

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001.

No. 464/INST/2009-EPS

Dated:18th March, 2009

To,

The Chief Electoral Officers of
All States and Union Territories

**Sub: General Election to Lok Sabha – 2009 – Rationalization of
Counting Centres – regarding.**

Sir,

I am directed to invite your attention to the Commission's earlier letters
No. 470/2007-PLN-I dated 11.01.2007 & 29.08.2007 & letter No.
470/2008/EPS dated 19.01.2009 (copy enclosed).

The conduct of election in a vast country like ours is a mammoth
exercise. An efficient human resource management forms an essential part of
the election management planning and execution. In view of the introductions
of new counting system, the Commission vide its letter No. 47/2008/EPS
dated 19.01.2009, has decided that all the Observers will keep a close watch
on the process of counting of votes and compilation of result.

The Observers are also required to satisfy themselves about the
fairness of counting of votes and accuracy of compilation of result, and put
their authorization before the declaration of the result to the concerned
Returning Officer. For this purpose, they have to supervise the round wise
counting of votes. The Observers also have to choose 2 EVMs (control units)
at random at the end of each round of counting for parallel verification as
stipulated by the Commission. Besides, the Observer's presence is also
required during counting of postal ballot.

In order to monitor the process with such accuracy, it is, therefore,
essential to rationalize the Counting Centres so that the Observer need not
oscillate between two or three Counting Centres, and there is no trade off
between the time taken to declare the result and the number of Observers.
There are States where counting is being done at each assembly/assembly
segment level while there are States where it is done at the District
Headquarter or PC/ROs Headquarter. There is a possibility of counting for a
few assembly segments coming under parliamentary constituency being
counted in one location, and the rest in other locations.

In view of the limited availability of Observers, the practice of taking up assembly segment wise counting at different locations should be resorted to only in rare case where that is absolutely needed in view of certain limitations, faced due to difficult terrain, long distances and difficult transport system. It is desirable to have one large Counting Centre, with ample storage space for EVMs and having as many Counting Hall as the number of Assembly Constituencies within the Parliamentary Constituency concerned. To the extent possible, Counting Centers should be established at district Head Quarters only in order to economise counting time, if the space is available, a counting all can be allowed to set up tables upto 25 in number. However, specific proposal should be made to the Commission for the purpose.

As per the Commission's aforesaid letter dated 11.01.2007, if the total number of Halls is less than the total number of Assembly segments of a Parliamentary Constituency, the sequence of counting will be as per the ascending AC numbers. This, if there are seven such AC segments in a PC and only three Halls, then segments with the three lowest serial numbers will be taken up for counting in the three Halls available. As soon as counting is completed in respect of one Assembly Segment in a particular Hall and after necessary clearance of the Hall, counting for the next AC pre-allotted to the hall will be taken up therein.

Under no circumstances, more than one AC segment will be taken up for counting simultaneously, inside one Hall, and, under no circumstances, Electronic Voting Machines (or Ballot papers) of more than one AC segment will be physically available for counting purposes inside one Hall at any time.

The places where one such large Counting Centre is not available to accommodate all EVMs of the Parliamentary Constituency, the counting may be carried out in two or more Counting Centers restricted to the number of Observers available.

This disposes off the clarification sought by CEO, Kerala.

Yours faithfully

(SUMIT MUKHERJEE)
UNDER SECRETARY