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Title

**MANAGING ELECTION WITH MS
PROJECT AS A TOOL**

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Abstract:

India is a largest democratic country in the world. The smooth functioning of a Democratic State requires strong Democratic Institutions in the country. Elections are backbone of a Democratic State. In a democratic country the people elect their representatives and leaders by elections. In India elections are held from Nyaya Panchayat in a village to Zilla Parishad in a District, to Legislature of a State and to the Parliament of the Nation. The strong Democratic Institutions in the country require free and fair polls. Free and fair polls are the prime responsibility of the Government, so that a common man can cast his vote without any fear. Election is the most important activity in which the entire Government machinery is involved in conducting free and fair polls. The Government delegates this responsibility to the District Administration. The District Administration is the responsive nodal agency between the common man and the Government. The entire election process proceeds in a step by step and time bound manner and all the steps involve a lot of paper work in the present set-up, which burdens the clerical staff a great deal.

Key words: Project Management, Work Break Down Structure, Resources, Resources Allocation, Resource Leveling, Predecessor, Successor, Gantt Chart, Network Diagram, Critical Path, PERT Chart, Nomination, Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), Polling Station, Polling Booths, Election Commission, Ballot, Schedule Project, Over Allocated Resources, Task Scheduling, Milestones, Planning, Working Time, Nomination, Counting, Scrutiny, District Election Office (DEO), National Informatics Centre (NIC).

Introduction:

In today's world, India is the largest democratic country. Free and fair elections have been held at regular intervals as per the principles of the Constitution since Independence. The Election Commission of India controls the entire process for conduct of elections to Parliament and Legislature of every State and to the offices of President and Vice-President of India.

The election process in the District starts with the notification of the Lok Sabha Elections by the Election Commission of India. The candidates nominated by various political parties or independents file their nominations in the available prescribed formats along with the

fees as per the norms of Election Commission. The nominations are received by the District Election Officer (DEO), generally the District Magistrate. In the existing system, a number of registers are maintained in nomination filing, and salient features of the nomination forms are again entered in the registers. At least four clerks sit in the chamber of the District Returning Officer to regulate the whole process. The nomination papers filed are then checked by the employees and incomplete or invalid nominations are rejected. The withdrawal, scrutiny and rejection and final list of contesting candidates is prepared in the alphabetical order. The final list of candidates in fray is then sent to the State Election Officer or Election Commission of India. Typically, the expenditure incurred in conducting an election is approximately Rs. 30 Crores. During the last election of Lok Sabha more than 10 Lakhs Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) were used.

Budget & Expenditure:

The Election Commission has an independent budget, which is finalized directly in consultation between the Commission and the Finance Ministry of the Union Government.

The major expenditure on actual conduct of elections is, however, reflected in the budgets of the concerned constituent unit of the Union - State and Union Territory. If elections are being held only for the Parliament, the expenditure is borne entirely by the Union Government while for the elections being held only for the State Legislature, the expenditure is borne entirely by the concerned State. In case of simultaneous elections to the Parliament and State Legislature, the expenditure is shared equally between the Union and the State Governments. For Capital Equipment, expenditure related to preparation for electoral rolls and the scheme for Electors' Identity Cards too, the expenditure is shared equally.

Election Schedule:

The Election Commission normally announces the schedule of elections a few weeks before the formal process is set in motion. The formal process for the elections starts with the Notification. As soon as Notifications are issued, candidates can start filing their nominations in the constituencies from where they wish to contest. These are scrutinised by the Returning Officer of

the constituency concerned after the last date for the same is over after about a week. The validly nominated candidates can withdraw from the contest within two days from the date of scrutiny.

A separate date for counting is fixed and the results declared for each constituency by the concerned Returning Officer. The Commission compiles the complete list of Members elected and issues an appropriate Notification for the due Constitution of the House. With this, the process of elections is complete and the President, in case of the Lok Sabha, and the Governors of the concerned States, in case of Vidhan Sabhas, can then convene their respective Houses to hold their sessions. The entire process takes between 5 to 8 weeks for the national elections, 4 to 5 weeks for separate elections only for Legislative Assemblies.

