

**Report of the Fact Finding Committee constituted**  
**by the IPHA Headquarters**

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## Summary

**Background:** The discrepancy of timing of voting closure for the IPHA election was noticed between the IPHA website (8 AM) and the voting website (10 AM), which was brought to the notice of the IPHA office. They subsequently constituted a fact-finding committee with five members from different parts of the country.

**Investigation Process:** It was conducted by the committee online mainly through emails, supported by phone calls and skype from 3<sup>rd</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Four key persons were contacted through emails and phones seeking clarification for the change in timing and the details of the voting on the last day. Supportive documents in terms of Minutes of the meeting of the Election Committee, emails and excel sheet of the voters and registered members were obtained. Clarifications were sought from them directly via emails.

**Facts found:** The change in timing was a rectification by the Election Chairperson in accordance to the meeting of the Election committee. The display of wrong timing on both the websites were mere oversight. The number of individuals who had voted between 8 AM and 10 AM were few to affect the result of the election.

**Conclusion:** There is no mala fide action from any party as regards to the change of timing of voting closure in the IPHA and the voting website and the wrong display was merely an oversight. Neither did the change in time alter the election result in any way.

## **Background**

The election process for the Indian Public Health Association for the year 2019-2021 was held online from 24<sup>th</sup> December 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019. The voting closing time according to the IPHA website was 8 AM on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019, but in the voting platform it was 10 AM. This discrepancy was noticed by the voters and it caused confusion among them. It was subsequently brought to the notice of the IPHA headquarter. The IPHA constituted a fact-finding committee to investigate the matter.

## **Fact-finding Committee Members**

1. Prof. Pankaja Raghav (**Chairperson**)  
Professor & Head  
Department of Community Medicine & Family Medicine  
AIIMS Jodhpur  
Rajasthan
2. Prof. Prakash Doke  
Professor, Department of Community Medicine  
Bharati Vidyapeeth University Medical College, Pune  
Maharashtra
3. Prof. Sonu H Subba  
Professor, Department of Community Medicine & Family Medicine,  
AIIMS Bhubaneswar  
Odisha
4. Prof. Sri Karuna Murthy Kolli  
Former Vice President (South) IPHA  
State president, IPHA, AP State
5. Dr. Neeti Rustagi  
Associate Professor, Department of Community Medicine & Family Medicine,  
AIIMS, Jodhpur  
Rajasthan

## **Investigation Process**

The investigation process was conducted online through emails and skype. The committee members communicated with each other over phone and email. The respondents were also contacted on phone as well as on email. The investigation was carried out from 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Four individuals who were directly or indirectly linked to the process of election were contacted for fact-finding. They were;

1. Accrete InfoSolution, Mr. Jalpan Mehta
2. Election Chairperson, Dr Byomkesh Manna
3. IPHA Headquarter- Secretary General, Dr. Sanghamitra Ghosh
4. Dr Pradeep Agrawal

### ***3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019***

The investigation process started with the Chairperson of the committee contacting the members on email with a draft letter to be sent to Mr. Jalpan Mehta, the vendor who was maintaining the election website. The letter asked Mr. Jalpan Mehta to:

1. Provide the explanation for change in the timings.
2. Provide the data of IPHA members who registered for election till 28 January 2019
3. Provide data of IPHA members who actually cast their vote.
4. Provide data of IPHA members who cast their vote between 8 am to 10 am on 31st January 2019

### ***5<sup>th</sup> June 2019***

Mr. Jalpan Mehta provided the numbers of those registered, and the those who cast their ballot on the last day before 8 AM and between 8 AM and 10 AM via email. He also provided the detailed excel sheet of all the members who had registered and voted. **(Annexure 1)**

For point no 1, he explained that the sole authority of changing the timing was with the Election Chairperson as he had been given the login ID and password. Chairperson was supposed to change the password after which the vendor had no access to make modifications in the website.

In the meanwhile, he offered to demonstrate to the committee the working of the online voting software that was used, so the committee members had a better understanding of the

interfaces and the extent of activity possible in the website. This was to be done over skype on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

### ***13<sup>th</sup> June 2019***

However, all members could not be contacted over skype. Thereafter, videos were made of the same and sent to all the members.

