

CHAPTER 4

THE DEMARCATION EXERCISE

After the Public Consultation

Section 1 : Deliberations on the Representations

4.1 As soon as the public consultation period ended, the EAC went through all the written and oral representations to consider whether they should be accepted.

General Approaches adopted by the Commission

4.2 For representations regarding DCCAs which were provisionally determined to be the same as those of the DCCAs in 1999 (“unaltered DCCAs”), modifications to their boundaries would be considered only if :

- (a) they are supported by cogent reasons and would result in substantial and apparent improvement on community, geographical and development considerations;
- (b) they would not in turn affect an unacceptable number of unaltered DCCAs;

- (c) all the resulting populations will not depart from the population quota by more than 25%; and
- (d) no representation supporting the retention of the provisional recommendations in respect of the same unaltered DCCAs has been received.

4.3 The Commission considered it inappropriate to accept representations on unaltered DCCAs which proposed solely improvement on population distribution. If the Commission were to accept them, many DCCAs would have to be re-delineated and included in the final recommendations without the benefit of further public consultation as to their acceptability.

4.4 For representations regarding new DCCAs, all suggestions with sufficient cause on better population distribution or on community considerations would be accepted, except those adopting an approach entirely different from the Commission's and affecting an unacceptable number of unaltered DCCAs.

The Commission's General Views

4.5 In considering the representations, the Commission also took the following factors into account –

(a) Preserving community identity and local ties

The majority of representations made to the Commission stressed the importance of maintaining local community identities and ties even though the population deviation in the DCCAs concerned would exceed the permissible limits.

Some representers pointed out that the Commission's proposed delineation had disrupted the community identity and cohesiveness of the residents already well established, and would greatly affect the integrity of the community.

Some representers also emphasized that the residents of the affected areas would likely have a weaker sense of belonging to the DCCAs to which they had been newly assigned, and this in turn, would adversely affect the voters' turnout rate. Moreover, the DC Member of a constituency might have difficulty in serving two or more heterogeneous communities though some other representers held contrary views that it would not create any particular problems under the circumstances.

The Commission fully understood the sentiments and wishes of the representations and has considered all of them very carefully. Community identities and local ties were given due weight. Reasonable suggestions to alter the Commission's provisional recommendations on the grounds of

community, geographical and development considerations would be accepted. The Commission has allowed some DCCAs to have their populations deviating from the population quota in excess of the permissible limits. The rationale was to view the conflict between the population quota requirement and local sentiments in an impartial manner so as to achieve a fair balance.

(b) The estimated population figures

There were representations objecting to the provisional recommendations on the grounds that they queried the accuracy of the estimated population figures which the Commission adopted for the demarcation exercise. They quoted other figures known to them, which were different from those used by the Commission. The Commission believed that the queries were merely based on personal estimation and/or information obtained from other sources eg the HD, which might not be appropriate for the exercise. The Commission's view in this aspect was that the estimated population figures used was supplied by the AHSG, which was set up solely for the purpose of the demarcation exercise. It had conducted comprehensive researches before compiling the relevant data by a systematic methodology.

The Commission therefore held that the official data provided by the AHSG should remain as the sole and authoritative basis for the demarcation work.

(c) Supporting views

Where there were supporting representations received on the one hand and opposing ones relating to the same DCCA(s) on the other, the EAC would examine the acceptability of both sides in the light of the reasons given vis-à-vis the working principles.

Section 2 : The Recommendations

4.6 At its meeting on 13 March 2003 the Commission met the DOs concerned to discuss its revised recommendations, having taken into consideration the representations received. Its views on the representations are recorded in the last column of **Appendix III**.

4.7 In its finalised recommendations the Commission altered the boundaries of 62 DCCAs and changed the names of 8 DCCAs. Details of the alterations and changes are set out in **Appendices IV and V** respectively.

4.8 In its finalised recommendations the EAC allowed the population in 27 DCCAs to deviate from the permissible limits of population quota for reasons specified in **Appendix VI**.

4.9 A summary of the Commission's final recommendations is shown in **Appendix VII** of this volume. The details of these final recommendations with reference to maps and boundary descriptions are in **Volume 2**.