

DELIMITATION COMMISSION OF INDIA
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No.282/DEL/2007

Dated: 19th June, 2007

PRESS NOTE

There have been reports in a section of press wherein the delimitation exercise being undertaken by the Delimitation Commission of India has been criticized. The Delimitation Commission has in its purview all the Lok Sabha constituencies and all the Assembly constituencies in India. The Commission has completed its work in respect of 20 States, viz. Goa, Pondicherry, Tripura, Mizoram, Kerala, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Punjab, Chhatisgarh, Maharashtra, Sikkim, Delhi, Gujarat, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Andhra Pradesh. Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya are likely to be notified shortly. In Manipur, the High Court has struck down the 2001 census figures and the matter is pending in the Supreme Court of India. The Commission is at the final stage of its work so far as the States of Assam and Jharkhand are concerned. The public sittings in the State of Jharkhand were scheduled on 31st May and 1st June 2007 whereas in Assam the public sittings were to commence on 16th June 2007 but due to agitations in these States and after considering the prevailing situation in Assam and Jharkhand, the Commission, by reasoned orders, have unanimously decided not to hold the public sittings and instead invite further suggestions and objections from the public by giving fresh notice in the newspapers. The updating of National Register of Citizens (NRC) in accordance with "Assam Accord" is the primary issue in the State of Assam. The demand is that the delimitation process be deferred till the time the NRC is updated. In Jharkhand the only grievance is that the number of Scheduled Tribe seats in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly should not be reduced. The problems in both the States are outside the purview of the Commission.

The process of delimitation of the assembly and parliamentary constituencies in terms of the Delimitation Act 2002 is mandatory and is followed

by the Commission meticulously. The statutory provisions regarding consulting the Associate Members, inviting suggestions and objections from the public and holding public sittings are being followed. Large numbers of meetings are held with the Associate Members before preparing the draft proposals. For example, 11 meetings were held with the Associate Members from Assam before preparing the draft proposals. Consultations with the Associate Members are done strictly in accordance with law. Every constituency in the working paper is discussed with them and their views are given due importance.

Reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is done strictly in accordance with law. Only those seats are reserved where the population of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes is comparatively large. Where there is a cluster of Scheduled Caste seats, the Commission makes an effort to distribute them, however, in the process a constituency with a small scheduled caste population cannot be reserved leaving the one with large scheduled castes population. There is total transparency in the Commission's working. The Commission cannot and would not permit gerrymandering which is anathema to the delimitation process. So far as the administrative units are concerned, the Delimitation Act and the Commission's guidelines are very clear. Within a State, district is the largest administrative unit thereafter either the revenue units or the development units are adopted, in consultation with the Associate Members. The administrative units within a district are only broken if it is necessary to adjust the population. By and large the administrative units are kept intact.

The final notification in respect of Rajasthan was published more than a year back. Dausa Parliamentary constituency has been reserved for the Schedule Tribes on the basis of the tribe population in the constituency. Mr. Sachin Pilot the Congress Member of Parliament has been in touch with the Commission at all relevant stages. He met the Chairman a number of times. The Press report that Commission's proceedings were not transparent is wholly unjustified.

The Commission is at the fag end of its work. 90 % work has been completed. All the constituencies have been formed in accordance with the Delimitation Act and the guidelines. The work in respect of about 500 Lok Sabha constituencies and more than 3500 Assembly constituencies in the country has been completed and finalised. The Commission's work is gigantic and time consuming. The delimitation exercise is being done after thirty years. The population since 1971 census has increased by almost 87%. The 2001 population being the base for the delimitation exercise there are bound to be changes in the formation of constituencies. To illustrate outer Delhi Parliamentary constituency has 38 lakhs population whereas Chandni Chowk has only 4.5 lakhs. The Commission has to re-adjust the constituencies to uniform the population base.

(SHANGARA RAM)
SECRETARY