After going through the documents and the videos of the software, the members decided to contact the Election Chairperson.

### ***24<sup>th</sup> June 2019***

Election Chairperson, Dr. B. Manna was sent an email to inquire about the change in timing and the reason for the same.

### ***25<sup>th</sup> June 2019***

Dr. B. Manna, Election Chairperson responded that he was the sole person who had that level of access to make such modifications on the website. He also explained that he had changed the timing because according to the IPHA meeting, timing was supposed to be 10 AM and on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2019, he suddenly noticed the time was 8 AM, so he corrected the timing. **(Annexure 2)** This response was supported by the email he forwarded **(Annexure 3)**, which was sent by IPHA office to Accrete InfoSolutions mentioning the timing as 10 AM.

Thereafter, the committee decided to contact the IPHA office to obtain the minutes of the election meeting to confirm the timing and all email communication of their office with the vendors that maintained the IPHA website and the election website as they were maintained by different vendors.

### ***29<sup>th</sup> June 2019***

The committee contacted IPHA HQ, ( President, Prof. Sanjay Rai & Secretary General, Dr. Sanghamitra Ghosh ) and received in response, the minutes of the meeting **(Annexure 4,5)** and it was confirmed that the timing was supposed to be 10 AM. However, the timing on the voting website was 8 AM till the Chairperson corrected it and in the IPHA website, it was 8 AM even till the end.

Secretary General, Dr. Sanghamitra Ghosh explained that according to the initial discussion, the timing was supposed to be 8 AM. However, in the final meeting it was decided to be 10 AM and even though the vendor was intimated about the timing, they seem to have overlooked it.

The maintenance of the IPHA website was handled by Dr. Pradeep Agrawal and he also mentioned that the initial timing was supposed to be 8 AM.

## Facts found after Investigation

1. On the basis of information received from Mr. Jalpan Mehta (**Annexure 1**), a total of 1823 members registered for voting, of which 1442 members cast their votes till 8 AM on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2019. 20 more people voted between 8 AM and 10 AM on the same date. Of these 20 votes, 11 votes were for the lost candidates, while 9 were for the winners.
2. The change in timings

Person responsible: Dr. B. Manna, Election Chairperson was the only one who had the level of access to make modifications and he explained that he had noticed the error and made the change himself.

Reason for change: According to the final meeting of IPHA, the closing time was supposed to be 10 AM, hence the Chairperson changed the time of closing.

Reason for display of 8 AM in IPHA website and on voting website till it was corrected: Initial decision was to keep closing time of 8 AM and both the vendors knew that as the timing because of which they overlooked the latest email which communicated the correct time of closure.

## Conclusion

The change in timing was a rectification done by the Election Chairperson in accordance to the minutes of the meeting by the election committee.

The display of wrong timing was just an oversight by the vendors because the initial meeting which had decided the time to be 8 AM.

These figures of votes cast between 8 and 10 AM are not substantial enough to affect the results as the result margins are far more than these votes.

It is clear from the investigation that there has been no mala fide action from any party and the discrepancy in timing was a mere oversight. It also did not alter the election result in any way.

There were no dissents, the report is unanimously accepted.





## Recommendation

In order to avoid such incidents in the future events/activities, IPHA may nominate one person, who takes the responsibility of monitoring that activity eg. elections in all the websites and liaises with all the related persons/vendors for that particular activity.

### Annexures( 1-5)

1. Annexure 1 Information received from Mr. Jalpan Mehta
2. Annexure 2 Election Chairperson, Dr. B. Manna's email
3. Annexure 3 IPHA HQ email forwarded by Election Chairperson
4. Annexure 4 Email from Secretary General Dr. Sanghmitra Ghosh
5. Annexure 5 Minutes of the meeting, forwarded by Dr. Snaghmitra Ghosh

Thanking you,

1. Prof. Pankaja Raghav 
2. Prof. Prakash Doke 
3. Prof. Sonu H Subba 
4. Prof. Sri Karuna Murthy Kolli 
5. Dr. Neeti Rustagi 