

**By Speed Post/e-mail**

**G.E-2009**

**ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

**NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001.**

**K.N. BHAR**

Tele No. 011- 23052014

**UNDER SECRETARY**

**No. 51/8/7/2009/EMS**

**Date: 23 .01.2009**

To

The Chief Electoral Officers  
of all States/UTs.

**Subject:** - Accountability for spreading awareness about EVM voting in rural and remote areas.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to say that the introduction of EVM in elections in India took place in phases and finally the universal use of EVM at all polling stations in a general election became a reality in 2004. At that time, the Commission took various initiatives to spread the awareness about EVM among all sections of voters. After that in various general elections to Legislative Assemblies, the EVMs have been used. The fact that EVMs have been repeatedly used in all elections in recent times should not result in EVM awareness being taken for granted. There is a need to renew the campaign as there are millions of voters who have become eligible to be voters in the meanwhile and there is a considerable gap between one general election and another general election.

For spreading EVM awareness among rural voters, various innovative methods can be used but there is no substitute for giving an opportunity to the voter to handle the EVM prior to the election so that the voter has 'hands on experience' about voting using EVM even before elections. Considering the need for giving a 'hands on training' to the

voters on EVMs, the Commission has issued the following directions based on some methods adopted in Orissa during general election in 2004.

1. Accountability for taking EVM to all villages and hamlets should be fixed on a govt. servant at the *Gram Panchayat* level by identifying one govt. servant for each *Gram Panchayat* who would be the nodal point for spreading awareness about EVM in all villages and hamlets coming under that *Panchayat*. In view of the fact that the BLO system in the meanwhile has become operational and functioning successfully, if the CEO desire he can create such accountability polling station-wise instead of *Gram Panchayat*-wise so that the EVM awareness spread in all villages and hamlets coming under that polling station area by the officer responsible for it, may be BLO. Whether the *Gram Panchayat* approach is adopted or the polling station approach is adopted, the accountability factor should be very clear.
2. The CEO should fix a time frame for a focused campaign so that the time frame is used uniformly throughout the State. It is relevant to note that such a focused approach in itself will generate its own momentum.
3. The DEO will direct the Sub-Divisional Officers/BDOs/ARO of the assembly segment to identify *Gram Panchayat*-wise or polling station-wise officer-in-charge of this exercise and approve the same. A directory of such GP-wise or PS-wise nodal officers will be maintained by DEO/ARO for his respective jurisdiction.
4. The DEO will make the required number of EVMs needed for this campaign for the specific period. The EVM used

for this purpose should bear the label indicating “T” (meaning Training).

5. A schedule for this awareness campaign should be prepared by the DEO assembly segment-wise and he should give adequate publicity by informing the media about the campaign. Leaflets shall be printed in this regard and circulated in the villages.
6. During the schedule for campaign, the nodal officer will carry the EVM and give exposure to the voters by convening *Gram Sabha/Palli Sabha* meeting at village/hamlet level. The campaign should make use of such locations where the people normally congregate in the rural and tribal areas for example, the weekly *Hat* (weekly market place) is an important place where the public congregate once in every week.
7. During the campaign period, supervisory officers such as SDOs/BDOs should take test check to find out whether the schedule is being followed by the nodal officers. At the end of the campaign, the nodal officer shall submit a certificate in the proforma attached to this letter. This certificate will be given by the nodal officer to the BDO and the BDO send a similar certificate to the SDO who in turn will send a certificate to the DEO. Finally, the CEO will obtain a certificate about EVM awareness in all the villages and hamlets of the district from the respective DEOs. A clear timetable should be adopted for this purpose. No deviation shall be allowed in this matter.
8. Simultaneously, before launching of the campaign period, the CEO will identify one officer for each district who will be called “EVM awareness observer”. This officer should be preferably drawn from various Departments in

headquarters. Alternatively, this officer can be identified with the help of Divisional Commissioner (if the Divisional Commissioner system exists in the State) from within the Division. Immediately after the campaign period at the district level is over, this EVM awareness observer will be deputed to the field. They should be given independent mobility. These officers will obtain the details of awareness campaign done in a district and travel at random in the interior pockets and meet the voters at random in market places/villages and check up with them as to whether they had seen the EVM and whether they are aware about the EVM voting. For this purpose, these officers should also carry one EVM with them wherever they travel. In case of the observer finding that EVM exposure was not done at the village level and the voters were not aware of the EVM voting, they should bring that fact immediately to the notice of the DEO and local officer concerned. Simultaneously, they will also inform the CEO's office. Observer should also submit a consolidated report after their return to the headquarters. Whenever such lack of awareness is detected, the DEO/ARO of the assembly segment should make immediate intervention for creating further awareness and he should also simultaneously fix up responsibility on the officer who was responsible for creating awareness during the campaign period and initiate necessary disciplinary action against that officer.

9. After the campaign period is over, after obtaining certificate from all the DEOs and after obtaining report from the EVM awareness observer, the CEO should send a report to the Commission's headquarters to Sh. K.N.

Bhar, Under Secretary (Fax-011-23052014, E-mail: knbhar@eci.gov.in.

10. For the purpose of spreading EVM awareness, the Commission in the past had prepared audio visual campaign materials which are available in the Commission's website and already been circulated to the CEOs also, in the past. Besides, the CEOs at their level also have prepared audio visual campaign materials in the respective vernacular language for the purpose of better dissemination. The CEOs may review the availability of such audio visual campaign materials. They should also finalize suitable posters and leaflets for spreading EVM awareness in the rural areas. Besides, CEO should also make use of the services of the Directorate of Field Publicity and Song & Drama Division of Ministries of Information & Broadcasting may be made use of. The CEO should take initiative to explore various folk medium that would attract the attention of rural voter in the process of EVM awareness.

This instruction may be brought to the notice of all concerned and be followed without any deviation.

Yours faithfully,

**(K.N. BHAR)**