

CHAPTER - X
BALLOT PAPERS AND BALLOT BOXES

With the preparation of the lists of contesting candidates, the first stage of election process, comes to an end. Within the 13 days interval between last date of withdrawal of candidature and day of poll, all necessary arrangements have to be finalized for taking poll. So this is the most crucial stage.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRINTING OF BALLOT PAPERS

All DC/SDO(C)s should make arrangements for this by way of identifying few competent, well equipped local printing presses. You might have been informed about the Govt. registered printing presses of your jurisdiction.

You are also to assess the requirements of the quantity of ballot papers to be printed against each constituency in four levels of Panchayat Election. You are also to ensure as to whether sufficient quantity of coloured DFC Papers for printing of ballot papers have already been received or not.

In addition to other arrangements, you are to work out proper security plans in an around the printing presses where ballot papers are to be printed. It is advisable to have round the clock security posting in these presses till the printed ballot papers are transferred to safe custody in your office.

Each level of election will have huge number of constituencies and the preparation and printing of hundreds of types of ballot papers in variable quantity as per number of voters in each constituency becomes an arduous job. All the authorized officers receiving nomination papers shall also be entrusted with the supervision, proof reading etc. for printing of ballot papers for constituencies concerned. Such responsibility may be in writing. However, additional responsible officer may also be engaged for this purpose in order to accomplish error free, timely printing of ballot papers including postal ballot papers.

(A) POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS

The Assam State Election Commission decides to follow the provisions contained in the Rule 17(C), 18, 22 and 23 of conduct of Elections Rule, 1961 as well as standing instruction of the Election Commission of India on the matter, for conduct of Panchayat Election

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ENTITLEMENT OF VOTING BY POSTAL BALLOTS

Under Rule 18 of the conduct of Election Rules 1961 "voters on election duty" are entitled to vote by post.

As per Rule 17 (C) of the said Rules, "Voters on Election Duty" include -

- (i) Any Presiding Officer
- (ii) Any Polling Officer
- (iii) Any Polling Agent duly appointed

(iv) Other public servants on election duty - who is a voter in any G.P. Ward constituency of the district/Sub-Division and is by reason of his being on election duty unable to vote at the polling station where he is entitled to vote.

Apart from above polling personnel, the police personnel on election duty are also treated as "voters on election duty". Further, this facility of postal ballots is also extended to the drivers, handymen etc. actually employed on vehicles hired for election duty.

POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS - FORM AND LANGUAGE:

(i) Postal ballot papers shall be printed in same form and language of the normal ballot papers used in polling station.

(ii) Names of the candidates shall be arranged on the ballot paper in the same order in which they appear in the lists of contesting candidates in Form - III-A or III - B.

(iii) Every postal ballot paper shall have a counterfoil attached to it at the top. The counterfoil shall bear the particulars of the election and constituency name.

(iv) Each ballot paper shall be serially numbered mechanically at top left portion as well as counterfoil.

(v) The counterfoil should also bear space for recording the Election Roll part no., serial number of the voter in Election/Roll and for his signature.

(vii) In case of Panchayat election, you have to print hundreds of kinds of ballot papers for each constituency in four coloured papers and hence another four different colour papers would not be available. In order to reduce work load, it is advised that postal ballot papers shall also be printed in same colour papers earmarked for four levels of constituencies. Further, postal ballot papers shall be numbered in different series.

(viii) Total number of postal ballot papers to be printed by you shall be carefully assessed, based on the number of voters in each constituency as well as probable drafting of voters on election duty. ASEC observes that in previous elections, number of persons availing facility of postal ballot papers was below 10% of total voters only. Hence requirement for this election should also be assessed at your end.

(ix) The width of the postal ballot paper shall be 4 inch wide. The width of space allotted to each candidate should be uniformly 1 inch. If total number of candidates exceeds 9, the ballot paper shall be printed in double column, each column separated by a half inch wide shaded line from top to bottom.

(x) The name of each candidate shall be separated by a shadow line of half inch width. There shall be a thick black border of 1/8 inch width at the bottom.

(xi) Postal ballot papers shall be stitched in convenient bundles of 50 ballots. ASEC has no objection to the postal ballot papers being type written in prescribed format if the number required is too small for printing. In such case, typewritten ballots are to be machine numbered.

(xii) The Standing instructions of the Election Commission of India regarding format & specifications of postal ballot should be followed.

ISSUE OF POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS

(1) Voters on election duty as described above are required by law to submit application to DC/SDO (C)S for permission to vote by postal ballot papers. Such application is to be made in Form No. XXV which may be seen at Annexure.

(2) Applications are to be made atleast 7 days ahead of date of poll in the constituencies. This is to enable you to send the postal ballot papers in time and making necessary entries in the marked/ working copies of E/Rolls of respective polling stations.

(3) Four postal ballots of different four levels of constituencies (viz. GP Member, GP President, AP Member and ZP member of the applicant) shall be issued to applicant against single application.

