

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI – 110001

F.No. 4/3/2020/SDR/

Dated: 19th December, 2020

To,

Sh. Sitaram Yechury,
General Secretary, CPI (M),
A K Gopalan Bhawan,
27-29 Bhai Vir Singh Marg,
New Delhi- 110 001

Sub:- Grievances on the Commission's proposal for extending the facility of postal ballot to the overseas electors-regarding.

Sir,

Please refer to your letter dated 04.12.2020 on the subject cited.

As you are aware that, in 2011, special provisions for registration/right to franchise for overseas electors was prescribed U/S 20A of the Representation of the People Act 1950. However, under the existing provisions, the overseas electors can cast their votes also at their respective polling stations in India and that too, in person.

In 2015, after detailed consultations with various stakeholders including political parties, as stated in your aforesaid letter, on the recommendation of a Committee, Commission recommended to the M/o Law & Justice to facilitate voting for overseas electors by one or more options: (i) postal ballots; (ii) proxy; or (iii) in person.

Thereafter, Rule 23 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 was amended on 21st October, 2016 providing facility of one way electronic transmission of postal ballot (ETPBS) (from RO to elector) to the service electors. The ETPBS system for service voters (armed forces and person employed under the GoI, in a post outside India) is now completely streamlined and functioning satisfactorily. After successful implementation of ETPBS for service electors, the facilitation process for Overseas Electors was deliberated in the Commission. In line with the recommendations, as already made in 2015, the Commission recommended to Ministry of Law & Justice for ETPBS for Overseas Electors by amending Rules. Commission noted from aforesaid letter that "the CPI(M) is in favour of extending the voting right to overseas electors/NRIs for participating in the election process in the country".

The current proposal to extend ETPBS voting option in favour of overseas electors sent to the M/o Law & Justice on 27.11.2020 is an extension of the continuing efforts of the Commission to facilitate voting to the overseas electors, who are unable to exercise their franchise inspite of amendment in Act, in 2011.

Yours faithfully,



(N.T. Bhutia)
Secretary