

GRAM PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS, 2019

The last Ordinary Elections to Gram Panchayats in the State were held in the United Andhra Pradesh during July, 2013 and their term commenced on 02.08.2013. Article 243E of Indian Constitution mandates that the term of Gram Panchayats shall be five years and no longer. Article 243K entrusted the responsibility of holding timely elections to SEC that too before the end of the term of ongoing bodies of Panchayat Raj Institutions. Following the mandates in Article 243E and 243K of Indian Constitution, similar provisions are made in Telangana Gram Panchayat Act, 2018.

The State Election Commission in letter No.215/TSEC-PR/2017, Dt.10.03.2017 Communicated the calendar of events to the State Government to comply with the constitutional mandate. However, the same could not be observed by the government, further a new Panchayat Raj Act was passed by the Legislature that came into existence w.e.f. 18.04.2018. The Election Commission of India published Assembly Constituency Electoral Rolls belatedly on 20.03.2018.

The State Election Commission issued notification for preparation and publication of Electoral rolls which were finally done on 17.05.2018. The list of Polling Stations were finalised by 04.06.2018 vide Circular No.269/TSEC-PR/2018, Dt.17.05.2018 and also completed the ballot paper printing and procurement of materials May,2018 ending. The SEC requested the State Government to furnish the reservations and also communicate their concurrence for the proposed election schedule sent vide Lr.No. 363/TSEC-PR/2018, Dt.20.06.2018.

When the matter stood so, the Hon'ble High Court at Hyderabad in their order dt.26.06.2018. in W.P.20477 of 2018 and batch directed the SEC not to issue notification pending finalisation of B.C. reservations as per their directions. In pursuance of this order, the State Election Commission paused the election process and made arrangements for safe storage of ballot papers and other polling materials apart from requesting the State Government to complete the B.C. Reservations as per the directions of the Hon'ble High Court. The Hon'ble High Court again in their order Dt.11.10.2018 in W.P.No.27036 of 2018 and batch directed the SEC to

complete the election process within (3) Months from the Date of the order and further ordered the State Government to extend all necessary cooperation. The SEC again requested the State Government to complete the process of reservations and as a safety measure even approached the High Court through review petition for suitable directions to the State Government to complete the reservations and communicate concurrence for the election schedule to complete the elections within the time.

While, the elections to Legislative Assembly under way, the SEC with the help of skeletal P.R. Officials undertook the revision of Gram Panchayat Electoral Rolls (GPERs),2018 by generating supplement-I as on 19.11.2018 The State Government communicated the reservations and also concurrence for election schedule in their letter No.12162/Pts.III/A2/2018-3 on 31.12.2019. The State Election Commission issued Notification No.363/TSEC-PR/2018, Dt.01.01.2019 calling upon the registered voters of Gram Panchayats to elect their Ward members and Sarpanch in the elections to be held in (3) phases starting from 07.01.2019 to 30.01.2019.

I. General Information:

1. Total **Gram Panchayats** as per schedule VIII - 12751
2. Total **Wards** as per schedule VIII - 113354
3. **Voter Strength**
 - (i) Rural Voter strength as on the date - **Male Female Others Total**
of publication of G.P electoral rolls 6850309 6866300 860 13717469
by SEC on 17.05.2018
 - (ii) Increase of voter strength from
17.05.2018 to 19.11.2018 i.e supplement – I - 1233375
20.11.2018 to 31.12.2018 i.e supplement – II - 357449
 - (iii) Rural Voter strength as on 19.11.2018 - 15308293

4. Offices Notified for Poll vide Notification No. 363/TSEC-PR/2018,Dt.01.01.2019

	No. of offices notified for election	No nominations	No. of unanimously elected	Balance no. of offices went to poll
Sarpanch	12732	24	2134	10571
Ward Members	113152	492	29985	82675