RECORDS OF POSTAL BALLOTS

- (1) It is presumed that a "Postal Ballot Paper Cell" has been constituted for your District / Sub-Division to handle the postal ballot paper related issues. A responsible officer, preferably Executive Magistrate, should be specifically entrusted as officer-in-charge. The officials of the cell will be made available with the copies of recently published E/Rolls to help any person on election duty to verify his name in the E/Roll, enter particulars in his application and submit it on the spot.
- (2) The records of delivery of postal ballot papers to the applicants should be recorded in a register prepared in Form - XXVI.
- (3) The officials of Postal Ballot paper cell make every effort to issue the postal ballot paper to every voter on election duty, on receipt of application in Form XXV, as expeditiously as possible. The issue of postal ballot papers should be completed in all cases, at least 3 days before the date of poll.
- (4) To facilitate speedy return of the postal ballot papers, DC/SDO(C) should have a special box with secure locks, in his office so that persons on election duty may come and drop in that box their ballot papers in the sealed covers (provided to them along with postal ballot papers).
- (5) Everyday, the officer in-charge of Postal Ballot Paper Cell should take out the contents of the box, make necessary entries in the register maintained for this purpose. Keep the postal ballot and registers in safe custody.
- (6) If a person opts to send the postal ballot paper by normal prepaid postal service, there is no objection.
- (7) So far as polling agents are concerned, some of them may require the postal ballot facility. They require to apply on their own motion for postal ballots. You must satisfy yourself in respect of each such polling agent who thus applied that - (1) his name has been entered in the E/Roll (2) that he is physically unable to vote in person by reason of his appointment as polling agent. If you are satisfied, allow him to vote by post.

For this purpose, you should be satisfied about genuineness of such claim. You may insist upon countersignature of candidate on the Form XXV or a certificate from the candidate.

If the appointment of a polling agent is revoked after issue of postal ballots, he can vote by post only.

SEALING OF MARKED COPY OF ELECTORAL ROLL

It has already been mentioned that after supplying the postal ballots, corresponding electoral roll should be marked. For this purpose, 'PB' (indicating Postal Ballot) should be marked on the left side of the serial number of the voter with red ink in corresponding marked copy of electoral roll. After marking all 'PB's the marked copy of E/Roll should be sealed and given to the Presiding Officer Concerned of the Polling Station.

Counterfoils of the postal ballot papers should be sealed in separate packets and kept in your safe custody.

POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS RETURNED IN TIME

(1) Postal Ballot papers should be returned to the DC/SDO(C) at the latest by the hour fixed for the commencement of counting of votes of the constituencies. Keep in safe custody all the covers containing the postal ballot papers received in time.

(2) For keeping correct accounts of postal ballot papers received in time, a register showing daily receipts of such postal ballot should be maintained by the Postal ballot paper cell.

POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS RETURNED LATE

You should not decline receipt of covers containing postal ballot even if delivered after the fixed time. Such ballot received late will not be counted and must be rejected. Note the date and time of receipt on these covers. Those covers need not be opened and posted in accounts as rejected votes.

প্ৰ-পত্ৰ - ২৫
(Form XXV)

(ডাকযোগে ভোটদিয়াৰ বাবে জাননী চিঠি)

প্ৰতি,

উপায়ুক্ত/মহকুমাধিপতি (অসামৰিক)

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মহশয়,

মই আগন্তুক পঞ্চায়ত নিৰ্বাচনত সংশ্লিষ্ট সমষ্টিসমূহৰ প্ৰাৰ্থীক মোৰ ভোটটো ডাকযোগে দিবলৈ ফনক কৰিছোঁ।

মোৰ নামটো জিলা পৰিষদ সমষ্টিৰ
অন্তৰ্গত গাঁওৰ ভোটৰ তালিকাৰ ক্ৰমিক নং ত অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত হৈ আছে।

গতিকে নিম্নলিখিত সমষ্টিসমূহৰ নিৰ্দ্ধাৰিত বেলট কাগজ মোলে পঠাবৰ বাবে অনুৰোধ জনালোঁ।

বেলট কাগজ/নামস্টিৰ বিৱৰণ :

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| ১। | জিলা পৰিষদ সদস্যৰ সমষ্টি | : | |
| ২। | গাঁও পঞ্চায়ত সভাপতিৰ সমষ্টি | : | |
| ৩। | আঞ্চলিক পঞ্চায়তৰ সদস্যৰ সমষ্টি (গা.প.) | : | |
| ৪। | গাঁও পঞ্চায়তৰ সদস্যৰ সমষ্টি | : | |

স্থান :

তাৰিখ :

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আপোনাৰ বিশ্বাসী

পংখ্যসং

অ-পত্র - ২৬

Form No. XXVI

নির্বাচনী কর্তব্যত নিয়োগিত লোকক প্রদান করা তালিকাভুক্ত কাগজের পত্রী

(Register of Postal Ballot Papers issued to persons drafted for Election Duty)

ক্রমিক নং	ব্যক্তিকর্মের নাম বলা জোটের তালিকার তথ্য				ক্রমিক নং	তালিকাভুক্ত কাগজ প্রদান করার তারিখ জোটের তালিকার চিহ্নিত প্রতিদিনের দিন দিয়ার তারিখ	তালিকাভুক্ত কাগজ থ্যে থ্যেত দিনের নং (স্ব/স্ব/স্ব)	ব্যক্তি কর্মের আবেদনকারীর চিহ্ন
	গীও পংখ্যসং নাম	গীও পংখ্যসং সংখ্যার নাম	গীও/অংক নাম	ক্রমিক নং				
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