Observers:

The Commission will arrange Observers in adequate number to ensure smooth conduct Election. The Observers will be asked to keep a close watch on every stage of the electoral process to ensure free and fair elections. The Observers will be given a detailed instruction by the Commission before the operation of the election.

Micro Observers:

In addition to Observers, the Commission will also arrange Micro-Observers to observe the poll proceedings in the polling station on the poll day in selected critical polling stations. They will be chosen from Central Government/Central PSUs officials.

Polling Stations, Polling Parties and Randomization:

There are approximately 850000 polling stations in the country. For physically challenged persons it is make sure that Polling Stations are located at the ground floor and ramps are provided. Polling parties shall be formed randomly, through special application software developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC). Three-stage randomization will be adopted. First, from a wider district database of eligible officials, a shortlist of about 120% of the required numbers will be randomly picked up. This group will be trained for polling duties. In the second stage, from this trained manpower, actual polling parties as required shall 7 be formed by

random selection software in the presence of ECI Observers. In the third randomization, the polling stations will be allocated randomly just before the polling party's departure.

To manage and monitor the entire election process and its different activities, MS Project can be used as an effective tool.

The major activities identified to conduct an election are as follows:

1. Announcement of Election
2. Notification of Election
3. Nomination
4. Scrutiny
5. Withdrawal
6. Final list of Contesting Candidates
7. Preparing final list of Polling Stations, Sectors & Zones
8. Draft list of Polling Stations, Sectors & Zones
9. Publication of draft list of polling stations
10. Preparing final list of Polling Station, Sectors & Zones
11. Getting approval of EC through CEO
12. Final publication of Polling Booths
13. Formation of Polling Parties
14. Sending letters to all offices
15. Determining people available
16. Determining number required
17. Formation of Polling Parties (Presiding Officer, Polling Officer –1,2 & 3)
18. Issue letters of Polling Duties
19. Training - I - to be imparted (Presiding Officer & Polling Officer –1)
20. Training - II - to be imparted (Presiding Officer & Polling Officer –1,2,3)
21. Arranging Transport
22. Requesting trucks, buses, jeeps etc.
23. Arranging petrol and diesel
24. Allocating vehicles for Polling Parties, Sectors Magistrates & Zonal Magistrates
25. Keeping reserved vehicles at HQ.
26. Preparation of Route Map / Route Chart
27. Assigning Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) to Polling Booths
28. Initializing Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)
29. Making Police Bandobast for Polling Parties
30. Making Medical arrangements for Zonal & Sector Magistrates
31. Dispersal of Polling Parties to Polling Stations
32. Polling
33. Re-Polling
34. Counting
35. Result Declaration

The WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE (WBS) for the above activities along with its predecessors and activities duration is as follows:

Task Name	Duration	Predecessors
1. Announcement of Election	0 days	
2. Notification of Election	1 day	1FS+10 days
3. Nomination	7 days	2FS+7 days
4. Scrutiny	1 day	3
5. Withdrawal	2 days	4
6. Final list of Contesting Candidates	1 day	5
7. Preparing final list of Polling Stations, Sectors & Zones		
7.1. Draft list of Polling Stations, Sectors & Zones	6 days	1SS+2 days
7.2. Publication of draft list of Polling Stations	6 days	8
7.3. Preparing final list of Polling Station, Sectors & Zones	1 day	9
7.4. Getting approval of EC through CEO	7 days	10
7.5. Final publication of Polling Booths	1 day	11
8. Formation of polling parties		
8.1. Sending letters to all offices	2 days	2
8.2. Determining people available	6 days	14
8.3. Determining number required	1 day	15
8.4. Formation of Polling Parties (Presiding Officer, Polling Officer –1,2 & 3)	5 days	16
8.5. Issue letters of Polling Duties	2 days	17
8.6. Training - I - to be imparted (Presiding Officer & Polling Officer –1)	1 day	18
8.7. Training - II - to be imparted (Presiding Officer & Polling Officer –1,2,3)	1 day	19

