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# GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVERS

(Panchayat General Elections)  
2013

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTION COMMISSION  
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# **WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTION COMMISSION**

## **GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVERS**

### **GENERAL**

#### **Statutory Basis of Appointment**

1. Observers of the Commission are appointed under the powers conferred on it by Section 134 of the West Bengal Panchayat Elections Act, 2003 and the plenary powers available to the Commission under the Constitution of India. They are the appointees of the Commission working under the superintendence, control and discipline of the Commission for the period from their appointment until the process of election is complete.

#### **2. Section 134 reads as follows :-**

“(1) The Commission may nominate an Observer who shall be an officer of the State Government to watch the conduct of election or elections in a constituency or a group of constituencies and to perform such other functions as may be entrusted to him by the Commission.

(2) The Observer, nominated under sub-section (1), shall have the power to direct the *Panchayat* Returning Officer for the constituency or for any of the constituencies for which he has been nominated, to stop the counting of votes at any time before the declaration of the result or not to declare the result if, in the opinion of the Observer, booth capturing has taken place at a large number of polling stations or at places fixed for counting of votes or any ballot

papers used at a polling station are unlawfully taken out of the custody of the *Panchayat* Returning Officer or are accidentally or intentionally destroyed or lost or damaged or tampered with to such an extent that the result of the poll at that polling station or place cannot be ascertained.

(3) Where an Observer has directed the *Panchayat* Returning Officer under this section to stop counting of votes or not to declare the result, the Observer shall forthwith report the matter to the Commission and thereupon the Commission shall, after taking all material circumstances into account, issue appropriate directions."

#### Role

3. By their seniority and experience in the administrative service, the Observers are expected to be in a position to assist the Commission in the conduct of free and fair polls. They will also oversee the efficient and effective management of the electoral process at the field level. They will act as the **eyes and ears of the Commission** during the period of election and provide direct inputs to the Commission from the field acting as an interface among the election machinery, the candidates, political parties, and electors to ensure that the acts, rules, procedures, instructions and guidelines related to elections are strictly and impartially complied with by all concerned. For close monitoring of electoral events commencing from nomination to the declaration of results, Observers play a critical role. **They should always clearly and firmly bear in mind the fact that they are only the eyes and ears (and not the mouth piece) of the Commission. Their inputs/observations are**

**confidential and solely for the use of the Commission and not for any other agency including the media. They must not, therefore, interact with or respond to the queries of the Press even after the elections are over. It is clarified that while the formal report/ input/ observation sent by the Observers are meant for the use of the Commission, it does not mean that the Observers will not discuss with the DPEO, PRO, and officials of the Commission about their observation on various aspects of election management in order to facilitate mid-course corrections. It should be kept in mind that the objective of the deputation of the Observer is not to find fault but to facilitate field administration in ensuring a free and fair poll. However, the Observers shall not mark copies of their formal reports to the Commission to any other person including DPEO/ PRO.**

#### BRIEFING MEETINGS

4. It is compulsory for every Observer to attend briefing sessions which he or she has been allotted by the Commission. The Briefing Meeting must be attended without exception whether the Officer is allocated any Constituency or put on Reserve List.

#### REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION

5. Commission does not entertain any request for exemption from duty as an Observer or for substitution by another officer, if it is directly submitted by the concerned officer or officers.

6. **Any request from the Officers appointed as Observers or from their Controlling Officers for exemption from the duty of Observer shall be made only to the Sponsoring Authority ie. the Secretary, P & A.R Department, Government of West Bengal. On receipt of specific recommendation of the sponsoring authority suggesting alternate officer of equivalent or higher rank, Commission may consider such requests within the limitations of the tight schedule of the elections.**

#### **REQUESTS FOR LEAVE**

7. No officer appointed as Observer or kept in Reserve List shall proceed on any kind of leave without prior approval of the Commission till the completion of the election in the constituency (ies) in which he/she has been appointed as Observer or for which he/she has been kept in reserve.

