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Civic polls: HC wants State to implement 50% women's quota

Once a gazette notification has been issued by the State government providing 50 per cent reservation for women candidates in local body elections, it has to be provided in the impending elections, the Madras High Court said on Wednesday. It then directed the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to implement the promised quota for women.

The First Bench of Chief Justice S.K. Kaul and Justice R. Mahadevan made the observation on a PIL petition moved by G. Kumar, a member of the Indian National Congress.

The petitioner wanted the court to direct the authorities to facilitate online submission of nomination for all the posts in local bodies; uploading of affidavits of all candidates onto the State Election Commission's website; deployment of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM); and installation of CCTV cameras in all the polling stations. He also asked the court to direct the government and the commission to ensure 50 per cent reservation for women candidates.

When the PIL came up for hearing, the Special Government Pleader informed the Bench that the issue of using EVMs was already pending before a Division Bench of the court. Recording the submission, the Bench directed the State government and the State Election Commission to take a decision on the other two aspects before the elections are announced.

As to the plea for implementing 50 per cent reservation for women candidates, the Bench referred to the government gazette dated February 27 and said, "Once the gazette has been issued, the reservation has to be provided as per the same."

The Bench then disposed of the PIL.