directed a survey of missing voters under two categories i.e. missing voters with family links and missing voters without family links. Out of these two categories the existence of missing voters without family links offers a scope for misuse and malpractice. The number of voters coming under the second category shall be analyzed polling station wise and the Polling Station with large number of such voters shall be marked. For this purpose the total number of such missing voters without family linkage shall be divided by the total number of polling stations to workout the assembly constituency average. Analyzing the deviation above the average shall identify the polling stations with large number of such voters.

3. During the election the DEOs/ROs may be asked to do a vulnerability mapping of hamlets/villages/electoral segments vulnerable for threat and intimidation. Polling stations identified as having vulnerable pockets shall be listed.

4. The polling station wise election results available in Form 20 with reference to the past general election shall be analyzed. All such Polling Station where percentage of poll recorded is more than 75% and where more than 75% of votes have been recorded in favour of one candidate shall be identified as critical polling station.

5. The polling stations that went for repoll during the previous election due to reported electoral malpractices; the polling stations that witnessed any sort of electoral violence shall also be identified.

6. The DEOs and ROs shall factor all the above inputs while finally identifying the critical polling stations for additional measures. The ECI Observers shall be consulted while finalizing the list of critical polling stations as per the above instructions.

7. The response protocol to be followed with reference to the vulnerable villages/hamlets/electoral segments has been detailed vide Commission's letter 464/INST/2007-PLN-I Dated 12th October, 2007. These instructions shall be implemented without fail.

8. With reference to polling stations identified as **critical polling stations** on account of other indicators listed above one or all of the following measures shall be put in place.

    a. The presence of CPF to safe guard the polling station.

    b. Digital camera or video camera shall be positioned in the polling station. The procedure for deploying such cameras has been given vide letter No.447/2007/PLN-IV, dated 17.01.2007.

    c. The Presiding Officer shall be specially briefed to ensure that the EPIC/approved identification document, if any are properly verified and reflected in the remarks column of Form 17 A.

    d. The list of such polling stations shall be given to the Commanding/Assistant Commanding Officers of CPF so that they can also keep an eye on such polling stations.

    e. Deployment of a micro-observer inside the polling station.

9. This shall be brought to the notice of all concerned. A copy of the circular be handed over to all Observers through DEOs.

Yours faithfully,

(SHANGARA RAM)
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY