

# ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

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No.464/INST-VS/2014-EPS

Dated: 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2014

To,

The Chief Electoral Officers of  
all the States & Union Territories.

**Sub: Distribution of Photo Voter Slips to the Electors by BLOs – reg.**

Ref: The Commission's instructions –

- (i) 464/INST/2011/EPS, dated 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2011
- (ii) 464/INST/2011/EPS, dated 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2011
- (iii) 464/INST/2013-EPS, dated 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2013

Madam / Sir,

The Commission has issued instructions from time to time regarding distribution of Photo Voter Slips to voters. In the light of experience gained in the past and in order to streamline the mechanism of distribution of Photo Voter Slips and bring in greater transparency, following instructions are being issued for the process to be followed for distribution of Photo Voter Slips:

- a) The Photo Voter Slips shall be printed on a good quality paper, ensuring clear entries and photographs of voters appearing thereon. The District Election Officer (DEO)/ Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) shall ensure that the Photo Voter Slips are printed by following/ meeting all possible safeguards.
- b) **Only one (1) set of Photo Voter Slips would be printed** for the registered electors of each Assembly Constituency, duly authenticated by the ERO, for distribution through the BLOs.

- c) A pre-printed register of voters shall be given to each BLO along with the Photo Voter Slips of the electors of his/ her Polling Station area. **The Photo Voter Slips should be issued under original signatures of the BLOs.** The BLO shall give the Photo Voter Slip either to the registered voter or to an adult member of the voter's family who is himself/ herself a voter. The BLO shall obtain the signature or thumb impression of the person to whom the Photo Voter Slip is delivered, as an acknowledgement of having received the Photo Voter Slip. The register shall be deposited by the BLOs to the ERO before the day of Poll.
- d) The marking of Absent/ Shifted/ Dead (ASD) Voters shall also be done on the Photo Voter Slips. These Photo Voter Slips may be stamped with a note "**ASD Voters – You will have to bring additional proof of identification such as- EPIC, any of the documents notified by ECI, on the day of Poll**". The Presiding Officers may be directed to verify such Voters through any additional document along with the Photo Voter Slip.
- e) **The Returning Officer (RO) of the Constituency shall prepare a schedule for distribution of Photo Voter Slips by the BLOs.** A copy of this schedule shall be given by the RO to the Political Parties, Booth Level Agents (BLAs) of all recognized political parties, if they have been appointed and contesting Candidates and their Agents, under acknowledgement.
- f) The BLAs of political parties/ Candidates' Agents **may accompany** the BLOs during the distribution work. When the BLA/ Candidates' Agent accompanies the BLO for distribution, their signatures should also be obtained on the register, as a token of having seen the distribution process to genuine voters. Strict action should be taken against the BLO if a complaint is received and it is proved that he/ she did not share the schedule of distribution of Photo Voter Slips with BLAs or contesting candidates or their agents or did not allow them to accompany him/ her during the distribution work.
- g) The DEOs shall ensure that BLOs maintain **absolute neutrality** during the distribution of Photo Voter Slips.

- h) Sector Officers should randomly check that distribution of Photo Voter Slips is being done as per these instructions and if any deviation is found it should be corrected immediately. Sector Officers should also verify from the Photo Voter Slip registers that all slips have been distributed and that signatures/ thumb impression of acknowledgement have been obtained on the register.
- i) Returning Officer should monitor the distribution of Photo Voter Slips with the help of Sector Officers and should ensure that all Photo Voter Slips are properly distributed and duly accounted for.
- j) **Bulk distribution of the Photo Voter Slips shall not be allowed by BLO or any other person.**
- k) A mechanism should be set up at the level of each Sector Officer and the RO/ ARO, to receive complaints about improper distribution of Photo Voter Slips. All such complaints should be expeditiously inquired into, and immediate corrective action should be taken. **The ROs/ DEOs will also ensure appropriate legal action against person(s) who procure the Photo Voter Slips distributed by BLOs, from a Voter, under intimidation or by means of an inducement.**
- l) All undistributed Photo Voter Slips should be kept in the office of the ERO/ AERO, in each Assembly Constituency. Wide Publicity should be given that if any person has not received the Photo Voter Slip, he/ she may collect it from the office of the ERO/ AERO. A distribution register should also be maintained in the office of the ERO/ AERO for taking acknowledgement from voters who collect their Photo Voter Slips from there.
- m) Distribution should be completed **at least five clear days** before the date of poll.
- n) BLOs will prepare a list of Photo Voter Slips left undistributed, on completion of the above mentioned distribution process, containing Serial No. and Names of the Voters, and will get it authenticated by ERO/ AERO and use this list on the day of Poll. **The undistributed Photo Voter Slips along with an alphabetical Voters' list shall be kept at a facilitation desk to be manned by the concerned BLO, outside each Polling Station, on the day of the poll.** Wide

publicity should be given that any voter who has not received Photo Voter Slip may collect it from this facilitation desk on the poll day. The facilitation desk should be set up outside the Polling Station at a convenient and visible place so that voters can easily access it. It should be identified by a big flex board.

- o) BLOs will keep a record of distribution (signature/ thumb impression) on the list itself on the day of Poll and finally deposit this list and any undistributed Photo Voter Slips to the ERO at the end of the Poll.
- p) **No photocopies of the Photo Voter Slips may be made for distribution purposes.** At the time of polling also, on Poll day, no voter carrying a photocopy of the Photo Voter Slip may be allowed to vote.
- q) The Observers would use the services of the Micro-observers and Sector Officers to carry out random checks and ensure distribution of the Photo Voter Slips in an effective manner and to address complaints received, if any, from any quarter about the conduct of the BLOs in impartial and fair distribution of these Slips.
- r) Any unauthorized distribution/ possession of Photo Voter Slips (election material) shall be considered as violation of the relevant provisions of the RP Act, 1951 and the IPC and is punishable with imprisonment or fine or both. **Instructions to this effect may be printed on the reverse of the Slips, along with other instructions like, not to bring any camera (still/ video/ digital) or Mobile Phone inside the Polling Station.**

Yours faithfully,



(SUMIT MUKHERJEE)  
SECRETARY