

ECI to provide Mobile Deposit Facility for voters at polling stations

Rationalises norms for Canvassing

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In line with various initiatives aimed at enhancing voter convenience and streamlining poll day arrangements, the Election Commission has issued two more comprehensive instructions for providing mobile deposit facility for voters just outside the polling stations and rationalising norms for canvassing. The instructions are in line with the relevant provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961.

Recognising the increasing coverage and usage of mobile phones in both urban and rural areas and the challenges faced not only by the voters at large but also by senior citizens, women, and PwD electors in managing mobile phones on the poll day, the Commission has decided to allow a mobile deposit facility just outside the polling stations. Only mobile phones shall be allowed within 100 meters of the polling station and that too in switched-off mode. Very simple pigeonhole boxes or jute bags shall be provided near the entrance door of the polling station where the voters would be required to deposit their mobile phones. Mobile phones shall not be allowed to be carried inside the polling station by the voter. However, certain Polling Stations can be exempted from this provision based on adverse local circumstances by the Returning Officer. Rule 49M of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, which ensures secrecy of voting within the polling station, will continue to be strictly enforced.

Further, in a move aimed at improving election day facilitation, the Commission has rationalised the permissible norms for canvassing in line with the electoral laws to 100 meters from the entrance of the polling station. However, electioneering shall not be allowed within a 100-meter radius around the Polling Station on the day of poll. Therefore, the booths set up by the candidates on poll day for issuing unofficial identity slips to electors, in case the electors are not carrying their official Voter Information Slips (VIS) issued by the Commission, can now be set up just beyond 100 meters of any polling station.

The Election Commission of India, under the Chairmanship of Chief Election Commissioner Shri Gyanesh Kumar along with Election Commissioners Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Dr. Vivek Joshi, remains committed to conducting elections strictly in accordance with the legal framework, while continuously innovating to improve the facilities for the voters.

PK/GDH/RP