5. Offices where poll not held/Result pending:

Details	GPs	Wards	Remarks
Elections process was stayed due to the stay orders by the Hon'ble High Court	2	18	Modugulagudem and Jujjur Gram Panchayats of Kuravi Mandal Mahabubabad District
Declared election process was void in the office of Sarpanch Mallapur in Jagityal District	1	-	Due to auctioning
Poll Process was stayed by Hon'ble High Court in Mangapet Mandal	24	180	All offices in Narsaigudem GP and 44 wards in 12 GPs declared as unanimous
Ordered for fresh Poll on 8.2.2019 in Ward 5 of Mulkalakalva GP, Miryalguda Mandal in Nalgonda district	-	1	Due to improper allocation of symbol to the contesting candidates
Ordered Fresh Poll on 1.2.2019 in Ward 7 and also Sarpanch of that ward of Thirumalapur GP, Pudur Mandal in Vikarabad District	1	1	Due to impersonation and cast of tendered vote
No nominations	24	492	
Total	52	692	

6. Total Offices where results declared	GPs	Wards
	12680	112430

7. Percentage of unanimous elections : Sarpanch - 16.7%
Ward Member - 26.4%

8. No. of Contested Candidates (CC) :

Sarpanchas	34537
Average	3.26
Ward Member	200890
Average	2.42

9. Polling Stations

- (i) No. of polling stations established - 96029
(ii) No. of polling stations where web casting held - 2114

- 10. No. of Returning Officers** appointed - Stage-I 5097 Stage-II 13965
- 11.No. of polling personnel** drafted for elections - 147379
(Presiding Officers, Asst. Presiding Officers and other Polling personnel)
- 12. No. of security force** i.e, Police constables (uniform service personnel), Forest Guards and NCC Cadets - 26340
- 13. Observers appointed**
- (i) General Observers - 27
 - (ii) Expenditure Observers - 39
 - (iii) Asst. Expenditure observers - 485
 - (iv) Micro observers - 2373
- 14. Material**
- (i) No. of ballot boxes used - 92223
(including 20 % reserve)
 - (ii) No. of ballot papers printed - 4,37,24,567
 - (iii) No. of indelible ink Phials utilized - 155000
 - (iv) No. of Paper seals utilized - 550000

15. Poll percentage

	Men	Women	Others	percentage
% of votes polled	86.62	87.97	8.57	87.30

Highest percentage : 94.60 % Yadadri Bhongir District

Lowest percentage : 77.04% Vikarabad District

16. Help line complaints round the clock

Sl. No.	Issues	Total
1	General complaints	525
2	Clarifications on general and software	732
	Total	1257

17. MCC Complaints received offline : 29
MCC Complaints received online : 26
MCC News paper clippings : 10
Other issues : 68
Total : 133
18. No. of Re Polls held Sarpanch : 5
Ward Member : 13

II. Comparative information for 2013 and 2019 Ordinary Elections to GPs.

1. No. of contesting candidates

Posts	2013			2019		
	Total offices	Contested candidates	Average	Total offices	Contested candidates	Average
Sarpanchas	8015	27649	3.44	10571	34537	3.26
Ward Members	71361	184381	2.58	82675	200890	2.42

2. No. of unanimous offices

Office Name	2013			2019		
	Total	Unanimously elected	Percentage	Total	Unanimously elected	Percentage
Ward Member	86504	15507	17.92	113170	29985	26.49
Sarpanchas	8776	662	7.54	12732	2134	16.76

3. Poll Percentage

Description	2013				2019				Remarks
	Men	Women	others	Total	Men	Women	others	Total	
% of votes polled	-	-	-	85.19	86.62	87.97	8.57	87.30	2.11% increased

4. Polling personnel

2013	2019
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III. Salient features of GP Elections 2019

1. Zero tolerance to impersonation :

The State Election Commission issued directions in Notification No. 04/TSEC-PR/2018, 16.02.2018 issued instructions that, "the Returning Officers shall, on the conclusion of the poll, report to the State Election Commission, through District Election Authority, the polling stations where, **tendered votes constitute more than Zero Point One percent (0.1%) of the total number of votes polled** for enabling the Commission to order for a fresh poll in such polling stations if it deems necessary.

The following are the details where impersonation occurred and tendered vote cast which led to fresh poll occurred:

- a. In Phase – I Poll in the polling station of 2nd ward of Munjalakunta Tanda, Parvathagiri Mandal in Warangal Rural District. Ordered fresh poll to 2nd Ward and also Sarpanch of that Ward in Phase – II.
- b. In Phase – I Poll in the polling station of 8th Ward of Somanpalli, Anthargaon Mandal in Peddapalli District. Ordered fresh poll to 8th Ward and also Sarpanch of that Ward in Phase – II.
- c. In Phase – II Poll in the polling station of 8th Ward of Thosham Thnada, Gudihatnoor Mandal in Adilabad District. Ordered fresh poll to 8th Ward and also Sarpanch of that Ward in Phase – III.
- d. In Phase – III Poll in the polling station of 7th Ward of Thirumalpur, Poodur Mandal in Vikarabad District. Ordered fresh poll to 7th Ward and also Sarpanch of that Ward on 01.02.2019.

