

4.9 Polling Personnel

Deployment of Polling personnel is critical for conduct of free, fair elections. As such, ECI issued detailed instructions mainly for

1. Preparing a data base of all polling personnel in electronic format.
2. Generating list by a process of randomization, DEO wise.
3. Conducting two more randomization exercise, one for formation of polling parties and the other for allocation of polling parties.

Unlike most of the other parts of the Country, the entire ANPIC, which is a single PC without any assembly, covers all the three districts with one of the DEO being the RO. The Islands are spread over a length of 7000 sq kms with a length of over 700 Kms from North to South, with the islands being separated by vast stretches of sea. Logistic arrangements for transport of men and material and accommodation arrangements at almost all the islands is also a major constraint in the territory.

Faced with these challenges, it was felt that complete randomization of polling parties, as per ECI guideline, will make it well nigh impossible for polling officers to reach from one corner to another at short notice. It was also noted that majority of government employees reside at South Andaman District especially in Port Blair being the largest chunk. The maximum number of Polling Stations is also located in this District making it impossible for shifting employees on large scale anywhere else in the territory. Therefore, the Election Office requested for exemption from few of the conditions of the ECI with a proposal for randomization specific for the territory. However, care was taken to ensure that the essence of direction of ECI is retained even while following the randomization specific for the territory.

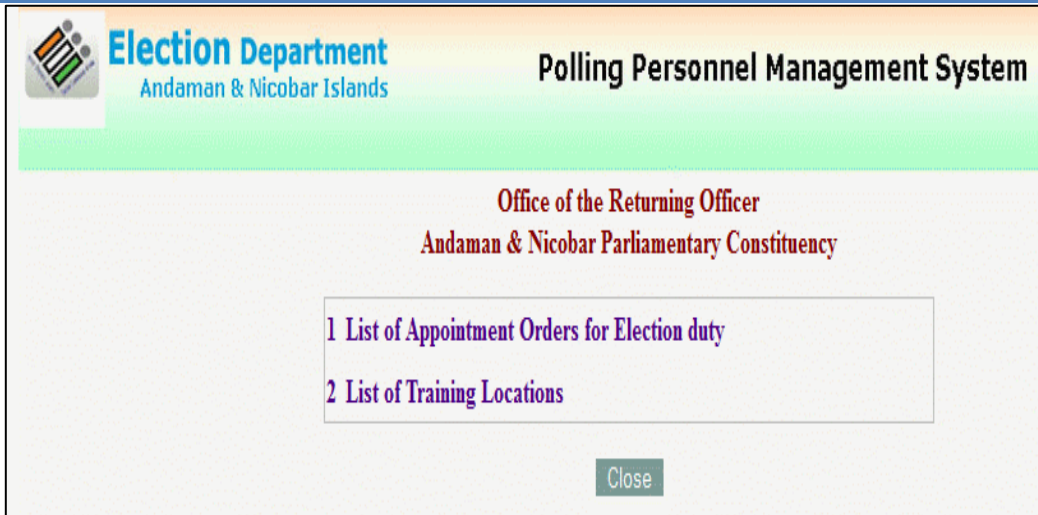
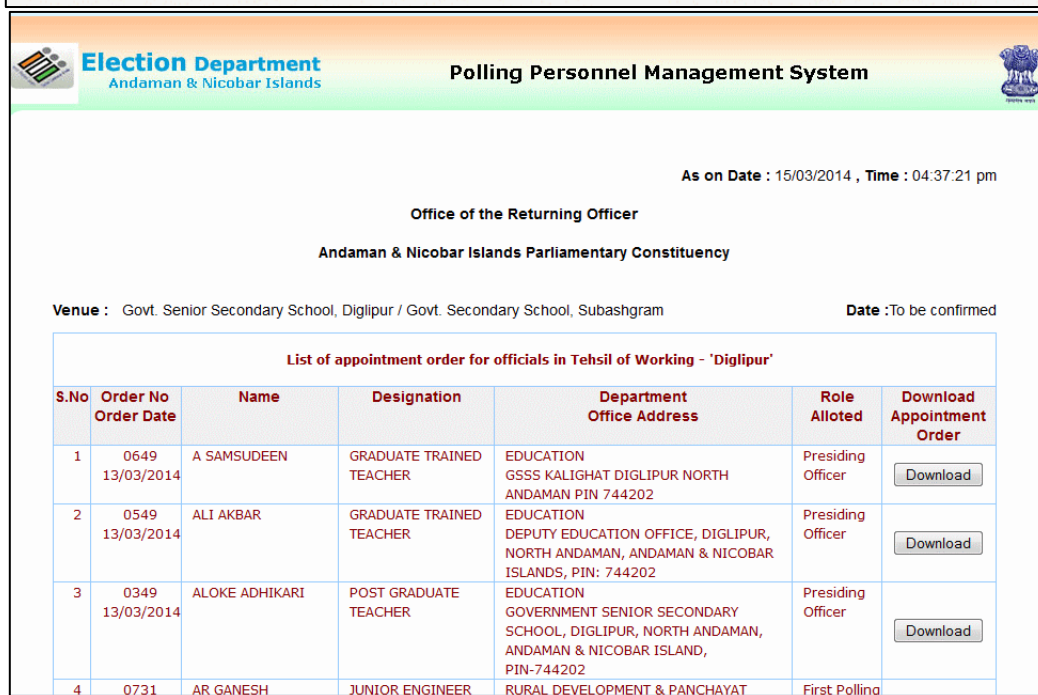
The ECI agreed to the proposal, which basically indicated:-