8.8. Arranging transport		
8.8.1. Requesting trucks, buses, jeeps etc.	5 days	16,12
8.8.2. Arranging petrol and diesel	1 day	22
8.8.3. Allocating vehicles for Polling Parties, Sectors Magistrate, Zonal Magistrate	2 days	22
8.8.4. Keeping reserved vehicles at HQ.	1 day	22
8.8.5. Preparation of Route Map / Route Chart	2 days	12
8.9. Assigning Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) to Polling Stations	2 days	12
8.10. Initializing Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)	3 days	27
8.11. Making Police Bandobast for polling parties	1 day	28
8.12. Making Medical arrangements for Zonal & Sector Magistrates	1 day	28
8.13. Dispersal of polling parties to Polling Stations	2 days	30
9. Polling	1 day	1FS+50 days,31
10. Re-Polling	1 day	32
11. Counting	1 day	33
12. Result Declaration	1 day	34

The approximate fixed costs of different activities as follows:-

Task Name	Fixed Cost
1. Announcement of Election	Rs. 0.00
2. Notification of Election	Rs. 0.00
3. Nomination	Rs. 0.00
4. Scrutiny	Rs. 0.00

5. Withdrawal	Rs. 0.00
6. Final list of Contesting Candidates	Rs. 0.00
7. Preparing final list of Polling Stations, Sectors & Zones	Rs. 0.00
7.1. Draft list of Polling Stations, Sectors & Zones	Rs. 0.00
7.2. Publication of draft list of Polling Stations	Rs. 2,000.00
7.3. Preparing final list of Polling Station, Sectors & Zones	Rs. 500.00
7.4. Getting approval of EC through CEO	Rs. 0.00
7.5. Final publication of Polling Booths	Rs. 1,000.00
8. Formation of polling parties	Rs. 0.00
8.1. Sending letters to all offices	Rs. 5,000.00
8.2. Determining people available	Rs. 0.00
8.3. Determining number required	Rs. 0.00
8.4. Formation of Polling Parties (Presiding Officer, Polling Officer –1,2 & 3)	Rs. 1,000,000.00
8.5. Issue letters of Polling Duties	Rs. 5,000.00
8.6. Training - I - to be imparted (Presiding Officer & Polling Officer –1)	Rs. 50,000.00
8.7. Training - II - to be imparted (Presiding Officer & Polling Officer –1,2,3)	Rs. 50,000.00
8.8. Arranging transport	Rs. 0.00
8.8.1. Requesting trucks, buses, jeeps etc.	Rs. 300,000.00
8.8.2. Arranging petrol and diesel	Rs. 400,000.00
8.8.3. Allocating vehicles for Polling Parties, Sectors Magistrates & Zonal Magistrates	Rs. 0.00
8.8.4. Keeping reserved vehicles at HQ.	Rs. 0.00
8.8.5. Preparation of Route Map / Route Chart	Rs. 0.00
8.9. Assigning Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) to Polling Stations	Rs. 0.00
8.10. Initializing Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)	Rs. 0.00

8.11. Making Police Bandobast for Polling Parties	Rs. 500,000.00
8.12. Making Medical arrangements for Zonal & Sector Magistrates	Rs. 100,000.00
8.13. Dispersal of polling parties to Polling Stations	Rs. 0.00
9. Polling	Rs. 500,000.00
10. Re-Polling	Rs. 100,000.00
11. Counting	Rs. 500,000.00
12. Result Declaration	Rs. 0.00

The list of resources along with their utilization and approximate expenditure incurred is as follows:

