

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

NirvachanSadana, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. ECI/PN/77/2020

Date: 12th October, 2020

PRESS NOTE

Towards **ACCESSIBLE, INCLUSIVE AND SAFE** elections during COVID-19

Election officials reach out to voters eligible for Postal Ballots in Bihar

More than 52,000 eligible voters opt for postal ballots in 71 Phase-1 constituencies

As the nomination process for 71 constituencies, spread over 16 districts of Bihar, where the date of polling is October 28, 2020 will end today, being last date of withdrawal, Booth Level Officers of these Constituencies reached out to **more than four lakh electors** belonging to **senior citizen** (above 80 years of age) and **PwD** categories. More than **fifty two thousand such electors** have **exercised their option to vote through postal ballots**. These electors will be provided postal ballots on pre-informed date(s) by the ROs with proper security and videography arrangements to ensure secrecy, safety, and transparency in the process. Remaining electors intend to visit the booth on the poll day for franchise. This is the first time that postal ballot facility is extended to both the categories in Bihar elections.

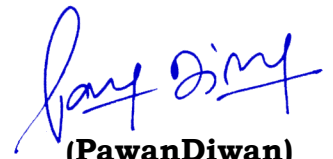
Earlier, during Commission's visit to Bihar from September 29 – October 01, 2020, attention was drawn to certain concerns regarding the implementation of this provision for the above categories of voters. To comprehensively address these concerns, on October 03, 2020, Commission had directed:

- “BLO will visit to the houses of the concerned electors, as provided by the RO, in the Polling Station area and deliver Form- 12-D to the concerned electors. If an elector is not

available, he/she will share his/her contact details and revisit to collect it within five days of the notification.

- The elector may or may not opt for postal ballot in the acknowledgement attached with the Form 12-D.
- If he/she opts for postal ballot, then the BLO will collect the filled-in Form 12-D from the house of the elector within five days of the notification and deposit it with the RO forthwith.
- BLO shall deposit all the acknowledgement forms with the RO along with all Form 12-D.
- Sector Officer shall supervise it under the overall supervision of RO.”

In subsequent two phases of elections in Bihar and in bye-elections in all other States, this exercise will continue so that electoral process becomes **more accessible, inclusive and SAFE** for these categories during the period of COVID-19. BLOs will visit approximately 12 lakh such electors' homes in Bihar in the next two phases for this purpose.


(Pawan Diwan)
Under Secretary