1. In the first phase of randomization, the polling officers will be selected and informed of the Tehsil they will be allotted. This would ensure that polling parties are moved within geographically contiguous tehsils only and restricts movement to Tehsils separated by sea.
2. The second phase of randomization will be done in the presence of ECI observer by ensuring all the directives of ECI, when polling parties will be formed.
3. In the third phase of randomization, polling parties will be assigned polling station one or two days before the poll in the presence of ECI observer.

All the above activity was undertaken at Port Blair. NIC, Port Blair developed a software for the purpose in such a manner that it was compliant with the proposal as above. Entire data of the polling officers including EPIC details was captured in the software and were uploaded directly on the CEOs portal. All the departments of the Administration/ central Government/ corporations etc were involved in the exercise. Capturing of EPIC details enabled the Election Office on two counts- one was to ensure that all government employees are enrolled and EPICs issued in time. The other was to ensure that a particular employee does not get appointed in the same polling area where he has his residence.

As steps were taken in right earnest and with the timely launching of the software, all activities with regard to appointment of polling personnel were completed well within the timeframe and by adhering to the norms prescribed by the ECI. This also enabled the Election office to generate appointment order online from the website of the Election department- another first for the territory.

For the first time Appointment Orders were generated online from Website of Election Department. A screenshot of the Polling Personnel Management System (PPMS) is as under:

S.No	Order No Order Date	Name	Designation	Department Office Address	Role Alloted	Download Appointment Order
1	0649 13/03/2014	A SAMSUDEEN	GRADUATE TRAINED TEACHER	EDUCATION GSSS KALIGHAT DIGLIPUR NORTH ANDAMAN PIN 744202	Presiding Officer	Download
2	0549 13/03/2014	ALI AKBAR	GRADUATE TRAINED TEACHER	EDUCATION DEPUTY EDUCATION OFFICE, DIGLIPUR, NORTH ANDAMAN, ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS, PIN: 744202	Presiding Officer	Download
3	0349 13/03/2014	ALOKE ADHIKARI	POST GRADUATE TEACHER	EDUCATION GOVERNMENT SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, DIGLIPUR, NORTH ANDAMAN, ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLAND, PIN-744202	Presiding Officer	Download
4	0731	AR GANESH	JUNIOR ENGINEER	RURAL DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYAT	First Polling	

Screenshot of the "Poling Personnel Management System"

Randomization of Polling Personnel

As per ECI's letter No. 464/INST/2009-EPS dated 24th February, 2009 in all cases where there is only one Parliamentary Constituency and where the District Election Officer of one District is the Returning Officer for the Parliamentary Constituency, then the randomization of Polling Personnel will be done as per Commission's instructions contained in letter dated 19th September, 2008.

The Returning Officer, Andaman & Nicobar Islands Parliamentary Constituency (Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman) convened a meeting with all the Contesting Candidates of General Election 2014 on 08/04/2014 regarding randomization of Polling Personnel.

1. In the First Phase Randomization the officers were informed about their role, i.e, whether they will be Presiding Officer's or Polling Officers. They will also be about the place where they will receive their training. The location of this randomization is Port Blair.
2. The Second Phase of Randomization was done in Port Blair in the presence of the Observer. At this stage the composition of the Polling Party were finalised. Instructions of the Election Commission of India regarding not putting two Officers of the same Department/groups/category in one team will be followed.

3. The third phase of Randomization of polling party was done during the 8th April 2014 in the presence of observers and orders sent to the outstations by fax, through helicopters and over land too.

Tehsil	Total Polling Station	No. of presiding Officer	Reserved	No. of 1st Polling Officers	Reserved	No. of 2nd Polling Officers	Reserved	No. of 3rd Polling Officers	Reserved
South Andaman	212	212	53	212	53	212	53	212	53
North & Middle Andaman	114	114	29	114	29	114	29	114	29
Nicobar	60	60	15	60	15	60	15	60	15
Total:	386	386	97	386	97	386	97	386	97

Table 26