#### **FACILITIES FOR OBSERVERS**

8. The Commission will separately issue instructions regarding the arrangements for boarding, lodging, transport and security of the Observers. These will be arranged by the District Panchayat Election Officers/the Panchayat Returning Officers concerned. The arrangements will cover the escort officer, driver, the accompanying security personnel and secretarial assistance. Arrangements for the full team will be made by the DPEO/PRO so that no time is lost on this account by the Observer in making the best and optimum use of the time available during the election

process. These expenses will be met out of contingencies for election by the DPEO/PRO.

9. It is clarified that under no circumstances the Observers can travel to the constituency with their own Steno/ Private Secretary/ Peon from their place of posting.

#### **TRAVEL PLANS**

10. The Observers are expected to draw their visit programme sufficiently in advance and intimate them to their Panchayat Returning Officer and District Panchayat Election Officer concerned so as to enable them to make necessary arrangements for their reception, security, transport, stay and publicity of their visit.
11. The District Panchayat Election Officer/ Panchayat Returning Officer will make arrangements for, the accommodation, security, transport, telecommunication with the Commission, guide/escort and secretarial assistance. **The DPEO shall also rent a mobile set for him/her.**
12. The P.R.O. will provide facilities of Fax( with STD) to the Observers at the Circuit House or Guest House where they will set up base.

#### **FAMILIES NOT ALLOWED**

13. **The candidates, political parties and the voting public have high expectations from the Observers,**

as the **direct representatives** of the **Commission** in the **constituencies**.

14. The Observers shall not put excessive and unreasonable demands on the District Administration regarding his/her personal needs and shall not fall prey to temptations of lavish hospitality.
15. It is made very clear that the Commission will not only withdraw the observers from the election duty on receiving any input about the Observers carrying their family members with them during the course of election duty but will also initiate disciplinary action against the Observer in this regard. The explanation that the Observer was making his own arrangement for the stay of the family members; was making payments for their food and stay, etc., will not justify their carrying their family members during the course of election duty. **The Commission does not approve the presence of any family member with the Observer while the Observer is on election duty.** The Commission has **zero tolerance** on this issue.

#### **OBSERVERS ARE OBSERVED**

16. As the Commission monitors the micro-details of the election management, the role of the election observer has also undergone tremendous changes in recent times. It is relevant to keep it in mind that the Observers are observed by all stake holders. The growing presence of the media even in the remote areas has added a new dimension to the role of Observers. The visibility of Observer has increased. The

political parties also keenly watch the performance and behavior of Observers. The Field Level Functionaries, Civil Society Organisations and even the common citizens have been giving inputs about the Observers' performance and about their behavior to the State Election Commission directly or indirectly.

17. The role of the Observer needs to be understood very clearly. The Observer is expected to keenly observe each and every development in the constituency and bring that to the notice of the Commission. Whenever he observes a development which requires intervention and remedial measures on the part of the district administration/ election machinery, he shall bring that to the notice of DPEO/ PRO in a proper manner. The observer is not expected to do any executive role. He is not expected to interfere in the day-to-day administration. A good efficient Observer can always achieve the objective of ensuring a free and fair poll without himself getting involved in taking measures which are beyond his jurisdiction.

#### **VISITS**

18. The Observers shall visit as per schedule given to them. Before commencing their field visits, the Observers are expected to ensure that their tour programme has been duly published by the District Panchayat Election Officer and that their place of stay, phone number, etc., have been reasonably notified among the candidates and the political parties by the Panchayat Returning Officer. They will mention in their tour programme that they will be available for

personal meets during a fixed period of the day at their base. It could be any time for an hour or so, convenient to the general public who may wish to approach the observers. The P.R.O. and the DPEO will do the needful in this matter.