2. Detection and Prevention of Auctioning of Posts :

- In certain Gram Panchayats, vested interests in the guise of village committees/caste associations are thwarting the election process by employing money power/undue influence and manufacturing "unanimous elections" through action of posts.
- Auctioning of posts amounts to a corrupt practice under Section 211 (1) of the Telangana Panchayat Raj Act, 2018. This is also a criminal

offence under Section 171 B and 171 E of the Indian Penal code, 1860 punishable with imprisonment for one year and fine, besides disqualification to contest elections for a period of six years.

- The State Election Commission issued a Notification No. 103/TSEC-PR/2019, dtd: 08.01.2019 with a view to counter this illegal practice of auctioning of posts of Sarpanch and Ward Member of Gram Panchayats by vested interests.
- In the Eenadu daily news paper dtd: 20.01.2019, it was reported that, in Mallapur Gram Panchayat of Jagityal District, price was fixed for the post of Sarpanch at Rs. 20.00 Lakhs and draw of lots conducted for the said post and aggrieved by the same, one Sri Enugu Venkat Reddy and some others attempted to commit suicide.
- The State Election Commission got it enquired by the C & DEA and General Observer, Jagityal and their reports revealed that, there is a prima facie evidence of auctioning of post of Sarpanch of Mallpur Gram Panchayat in Jagityal district.
- Basing on those reports the Commission declared the unanimous election of Sarpanch of the said Gram Panchayat as void vide Notification No. 275/TSEC-PR/2019, dtd:29.01.2019.

3. The impact of inclusion of NOTA in the ballot papers. Average number of votes polled for NOTA and also the cases where NOTA No secured more votes than the winning candidates.

For 8,400 Gram Panchayats:	49, 522 – Polled for NOTA
	1, 52, 536 – invalid votes

4. Complaints and reports received about duplicate voters, impersonation etc. and the action proposed to be taken.

14 complaints were received through E-Mail and offline mode on impersonation etc:

In most of these cases the voters are found to be registered twice either in the same Gram Panchayat or different Gram Panchayats. This has resulted because of duplication of voters in the ACERs or because of non-

deletion of death cases in ACERs. Since law mandates mere regeneration of GPERs based on ACERs such duplicate registrations are noticed in a few cases.

- (i) Once the elections process is completed the Returning Officer will hand over all sealed statutory packets to the officer authorised by the DEA and they shall not be opened and their contents shall not be inspected or produced except under the orders of an authority competent to decide election disputes.
- (ii) The SEC has no jurisdiction to interfere in the post election matter after declaration of results by Returning Officer.
- (iii) As per Section 242 of Telangana Panchayat Raj Act, 2018, "No election held under this Act shall be called in question except by an election petition presented to such authority and in accordance with such rules as may be made in this behalf."

In view of this the petitioners are advised to approach election tribunal for redressal of their grievances if they desire so.

5. Improved facilitation to be contesting candidates :

- a. Sufficient no. of Hand Books printed in Telugu and English.

Total 3,00,000 (60,000 English version and 2,40,000 Telugu version) hand books for contesting candidates were supplied to contesting candidates.

- b. facility of down loading GPERs from the Web Portal.

The TSEC web-portal (Web based application) developed to improve Transparency in election process, to improve Efficiency of poll officers (District Officials) and to provide Services such as downloading voter slip, constituency and Polling Station-wise Voter list, affidavits filed by contesting candidates besides dissemination of latest Laws, Rules, Notifications, Orders, Circulars etc.

The Te-poll software was of great utility to the Officers, candidates and the voters in preparing the electoral rolls, their downloading by candidates and generation of voter slips by the voters.

Total hits on web portal : **4,17,55,903**

Total GB data downloaded (in 20days) : **5843 GB**

c. Facility for uploading nominations online.

