

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW AND JUSTICE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4049
ANSWERED ON:21.03.2013
OVERSEAS VOTERS
Jindal Shri Naveen

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether only 13 overseas Indian electors had casted their votes during the recent assembly elections held in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons behind such low turnout by the overseas Indian electors;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to take measures to make it convenient and practical for overseas electors to cast their votes including measure like relaxing the requirement of an overseas elector to be physically present at a local polling booth in India to cast the vote by permitting the overseas elector to vote at any local Indian Embassy/High Commission, or through Postal Ballot or any other alternative voting mechanism; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. ASHWANI KUMAR)

- (a) and (b) Yes, Madam. The Election Commission of India has intimated that a total of twelve overseas electors in the Assembly elections of Punjab and one overseas elector in Assembly elections of Goa have cast their votes. No overseas elector has voted in the Assembly elections held in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Manipur. There could be many reasons attributable to the low turnout by overseas electors. The Government has not made any study to ascertain the specific reasons for such low turnout.
- (c) No, Madam.
- (d) The other mode of voting viz. 'Postal Ballot', voting at embassies, internet voting, etc. could not be extended to 'Overseas Electors' owing to following practical difficulties involved in its implementations:-
- (i) it would not be possible to dispatch postal ballots to the lakhs of overseas electors spread over in all parts of the world and to get them back within the limited period;
- (ii) voting in consulates is not available even to the staff in consulate. It is not considered a workable option as the electors would belong to different constituencies and arranging EVMs showing ballot papers of all constituencies (543 PCs and 4120 ACs) in every Embassy would not be practically feasible;
- (iii) many countries have such a large population of Overseas Indian electors that it will be impossible to arrange polling for them at Indian Missions. In many countries, the number of such people is in lakhs and arrangements for them to cast votes in the country of their residence will be almost like organizing a General Election and to make arrangements for security etc. in foreign lands, would be very difficult;
- (iv) the staff requirement for making arrangements for voting by large number of Overseas Indian electors will be huge. It will be difficult to get such large number of personnel to conduct elections in foreign countries.