Resource Name	Max. Units.	Std. Rate	Ovt. Rate
EC	100%	Rs. 200.00/hr	Rs. 200.00/h
DEO	100%	Rs. 200.00/hr	Rs. 200.00/h
Dy. DEO	100%	Rs. 200.00/hr	Rs. 200.00/h
SP	100%	Rs. 200.00/hr	Rs. 200.00/h
Observers	25%	Rs. 200.00/hr	Rs. 200.00/h
RTO	100%	Rs. 100.00/hr	Rs. 100.00/h
Vehicles	25%	Rs. 50.00/hr	Rs. 50.00/h
Police	100%	Rs. 50.00/hr	Rs. 50.00/h
Medical	100%	Rs. 50.00/hr	Rs. 50.00/h
Polling Parties	25%	Rs. 50.00/hr	Rs. 50.00/h
Counting Staff	10%	Rs. 50.00/hr	Rs. 50.00/h
SDM	100%	Rs. 100.00/hr	Rs. 100.00/h

CEO	100%	Rs. 100.00/hr	Rs. 100.00/h
NIC	100%	Rs. 50.00/hr	Rs. 50.00/h

SNo.	Resource Name	Details
1.	EC	Election Commissioner
2.	DEO	District Election Officer
3.	Dy. DEO	District Election Officer
4.	SP	Superintendent of Police
5.	RTO	Road Transport Officer
6.	SDM	Sub Divisional Magistrate
7.	CEO	Chief Executive Officer
8.	NIC	National Informatics Centre

After assigning the resources to the different activities, final plan of the election process is as follows:

Task Name	Duration	Predecessors	Resource Names
1. Announcement of Election	0 days		
2. Notification of Election	1 day	1FS+15 days	EC
3. Nomination	7 days	2FS+7 days	DEO
4. Scrutiny	1 day	3	DEO

5. Withdrawal	2 days	4	DEO
6. Final list of Contesting Candidates	1 day	5	DEO
7. Preparing final list of Polling Stations, Sectors, Zones	20 days		
7.1. Draft list of Polling Stations, Sectors, Zones	3 days	1SS+2 days	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM,SP
7.2. Publication of draft list of polling stations	8 days	8	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM
7.3. Preparing final list of Polling Station, Sectors, Zones	1 day	9	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM
7.4. Getting approval of EC through CEO	7 days	10	DEO,EC
7.5. Final publication of Polling Both	1 day	11	DEO,EC
8. Formation of polling parties	20.33 days		
8.1. Sending letters to all offices	2 days	2	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM,NIC
8.2. Determining people available	6 days	14	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM,NIC
8.3. Determining number required	1 day	15	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM,NIC
8.4. Formation of Polling Parties (Presiding Officer, Polling Officer -1,2 & 3)	6.67 days	16	DEO,Dy. DEO,NIC
8.5. Issue letters of Polling Duties	2 days	17	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM,NIC
8.6. Training - I - to be imparted (Presiding Officer & Polling Officer -1)	1.33 days	18	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM
8.7. Training - II - to be imparted (Presiding Officer & Polling Officer -1,2,3)	1.33 days	19	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM
8.8. Arranging transport	9.75 days		

8.8.1.	Requesting trucks, buses, jeeps etc.	3.75 days	16,12	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM,RTO
8.8.2.	Arranging petrol and diesel	3 days	22	RTO
8.8.3.	Allocating vehicles for Polling Parties, Sectors Magistrate, Zonal Magistrate	2 days	22	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM
8.8.4.	Keeping reserved vehicles at HQ.	1 day	22	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM
8.8.5.	Preparation of Route Map / Route Chart	1.2 days	12	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM,RTO,NIC
8.9.	Assigning Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) to polling stations	2 days	12	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM
8.10.	Initializing Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)	3 days	27	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM
8.11.	Making Police Bandobast for polling parties	1 day	28	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM,SP
8.12.	Making Medical arrangements for Zonal & Sector Magistrate	0.75 days	28	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM,Medical
8.13.	Dispersal of polling parties to polling station	2 days	30	DEO,Dy. DEO,SDM
9. Polling		0.85 days	31,1FS+50 days	DEO,Dy. DEO,SP,Observers[25%],Police,Medical,Polling Parties[25%],SDM
10. Re-Polling		0.76 days	32	DEO,Dy. DEO,SP,Observers[25%],SDM
11. Counting		0.69 days	33	DEO,Dy. DEO,SP,Observers[25%],Police,Counting Staff[10%],SDM,NIC
12. Result Declaration		0.56 days	34	DEO,Observers[25%], NIC

