

# ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 470/INST/2014-EPS

Dated: 30.04.2014

To

The Chief Electoral Officers  
of all States and UTs.

Sub: **Counting of votes for General/Bye-elections to the House of People/State Legislative Assembly – Counting procedure – regarding.**

Sir/Madam,

The Commission has issued various instructions on counting procedure and identification of counting centres and appointment of Counting Staff / Counting Agents, from time to time, which have been circulated to all the Chief Electoral Officers. In addition to these, some of the instructions were also issued during the General Election to State Legislative Assemblies held in the recent past. These instructions were not circulated all the Chief Electoral Officers. All these instructions have now been incorporated and consolidated in the enclosed letters No. 470/INST/2014-EPS dated 30.04.2014 for convenience of all stakeholders. The gist of these instructions are given below for facility of easy reference :

## **COUNTING OF POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS (PBs)**

**Reference No. 470/PB Counting/2013/SDR dated 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2013**

- I. On the day previous to the date of counting, the Returning Officer shall meet the observer and furnish the latest account of the total number of postal ballot papers received back both from the facilitation centres and those received through post. At the time of commencement of counting he should also give similar information to the Observer in respect of postal ballot papers received subsequently and till the time fixed for commencement of counting on the day of counting.
- II. Ideally not more than 500 postal ballots may be counted in one Table at a time in each round. Accordingly, arrange for additional tables, subject to availability of space inside the counting hall, for counting of votes polled by postal ballot. However, ordinarily not more than four counting tables may be provided for counting of postal ballot paper. In

each Table for counting of postal ballot there should be an ARO. Thus there will be as many AROs for counting of postal ballot papers as are the number of Tables provided for counting of postal ballot. For each such Table, there will be one Counting Supervisor and two Counting Assistants. The Counting Supervisor and Counting Assistants for the postal ballot should be Gazetted officers.

- III. Persons involved in postal ballot counting should also be trained about all aspects of postal ballot counting for which there are already detailed instructions of the Commission.
- IV. RO or one of the AROs shall explain and demonstrate the requirements of a valid declaration to all the counting supervisors, assistants and the micro observers before the envelopes of the postal ballot papers are distributed to each of the counting tables and actual scrutiny of the declaration by the counting supervisor.
- V. The RO shall ensure that there is no inordinate delay in scrutiny of the declarations by the AROs and the counting supervisors.
- VI. There shall be an additional micro-observer (GOI or CPSU official) for each table for postal ballot counting.
- VII. All the cases of rejection of postal ballot on account of defects in Declaration in Form 13A should be re-verified by the Returning Officer before they are actually put in the rejected category.
- VIII. As already instructed in the Handbook for Returning Officers, the penultimate (one before the last) round of counting of votes recorded in EVMs shall not commence till the counting of postal ballot is completed in all respects.
- IX. **The contesting candidates will be entitled to appoint a counting agent for each Table provided for counting of postal ballot papers**



- X. The additional measure being put in place to expedite the process of counting of postal ballot paper by providing additional counting tables in view of the large number of votes polled by postal ballot may be brought to the notice of contesting candidates in advance so that they can also appoint **additional counting agents for the extra tables.**
- XI. The Observer shall very closely oversee the process of counting of votes by postal ballot, especially the scrutiny of the declaration in Form 13A. While submitting the report on counting, after declaration of result, the Observer shall include therein a detailed description of the procedure followed for the postal ballot counting. This should specifically make a mention about the total number of postal ballot papers received for counting, no. of PB rejected, no. of tables provided for postal ballot counting and the total time taken for the counting of PB.
- XII. A postal ballot paper shall not be rejected merely on the ground that the attesting officer has not put his seal on the declaration of the elector in Form 13-A, if the attesting officer has given all relevant details with regard to his name and designation on that Form. Further, a postal ballot paper shall also not be rejected on the ground that the sender (elector) has not put his signature on the outer cover "B" (Form 13C) in which he has returned the postal ballot paper, if the identity of the sender is verifiable on the basis of his declaration in Form 13-A.

#### **COMPLETION OF PART II - RESULT OF COUNTING OF FORM 17C**

- I. Sufficient no. of Part – II of form 17-C (Result of counting) with the names of all the contesting candidates and NOTA below the name of the last contesting candidate shall be **pre-printed.**
- II. The Commission has directed that the Part-II of Form 17C shall be prepared in duplicate using carbon paper. And both the copies should be got signed from the counting agents

present. One copy of the Part-II of Form 17C will be handed over to the RO/ARO for computing round wise tally of votes.

This may be brought to the notice of all concerned.

Yours faithfully,



(SUMIT MUKHERJEE)

SECRETARY

Enclosure:

1. **No. 470/INST/2014-EPS dated 30.04.2014**
2. **No. 470/INST/2013-EPS dated 30.04.2014**
3. **No. 470/PB Counting/2013/SDR dated 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2013**
4. **No. 470/2013/SDR dated 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2013**
5. **No. 470/2013/SDR dated 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2013**