

Case 2

The situation came up when a political leader of a prominent City came up with a proposal before the District Magistrate. The proposal involved recommending allotment of small pieces of land to 80 houseless people. The government had a policy of giving government land too houseless people. In the past some wrongful people had got the land under the policy and this policy was kept in suspension.

The leader who prepared the proposal was the chief whip of the ruling party in the state. The district had 11 legislators. 10 of the legislators of the district were Cabinet ministers, one of them being the Chief Minister. The remaining one legislator was the Chief whip of the party in the legislative assembly and had come up with the proposal.

He demanded that immediate action be initiated and the case for allotment of land to the 80 landless, houseless people be recommended to the government. He had proposed a patch of land along with the list to be allotted. The process of land allotment was that the field staff would verify the landless person's status and prepare papers for available land as per policy.

The recommendation of DM will go the Commissioner who in turn would send it to government. The Revenue Secretary would endorse the papers for allotment and then it would be placed before the Chief Minister by the Chief Secretary for approval. The Revenue Secretary , Commissioner and Revenue Minister also called the DM to recommend the case and they cited that it was the directive from the Chief Minister.

The DM sent the proposal to the field functionaries for identification of the land and preparation of papers and verification of antecedents of the list of people given in the proposal. The papers were received in 2 days from the field functionaries wherein the cases of all the 80 persons were recommended and it was verified that all are landless and houseless. Moreover, the land identified by the legislator was also shown to be suitable for allotment by the field functionaries.

The DM also sent the list of persons to the police for verification of their antecedents and residential status. The report was received from police in 7 days. The report indicated the status of persons mentioned in the list. 90% of the list contained people belonging to the extended family of the chief whip. The remaining 10% of the persons were also reported to be living in their own houses or had valid sources of income.

The DM after receiving this report went on his own to see the piece of land proposed. It turned out that the land was government land but it was the most precious land in the city. The chief whip was visiting every day to ask for the recommendation letter for these persons.

The Divisional Commissioner also directed the DM to submit the papers very early as the Chief Minister's office was asking for the papers to be sent to Revenue Department.

How should the DM influence and handle the situation in this case where political sensitivity of practically everyone in state government was involved.