

Most Immediate

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No.470/PB Counting/2013/SDR/

Dated: 4th December, 2013

To

The Chief Electoral Officer,

(1) Chhattisgarh

(2) Madhya Pradesh

(3) Mizoram

(4) Rajasthan

(5) Delhi.

Sub: Counting of postal ballots – additional instructions.

Sir,

The Commission has given detailed instructions regarding counting of postal ballot papers. In the current elections, the number of postal ballot papers are comparatively high in view of the special measures adopted for facilitating voting by postal ballot by the staff on election duty and police personnel. Therefore, for efficient management of counting of postal ballots, the Commission hereby gives the following directions :-

- (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/in person. 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.i.e upto 8.00 hrs. on the day of counting. A format for furnishing this account is enclosed for uniformity.
- (ii) Two or if required three Tables may be kept, subject to availability of space inside the counting hall, for counting of votes polled by postal ballot. For 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. Ideally not more than 500 postal ballots may be distributed to each Table.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 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.

- (v) 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.
- (vi) The RO shall ensure that there is no inordinate delay in scrutiny of the declarations by the AROs and the counting supervisors.
- (vii) There shall be an additional micro-observer (GOI or CPSU official) for each table for postal ballot counting.
- (viii) All the cases of rejection of postal ballot on account defects in Declaration in Form 13A should be re verified by the Returning Officer before they are actually put in the rejected category.
- (ix) 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.
- (x) The contesting candidates will be entitled to appoint a counting agent for each Table provided for counting of postal ballot papers.

2. 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.

3. 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.

3. These instructions should be brought to the notice of all DEOs, ROs, AROs, and a copy of this shall also be given to each of the Observers.

Yours faithfully

Sd/-
(Ashish Chakraborty)
Secretary

Statement of Postal Ballots Cast at Facilitation Center/received by post/in person

Name of State _____

Name of District _____

No. & Name of Assembly Constituency _____

Date and time on which this report is given to the Observer by the R.O. _____

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Name of Facilitation Center</i>	<i>Dates of facilitation Provided for casting of votes by postal ballot</i>	<i>Total Number of postal ballots cast by voters on election duty including police personnel and drivers/conductors/cleaners etc. for the Assembly Constituency</i>	<i>Total Number of postal ballots received by post/in person</i>	<i>**No. of PBs received subsequently till 8.00 hrs. on the date of counting.</i>

Note:-**This information may be entered on the counting day by the RO before actual commencement of counting at the appointed hour and countersigned by the RO again.

Returning Officer