

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi, 110001

No. ECI/PN/66 /2017

Dated : 01 August, 2017

Sub: Meeting on Registration and ETPBS Facilities for Mission officials, Registration Process of Overseas (NRI) Electors and Special Campaign for registration of Young Electors in Colleges/Universities in the USA

The team of the Election Commission of India officers comprising Mr. Umesh Sinha, Sr. Deputy Election Commissioner and Mr. Sandeep Saxena, Deputy Election Commissioner held a meeting with the Incharge, CG, Ms. Parimita Tripathi, Dy. CG and other officials of the Consulate in the Consulate building in New York on 31st July, 2017 about the process of registration of MEA officials as Service Voters and the system of operation of the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System.

The Consulate also facilitated the interactive session of the ECI officials with about 30 NRI Representatives and about a dozen media persons on the topic Registration and Participation of Indian Overseas Electors in the US. During the interactive session, Mr. Sinha and Mr. Saxena explained about the eligibility criteria for the Overseas electors, procedure for registration, the present system of voting, the proposed system of the voting and methodology to run the campaign for the students of the Colleges/Universities and India Citizens staying on work permit or green card. The ECI officials solicited support from the Media, the NRI organizations, Representatives of the Indian Students Community in registration of Overseas electors and enhancing their participation. A special appeal was made to identify the eminent apolitical persons of India who could act as an Icon for the Commission. It was visualized that on pattern of India, we could make the experienced students of the Universities and Colleges as Campus Ambassadors for their own Campus. Media was also appealed to run their own innovative campaign for registration of Young Voters and residual Overseas electors.

Explaining the process of overseas electors' registration, it was informed that Section 20A of the Representation of People Act, 1950 specifies an overseas elector as a person who is a citizen of India, has not acquired citizenship of any other country, has attained the age of 18 years on the qualifying date i.e. first day of January of the year of revision of electoral roll and is away from India for employment, education etc. Those who have ceased to be citizens of India on acquiring the citizenship of another country are not eligible to be enrolled in the electoral rolls in India. As per an estimate, there are about sixteen million number of overseas Indian Citizens out of which about 1,30,00 students are studying in colleges and universities and about 5 lakh Indian citizens are working in various organisations and several thousand persons are engaged in trade and business. However, a very small number are registered as Overseas (NRI) electors

in India.



It was explained that in order to enroll as overseas Indian (NRI) an application need to be filed in Form 6A before the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) of the constituency within which the place of ordinary residence of the applicant in India as given in his/her passport falls. The application accompanied by duly self-attested copy of the relevant documents can be filed in person or sent by post addressed to ERO or can be filed online on Election Commission of India (ECI) website (www.eci.nic.in) and (www.nvsp.in) and upload, the copy of the passport and copies of other necessary documents like visa. Form 6A can be downloaded from the above website or may be collected free of cost in Indian Missions in foreign countries. Hard copy of Form 6A duly filled in with recent passport size coloured photograph, self-attested copies of the relevant pages of the passport containing photograph, his address in India and all other particulars of the applicant and also the page of passport containing the valid visa endorsement can be either sent to ERO by post or in person or may be submitted online. The details of the ERO of the concerned Assembly Constituency and the Polling Station of for the residential address of the applicant can be obtained from the websites (www.eci.nic.in) and (www.nvsp.in).

Under the process of registration, the Electoral Registration Officer may also ask the concerned Booth Level Officer to verify with the family members / relatives or the neighbours, if

any, the information provided by the applicant. If Form 6A is complete in all respects and copies of all relevant documents enclosed and no person has objected within 7 days stipulated time, the Electoral Registration Officer can order inclusion of name in the electoral roll. The status of the application may be tracked on the websites (www.eci.nic.in) and (www.nvsp.in). The decision of the Electoral Registration Officer will be communicated to the applicant by post on his address in the foreign country given by him in Form 6A and also by e-mail/ SMS on the mobile number given by him in Form 6A.

For any correction of mistakes in electoral rolls, an application in Form-8 is to be submitted online/ by post/ in person to the Electoral Registration Officer concerned. Electoral Registration Officer is to be informed of the change in current residential address of the overseas (NRI) electors in the country of his/her residence. On return an overseas elector can get himself registered as a general elector at the place where he is ordinarily resident in India. After enrolment, an overseas (NRI) elector will be able to cast his vote in an election in the Constituency, in person, at the polling station provided for the part where he is registered as an overseas (NRI) elector.

ECI has recommended to the Government of India to facilitate overseas electors in voting through a proxy appointed by him or through one way electronically transmitted Postal Ballot which is under active consideration of the Union Government. A proposal to issue Elector Photo Identity Card to all overseas (NRI) elector is under active consideration of ECI. At present he may cast his vote in an election in the constituency, in person at the polling station on production of his original passport. A power point presentation was made to explain the process of online registration of overseas electors' which is very simple and user friendly and the system of Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) presently being implemented as pilot for Service voters which includes Indian Embassy and Consulate staff. ETPBS is a secure system which works with inscription technology and operates on Personal Information Number (PIN) and One Time Password (OTP) and significantly reduces the travel time for postal ballot thereby helping in timely reaching of Postal Ballot back to Returning Officer before counting.

The discussion was very live and interactive in which apart from sharing diverse views many good suggestions were made by the representatives of Overseas Indian community. Replies to the questions and queries were given by the Election Commission Officials. An assurance was given by the participants to help connecting the efforts of ECI to reach to every single eligible overseas elector in various available forum, in both formal and informal way and also by using Social Media and Information Technology. The Meeting ended with thanking all the participants with a resolve to facilitate all available channels to disseminate information on overseas voters' registration and electoral process. It is hoped that the meeting will help in registering a large number of the overseas Indians as electors who will subsequently be able to use their franchise in the coming elections.

(Suman Kumar Das)
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