



OFFICE OF THE
ELECTION AUTHORITY
UNDER PANCHAYATI RAJ ACT, 1989
(CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, JAMMU & KASHMIR)
2ND FLOOR VIKAS BHAWAN, RAIL HEAD COMPLEX, JAMMU

The District Panchayat Election Officer,
(Deputy Commissioner)
Kupwara/Baramulla/ Bandipora/Ganderbal/Srinagar/
Budgam/Pulwama/Shopian/Kulgam/ Anantnag/Kishtwar/
Doda/Leh/Kargil/Ramban/Udhampur/Reasi/Kathua/Samba/
Jammu/ Rajouri/ Poonch.

No. 5327/Pyt/2011/ 5024-45

Dated: 15/04/2011

Subject: - Conduct of Panchayat Elections 2011 – Counting of votes- regarding.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to bring to your kind notice the difficulties faced by the various District Panchayat Election Officers (DPEO's, Dy. Commissioner's) during the counting of votes in First Phase of Panchayat Elections on 13.4.2011. It must be understood that on an average the number of votes to be counted in a Sarpanch and Panch segment varies between 1400-1800 in most of the Panchayat Halqas. The average time likely to taken for counting 1400-1800 votes should not ordinarily exceed 4 hours. However, it was observed in the counting of votes during the 1st phase of elections that counting process which was started at from 4 pm in had extended even in the some of the blocks well beyond midnight. The long time taken in the counting of votes underlines that the ROs' and AROs' have not been imparted proper training as laid down in Chapter XV (Counting of Votes) in the Handbook for Returning Officer.

It is therefore enjoined upon all District Panchayat Election Officer's (Deputy Commissioner's) that ROs' and AROs' for next phases of election may be imparted special training regarding counting of votes in order to ensure that the counting of votes should be finished within a reasonable time. Moreover, in order to avoid any controversy, looking at the margin of victory of different contesting candidates, you are requested to exercise utmost vigilance on the work of the counting staff and also in ensuring maintenance of discipline during the counting process.

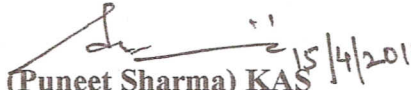
It is also pointed out that the classification of Votes as valid or invalid has also been a source of controversy especially when the Validity of votes is decided after they


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have been segregated and counted in favour of different candidates. In such a situation, the candidate securing that vote will do his utmost to prevent that vote from being declared invalid. This situation can be avoided, if the validity of votes is decided after they have been taken out of the ballot boxes, segregated, made into bundles but before assigning them to different candidates.

It is therefore impressed upon all DPEO's (Deputy Commissioners') that they should instruct all the ROs'/ AROs' of the next phases of Panchayat Election to separate out invalid votes from the available lot of total votes polled before the actual start of candidate wise counting process. The ROs'/ AROs' may try to evolve consensus among all the contesting candidates while taking decision on invalid/doubtful votes. If feasible, the signature or thumb impression of all or majority of the contesting candidates be obtained by ROs'/AROs' while deciding the invalid votes so as to pre-empt any complaints at later stage of counting. Since, the counting process is extending well beyond the day light. All DPEOs' should ensure that proper lighting arrangements are made in the entire designated counting Hall/ Centres established at ROs'/ AROs' level. All concerned may be asked to comply by the instructions given by Election Authority in true letter and spirit. **Matter may be treated as Election Urgent.**

Yours faithfully,


(Puneet Sharma) KAS 15/4/2011
Dy Chief Electoral Officer,
Jammu.

Copy for kind inf. to the:-

- 1-2. Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir/Jammu.
- 3-4 Director Rural Development Department, Kashmir/Jammu.
5. Special Assistant to Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs for kind information of the Hon'ble Minister.
6. Principal Private Secretary to Chief Secretary, J&K, Jammu for the kind information of the Chief Secretary.
- 7-8 Assistant Chief Electoral Officer, Kashmir/Jammu.