

Nov 6, 2017

To,
Shri. Sunil Arora
Election Commissioner
Election Commission of India
Nirvachan Sadan
New Delhi 110001

Sub: Draft Electoral Roll Published in Karnataka state by CEO-Karnataka on 03 Nov 2017

Dear Shri. Arora,

Greetings from B.PAC !

Bangalore Political Action Committee (B.PAC) is a non-partisan trust working with an objective to promote a good quality of life for all citizens of Bangalore City. One of the programs run by B.PAC is Participative Democracy Program(PDP) which emphasize on citizen participation through voting and continued engagement with elected representatives.

The 'One million New Votes' campaign is an initiative to make elections a truly democratic process by giving every Bengalurean a voice. The first step in this process is to enrol as a VOTER. B.PAC is continuing the efforts to sensitize those who have not yet registered to vote to become a registered voter in Bengaluru City.

I want to bring the following points to your notice with respect to the electoral rolls published by CEO Karnataka on 03 November 2017:

1. They are image PDF files, which do not allow searching for any data in the document. This is a great inconvenience for the voters, volunteer organisations helping in the electoral process and political parties.
2. Each voter list requires entering email ID, mobile phone number, and CPATCHA to open it. This is an inconvenience. Not all voters would have email ID and mobile phone numbers. We consider it incorrect to apply restrictions to the access of voter lists defined as public documents by the ECI.

CEO Karnataka has introduced the above two restrictions in the current version, not found in the previous versions. Also, other states and union territories do not pose this restriction on the usability of their electoral rolls.

The part numbers and polling booths of voters have changed in the current version of the rolls and hence it is even more important that the voters have easy access to the voter lists to check their data.

I wish to draw your attention to CEO-KA did publish electoral rolls with CAPTCHA protected image files once during January 2013.

The issue was raised in a meeting with the three ECs held at ECI office on 08 Feb 2013 and at Bangalore during their visit on 02 March 2013. The ECI had then directed that the electoral rolls be published as text PDF files and CAPTCHA be removed. This directive was followed by CEO Karnataka office from then till January 2017.

I did reach out to the office of CEO-KA on this and we were informed that the rules have been now changed and they can publish the rolls as image files. The office of CEO-KA did not give us references to the rules.

Sir, the English version of the rolls will be published next week. Our humble request to you is to direct the CEO-Karnataka to publish the rolls as text PDF documents for us to analyse the rolls and share our comments and inputs.

Anticipating positive response from your good office.

Regards,

-Sd-

Revathy Ashok

Hon Managing Trustee & CEO

CC:

Shri. Sanjeev Kumar, CEO-Karnataka
Office of The Chief Electoral Officer
Nirvachana Nilaya,
Maharani's College Circle,
Sheshadri Road, Bangalore 560 001.