

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 470/2008/EPS

Dated : 19th January, 2009

To

The Chief Electoral Officer of
All States/Union Territories.

**Sub: Counting of vote for General/Bye-election to the House of People/State
Legislative Assembly-ensuring transparency – regarding.**

I am directed to refer to the Commission's instruction issued vide letters no. 470/2007/PLN-I dated: 11.01.2007 and 29.08.2007 on the above subject. In para 18 of the Commission's said letter dated: 11.01.2007, it is mentioned that at each counting center the Observer or group of Observers will be provided a separate room or cubicle with table/chairs, a telephone with STD and a fax attached to it. This will be reserved for the exclusive use of the Observers for their communication with the Commission, in strict confidentiality. With the introduction of new Counting System the Commission has decided that all the observers will keep a close watch on the process of counting of votes and compilation of result. The Returning officer before declaring the result of an election shall obtain an authorization for the declaration of result of an election from the observer concerned.

The observers is also required to satisfy himself about the fairness of counting of votes and the total accuracy of compilation of result. For this purpose he has to supervise the round wise counting of votes. The observer also has to choose 2 EVMs 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. Therefore, it is evident that the role of observer in the present context of counting is very crucial and requires constant vigilance and full time involvement during counting process.

In the light of above, and in order to ensure proper watch over the counting process, the Commission has decided that in future, the Observers shall be provided a table and a chair next to the table of the Returning Officer instead of providing a separate room for them. The seating arrangements of counting supervisors, counting assistants and micro-observers should be made in a sequence. They should not be allowed unnecessarily to roam here and there in the counting hall. Arrangements should be made for getting the information from them and providing material to them.

Yours faithfully,

(SUMIT MUKHERJEE)
UNDER SECRETARY