

TELANGANA STATE ELECTION COMMISSION
1st Floor, DTCP Building, A.C. Guards, Hyderabad.

No.317/TSEC-ULBs/2021-2

Dated:29.04.2021

ORDER

Sub:- TSEC – Elections – Ordinary Elections to 7 ULBs and Casual Elections to 5 Casual vacancies - Broad guidelines for conduct of elections to local bodies in the state during covid-19 - Counting of Votes - Orders – Issued.

Ref:- 1. TSEC Notification no. 257/TSEC-ULBs/2021, dated:15.4.2021.
2. TSEC Notification no. 263/TSEC-ULBs/2021-1&2, dated:15.4.2021.
3.TSEC Circular No. 243/TSEC-ULBs/2021, dated:07.4.2021.
4. TSEC Order No. 309/TSEC-ULBs/2021, dated:22.4.2021.
5. TSEC Order No. 317/TSEC-ULBs/2021, dated:27.4.2021.
6. Hon'ble High Court Orders in WP(PIL) No. 56 & 58 of 2020 dated 29.04.2021

Whereas, the Commission notified Ordinary Elections to the following 7 ULBs and also elections to casual vacancies vide reference 1st and 2nd cited.

Ordinary Elections

1. Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation
2. Khammam Municipal Corporation
3. Atchampet Municipality in Nagarkurnool District
4. Siddipet Municipality
5. Nakrekal Municipality in Nalgonda District
6. Jadcherla Municipality in Mahabubnagar District
7. Kothur Municipality in Ranga Reddy District.

Elections to Casual Vacancies

1. 12th Ward in Gajwel Municipality in Siddipet District
2. 26th Ward in Nalgonda Municipality
3. 18th Ward in Bodhan Municipality in Nizambad District
4. 9th Ward in Parkal Municipality in Warangal ® District
5. Ward No.18, Lingo jiguda, Circle-4, LB Nagar, GHMC, Hyderabad

Whereas, the Commission, cognizant of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, has issued detailed broad guidelines in the reference 3rd cited prescribing arrangements

at polling stations for voters, polling officials, counting officials, as well as for political campaign to be followed during conduct of elections to above 7 ULBs and 5 Casual vacancies.

And Whereas, the Commission further issued orders in the reference 4th cited. For conduct of safe elections, duly warning that non-compliance of orders, legal action will be taken under Section 188 of IPC and other legal provisions as applicable, as specified in Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 29th July, 2020 of Ministry of Home Affairs.

In view of the surge in COVID-19 cases in the State of Telangana, the State Election Commission has decided to make more stringent provision to be followed during the process of Counting, in addition to existing Broad Guidelines dated 07.04.2021, 22.04.2021 & 27.04.2021 and hereby, orders the following.

- i. Additional District Election Authority shall be the Nodal Officer at each Counting Centre to ensure adherence to the following the COVID-19 related norms at Counting Centres, with assistance of Nodal Health Officer.**
- ii. Compliance Certificate in respect of Counting Centre that all arrangement has been made as per extant COVID guidelines shall be obtained from the concerned Health Authorities. Copy shall be sent to the SEC.**
- iii. No candidates/agents will be allowed inside the counting hall without undergoing Rapid Antigen Test or RT-PCR could be negative before entering the counting Hall. The DEA shall facilitate testing of all counting personnel as well as counting agents and candidates by concerned Medical Authorities.**
- iv. No public gathering outside the counting venue shall be allowed during the process of counting.
- v. The Counting Hall should be sufficiently big to maintain Social Distancing, and should have proper ventilation, windows, exhaust fan etc. as per available protocol of SDMA / NDMA.
- vi. The counting centers shall be disinfected before, during and after the counting.

- vii. Polled & Sealed Ballot Boxes shall be sanitized/disinfected.
- viii. Number of Counting tables to be allowed in a counting hall is 5 and keeping in view safety norms prescribed for Covid-19. Hence, counting of votes of a constituency may be considered at 3-4 halls by appointing additional Assistant Returning Officers.
- ix. At the entry of hall/ Room/ premises
 - a. Thermal Scanning of all persons shall be carried out;
 - b. Sanitizer, soap and water shall be made available and every person entering in hall shall sanitize his/her hand.
- ix. No one having any symptom of COVID-19 like fever, Cold etc. shall be allowed to enter in the Counting Hall.
- x. Candidate may appoint/replace the counting agents in case report is positive.
- xi. Social distancing shall be maintained inside Counting Hall, seating arrangement of Counting Personnel/Agents etc. should be made as per extant COVID-19 guidelines of NDMA/SDMA.
- xii. There shall be sufficient number of PPE Kits in the Counting Hall for needy staff, such as those who handle ballot boxes and involved in mixing of ballot papers.
- xiii. The following items shall be provided to every counting official and security personnel in addition to other prescribed items:
 - a) Mask
 - b) Sanitizer
 - c) Face-Shield
 - d) Gloves
- xiv. For counting of Postal Ballots, additional number of AROs may be appointed. If required, Postal Ballots may also be counted in a separate hall under the supervision of the Returning Officer/Assistant Returning officer.
- xv. As per the government guidelines, there shall be proper arrangement of disposal of COVID related wastage viz Mask, Face Shield, PPE Kit, gloves etc.
- xvi. There shall be proper display of guidelines "Does & Don't" at convenient places including entrance gate and inside counting hall.

The Hon'ble High Court on 29.04.2021 ordered the State Election Commission to ensure that all the guidelines already issued and which will be issued in future are followed scrupulously without any deviations by the all stakeholders.

Therefore, these instructions shall be brought to the notice of all the stakeholders for their information and strict compliance. Any violation of these instructions will be viewed seriously and stringent action will be initiated against the violators.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONER)

**Sd/- M Ashok Kumar
SECRETARY**

To

The Commissioner and Election Authority, GHMC.

The Collectors and District Election Authorities of Warangal (U), Khammam, Nagarkurnool, Siddipet, Nalgoda, Mahabubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Nizambad, Warangal (R) Districts.

The superintend of Police/ Commissioner of Police concerned.

The Commissioners of Greater Waragal Municipal Corporation, Khammam Municipal Corporation, Atchampet Municipality, Siddipet Municipality, Nakrekal Municipality, Jadcherl Municipality, Kothur Municipality, Gajwel Municipality, Nalgonda Municipality, Bodhan Municipality, Parkal Municipality.

All the Returning Offices of Municipal Corporations and Municipalities concerned through Commissioners of concerned Municipal Corporation and Municipalities.

The Observers

All the Political parties registered with the SEC.

Copy to:

The Commissioner & Director Municipal Administration & Election Authority, Hyderabad

The Principal Secretary to Government, MA & UD, Department, Telangana, Hyderabad.

The Print & Electronic Media for wide publicity.

// Attested //

Joint Director