Task Dependency:

FS : Finish to Start

SS : Start to Start

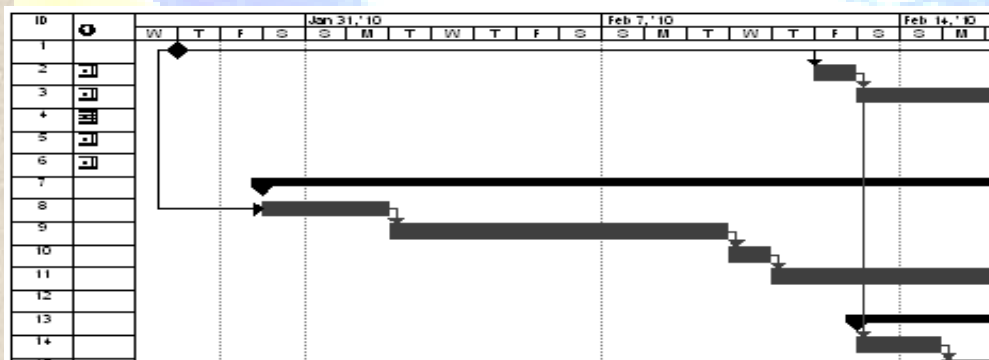
SF : Start to Finish

FF : Finish to Finish

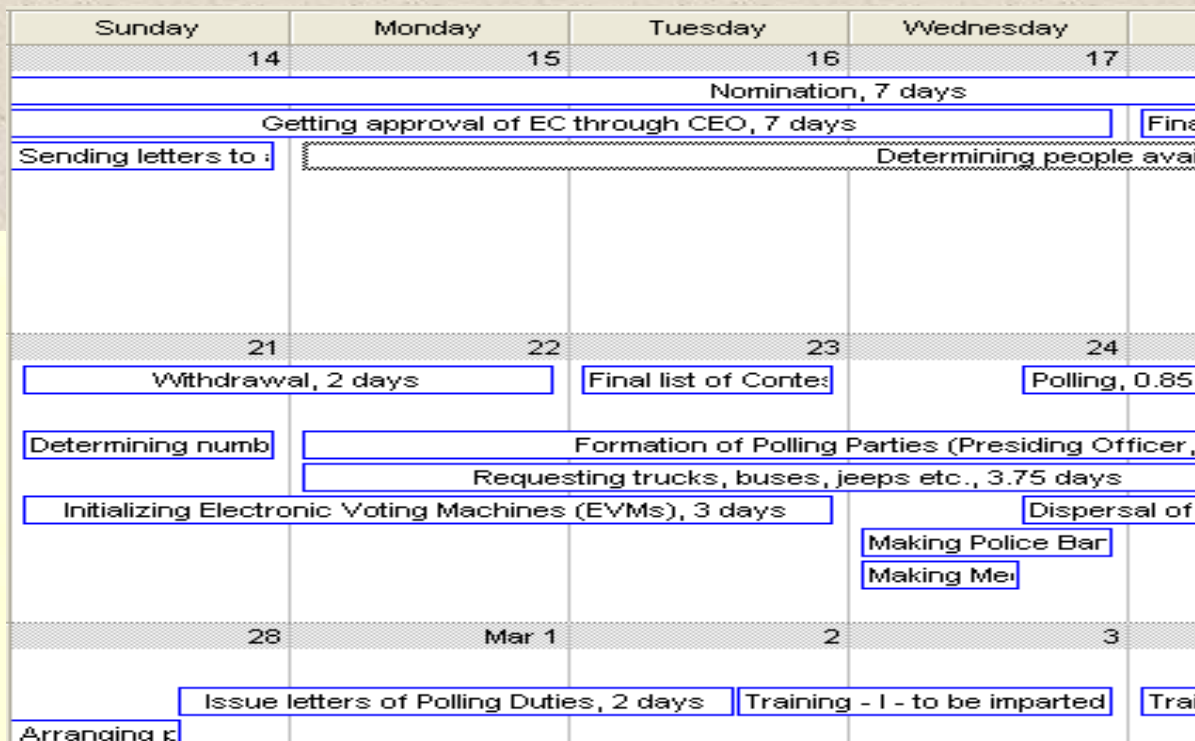
PROJECT VIEWS:

There are different views available in MS Project. These views are helpful in the analysis of the project. The important views are Gantt Chart View, Calendar View, Network Diagram and Pert Chart.

