

**OFFICE OF CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
MAHARASHTRA STATE**

No. GEN -2024/C.R.No.110/24/Election-1
General Administration Department,
Madam Kama Marg, Hutatma Rajguru Chowk,
Mantralaya, Mumbai 400 032.
Email: ceo_maharashtra@eci.nic.in
Date: 26.11.2024.

To,
Editor,
The WIRE.

Subject: Correct and factual position with regard to misleading and inaccurate article published in 'The Wire' regarding, 5,04,313 'Additional' Votes and mismatch in AC-231 Ashti and AC-242 Osmanabad regarding.

Dear Editor....

This is with reference to an article published in The Wire with the title **"5,04,313 'Additional' Votes? Maharashtra Data Mismatch Between Votes Polled and Counted"**. In the said report, allegations have been raised with regard to additional counting of over 5 lakh votes in comparison to the total votes polled data as released by CEO Maharashtra on its website on 22/11/2024. (<https://ceoelection.maharashtra.gov.in/Downloads/PDF/End-Poll-VTR AC-Wise Male Female TG 22.11.pdf>)

2. In this regard it is brought to your notice that the report is misleading and inaccurate, written and published in a haste without accounting for the accurate details. The report has attempted to mislead readers by mischievously comparing two different parameters, as the report has included 5,38,225 postal ballots in the votes counted which was not part of the votes polled data released by CEO Maharashtra. The results portal of ECI clearly displays "EVM votes" and "counted valid postal votes" separately for each AC. The story has chosen not to add postal ballots in the figure of polled votes on the voter turnout APP (VTA), which was verifiable and thus sensationalised an imaginary mismatch.

3. **The correct factual position** is as follows:

Total votes polled in all 288 Assembly constituencies in EVM in Maharashtra state is 6,40,88,195, which has been mischievously shown as total votes polled. The fact is that 5,38,225 valid postal ballots were not added in this figure. When we add the 5,38,225 valid postal ballots to the 6,40,88,195 votes polled in EVM; the total votes polled comes out to be 6,46,26,420. Total votes counted on the day of the counting including postal ballots is 6,45,92,508. Hence, the total votes counted are not more than total votes polled. However, in few ACs the lesser number of votes were counted than the votes polled due to the following reasons and as per the established protocol:

- a. The EVM counting is not taken up if Mock Poll Data was not cleared from the Control Unit of the Polling Station before actual start of Poll or If there is non-display of result in the display panel of Control Unit. or there was mismatch in data reported in Form 17C and votes recorded in EVM due to clerical or typing human error. In such cases, as the winning margin was higher than total votes polled in these Polling Stations, counting of VVPAT Slips of these Polling Stations was not done as per instructions contained in Para No.7(iv)(b) of ECIs letter dated 19.07.2023.
- b. Election Duty Certificates are issued to the Polling Officers on Poll Duty who are voters of the same Assembly Constituency but number of EDC (Election Duty Certificate) votes are not included while entering data.

4. Additionally, regarding 02 Assembly Constituencies, viz.231-Ashti and 242-Osmanabad ACs mentioned in your report where vote difference is alleged as 4538 and 4330, respectively are also misleading and irresponsible reporting. The following details will clarify: -

1. AC 231 Ashti

(<https://results.eci.gov.in/ResultAcGenNov2024/ConstituencywiseS13231.htm>)

- Total EVM votes : 282246
- Total Postal Votes : 5013
- Total Rejected postal Votes : 475
- Total valid postal votes counted: $5013-475 = 4538$

2. AC 242 Osmanabad

(<https://results.eci.gov.in/ResultAcGenNov2024/ConstituencywiseS13242.htm>)

- Total EVM votes : 238840
- Total Postal Votes : 4330
- Total Rejected postal Votes : 175
- Total valid postal votes counted: $4330 - 175 = 4155$

5. In view of the above details, the conclusion in the article published in 'The Wire' that more than 5 lakh votes have been counted in excess is inaccurate and mischievous.

It is expected that the above factual position will be reflected prominently in your story to avoid any misinformation to readers. The hastily drawn conclusions without due diligence have the potential to create false narratives which can not only vitiate the electoral atmosphere but can also give credence and paint a sense of authenticity to false & mischievous narratives.

Yours faithfully,



(M.R. Parkar)

Deputy Secretary & Joint Chief Electoral Officer
Maharashtra State