The Te-poll software provided opportunity to contesting candidates for filing nominations online. The Nomination filed through online is valid only when the candidate in person or by his proposer delivers it duly signed to the Returning Officer at the date, time and place specified in the Election Notice.

This facility was used by 357 Sarpanch candidates and 526 ward members.

d. facility for uploading the affidavits and their availability to other candidates and other interested people.

The Commission has provided module "Election Process Management System" in which complete election process information data right from the nomination stage to till result declaration along with affidavits of Sarpanch and Ward member of Gram Panchayat will be uploaded during elections period. The same will be automatically made available in the web portal for the use of candidates and interested people.

6. Facilitation to the field officials:

a. Use of ERMS for preparation of GPERs from the ACERs.

In Te-poll software, the ERMS was very much helped for the field staff and officers, for preparation of ward wise and polling station wise the Gram Panchayat Photo electoral rolls (GPERs) from the ACERs, Photo voter slips were also downloaded for distribution to voters by field staff. The contesting candidates and interested voters have down loaded the voter slips without photos.

b. Facility of PPRS for preparation of data base of employees for the randomisation and preparation of posting orders.

The PPRS helped the District Administration for Randomisation of Polling Personnel for three levels and formation teams for assigning to polling

stations thereby saving huge time when compared with traditional methods of Randomization.

c. Facility of Election Process Management System whereby the reports from the stage of nominations are being uploaded directly into the TSEC Web portal. Till now the following records are updated by district officials

Sarpanch Records : 4736

WM Records : 50770

Once the data entry is completed, the election results will be made available for general public through TSEC web portal.

d. Facility to upload the election expenditure accounts leading to faster disposal of cases soon after the elections

The Commission proposing to provide service to upload the election expenditure accounts of contested candidates directly in Te-Poll software for faster and case disposal of cases.

7. Voter facilitation:

TSEC Web Portal facilitates voters by enabling them to know their Polling Station and also the facility of downloading voter slips. A mobile app is also created to facilitate downloading of voter slips directly.

Sl. No.	Medium	No. of Voter Slips downloaded
1.	TSEC Web Portal	2,84,069
2.	Mobile app	16,357
Total		3,00,426

In addition to supply of Photo Voter Slips by MPDOs, the contesting candidates were also permitted to distribute Voter Slips to voters.

IV. Statement of Law and Order status:

SUMMARY REPORT (CUMULATIVE) (Progressive figures including the date of report)

Sl.No.	Name of the District	No. of GPs going to poll	Cash and other items seized				No. of cases including MCC in which			
			Cash seized	Worth of other items seized	Party / Candidate links found	Complaints filed during the day	FIRs filed	No of cases Action taken	No of cases Pending	Remarks
1	Adilabad	465	260000			2	2	2		
2	Komarambheem Asifabad	334								
3	Nirmal	396		124640	2	4	4	4		
4	Jagtial	380	961130	905955	30	70	70	70		
5	Jayshankar Bhupalpally	415	299670	154065	5	29	28			
6	Bhadradi Kothagudem	479		160260	2	27	27	16		
7	Mahabubabad	460				1	1	1	1	
8	Rajanna Siricilla	254	584500	117130		1	1			
9	Kamareddy	526	509590	10780		9	9	1		
10	Sanga Reddy	647		208185		15	15	15		
11	Medak	469		258930	4	39	39	39		
12	Vikarabad	565		231810						
13	Mahabubnagar	719		39500	1	12	14	3	10	
14	Jogulamba Gadwal	255								
15	Wanaparthy	255	2039100	301875	1	13	12	12	1	
16	Nagarkurnool	453		120810		12	12	10		
17	Nalgonda	837	170500	114760	3	43	43	43		
18	Suryapet	475		427360	1	10	10		3	
19	Karimnagar	313	495430	2542282		151	154		3	
20	Siddipet	499								
21	Khammam	584	11890500	87685	1	51	51	5	3	
22	Ramagundam (Mancherial Peddapally)	571	49230	156215	1	13	13			
23	Nizamabad	530		143500		15	16	7		
24	Warangal	831	181780	49715	3	13	13	8	1	
25	Rachakonda	601	1863980	404010	2	67	67	28		
26	Cyberabad	419	250000			25	25	25		
	Total	12732	19555410	6559467	56	622	626	289	22	