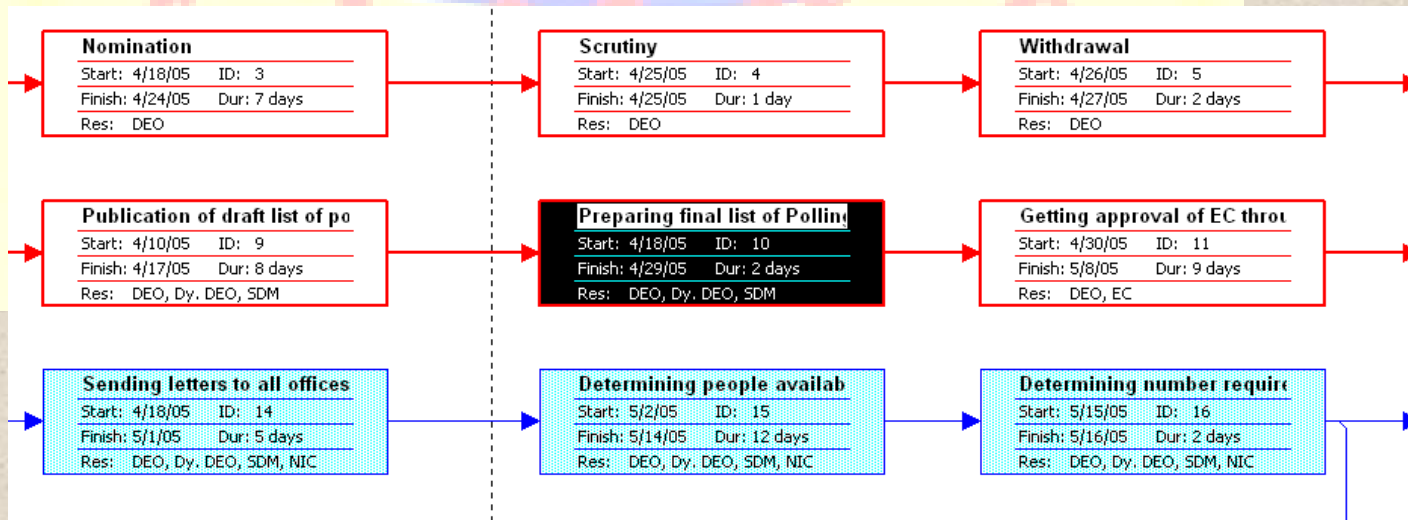
GANTT CHART VIEW:



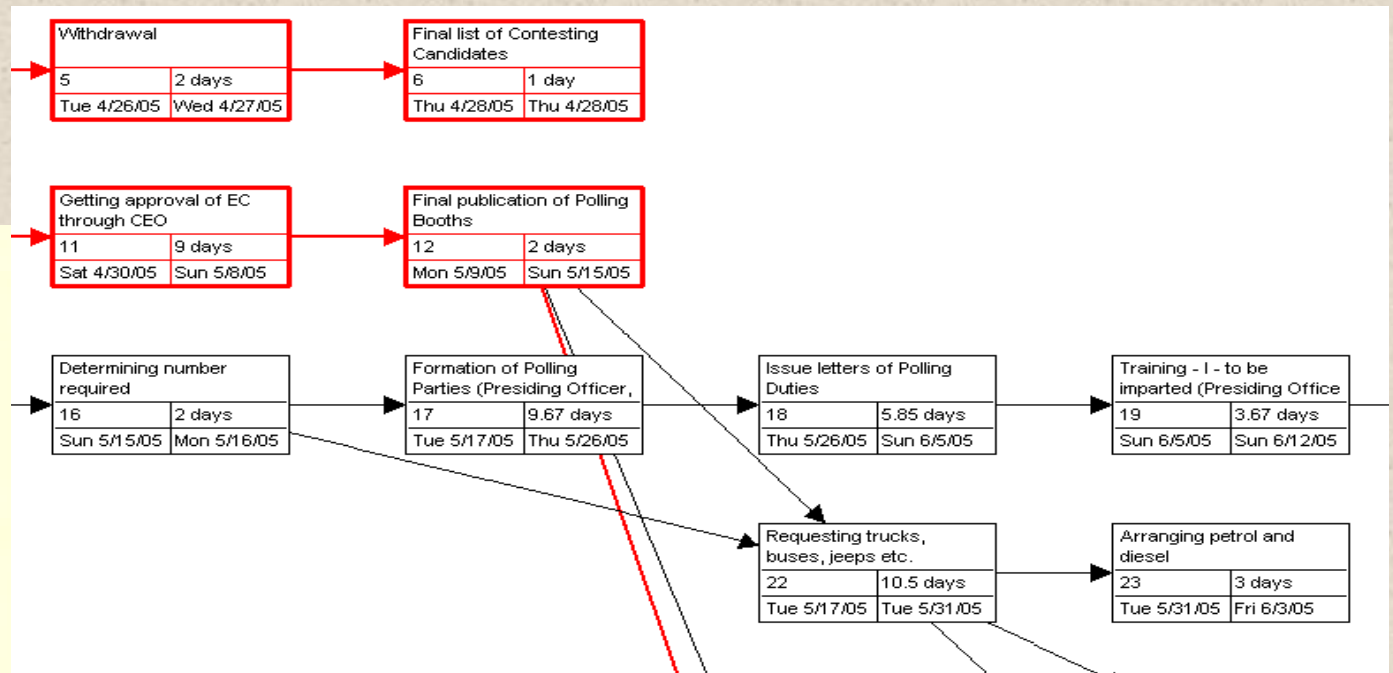
CALENDAR VIEW



NETWORK DIAGRAM FOR THE ELECTION PROJECT:



PERT CHART:



REPORTS:

For analysis of the Project different reports can be generated using MS Project.

1. Summary of the Project
2. Cash flow of the Project
3. Budget of the Project
4. Budget Report of the project
5. Budget Report of the Project
6. Overview Report of the Project which includes the following:
 - a. Top-Level Tasks
 - b. Critical Tasks
 - c. Milestones
 - d. Working Days
7. Current Activities of the Project which includes the following
 - a. Unstarted- Tasks
 - b. Tasks-Starting Soon
 - c. Tasks in Progress

- d. Completed Tasks
 - e. Should have started Tasks
 - f. Slipping Tasks
8. Cost of the Project which includes the following:
- a. Over budget Tasks
 - b. Over budget Resources
 - c. Earned Value
9. Resource Work Assignment Reports which includes the following:
- a. Who Does What
 - b. Who Does What When
 - c. To-do List
 - d. Over allocated Resources
10. Resources Work Load Reports which includes the following:
- a. Task Usage
 - b. Resource Usage

CONCLUSION:

The monitoring of Election process using MS Project is more effective in conducting the election. The optimum utilization of the resources for the election activities can be monitored. Using MS Project, the critical tasks can be tracked within time limit. The slack time of various activities can also be calculated with MS Project. MS Project helps in leveling the over allocated resources for the entire project or activity wise also. The budget allocation can be monitored. Work time for the different resources can be monitored with MS Project. In MS Project, various types of required reports can be generated.

Therefore, the use of MS Project is an important tool to handle, monitor and in analysis of any important project.

Note: - This project work was done by the author during the training programme on “Project Management” conducted by IIM, Lucknow (Noida Center). The data used is not factual, but imaginary.

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