19. The Observers are expected to visit the constituencies allotted to them strictly as per the schedule given to them. In case of any change in the schedule, instructions will be given separately by the Commission to the Observers concerned – either at the time of briefing or by means of a written or oral communication either directly or through PRO / DPEO as appropriate.

#### **POINTS TO BE COVERED BY OBSERVERS DURING THEIR VISITS**

20. The **initial stage of this visit** will cover the receipt of nomination papers and its **scrutiny** and familiarization with the Block/Constituency assigned to the Observer. They will check the polling stations that have been set up, especially the new ones and temporary booths if any, the training of polling personnel, the general principles of randomization of polling personnel and the data base prepared by the district and its conformity to the instructions of the Commission, the dissemination of information on declarations filed by the candidates as part of the nomination papers and the overall preparedness for the elections in the area allotted to them, etc.
21. The Observers should specially take a closer look at

the arrangements at the polling stations, the availability of Ballot Boxes, polling materials like forms, etc., arrangements for setting up of Sector Offices, the observance of model code of conduct in particular, misuse of Government personnel, Government vehicles, Government buildings, defacement of property, etc. Special attention will be needed to the observance of the statutory restriction of stoppage of campaign 48 hours before the close of the poll, closure of the liquor shops 48 hours before the close of the poll and the polling personnel to commence polling in all the polling stations in the constituency as scheduled. Random questions can be asked to the polling personnel at polling stations to check their understanding of the procedure for the conduct of poll, such as, filling up of a Presiding Officer's diary, the use of indelible ink, the procedure for tendered vote, the requirement for statutory and non-statutory papers being separately sealed, etc.

The Commission has decided that the indelible ink will be applied on voter's left hand forefinger as a line from the top end of the nail to the bottom of the first joint of the left forefinger.

22. The Observers shall closely see whether the counting staff are properly geared up for the work, the arrangements for counting at the Counting Hall including security and law and order are satisfactory, facilities for the press are properly organized, the counting personnel have been adequately trained in the procedure for counting.

23. The action taken for issue of passes to counting agents and their presence during the counting should also be observed, as also the manner in which objections are heard and finalized by Panchayat Returning Officer before declaring the outcome of counting including formal speaking orders being passed by him to ensure that there is absolute objectivity, fairness and transparency in the counting process as well.
24. The Observers shall also ensure that after the nomination process and after the declaration of results, the PRO / DPEO uploads names of contesting candidates, their declarations filed with the nomination papers and results of counting to the Commission's website.

#### **TASKS, INPUTS AND DELIVERABLES OF VISITS**

##### **1. VISIT(S) COVERING NOMINATION AND POLLING PROCESS:**

###### **Objective**

25. During the visit the focus of the Observer would be on: familiarization with the area of the constituency, the election machinery in district, the candidates, the political parties and the electorate; assessment of preparations for conduct of poll and counting; observing the process of nominations and scrutiny; observing the campaign and the compliance of the model code of conduct as well as supplementary instructions issued by the Commission from time to time; and a general watch on the complete election process.

#### **Information Folder from P.R.O.**

26. The Panchayat Returning Officers will hand over to each Observer a folder containing a map of the constituency, a list of Polling Stations as made available to the political parties, Telephone Numbers at a glance, a booklet containing the plan for managing the elections in the district/ Block(s) and such other documents as are essential.

#### **Inspection of Polling Stations and Field Visits**

27. The Observers, will inspect as many polling stations as is possible during the first few days of their visit and verify them. The selection of Polling Stations should be done on a random basis and the areas of the constituencies covered should serve as a reasonable sample, but should include some temporary polling booths. During these field visits, the Observers should talk to the electors and assess the level of confidence of the electorate in the electoral process and machinery. They should particularly talk to the electors belonging to the weaker sections and women electors for making such an assessment. They should enquire to find out about the voting arrangements in the previous elections. They may suggest to the PROs any corrective action as may be required to increase the level of confidence of the electors as per their own assessment.

#### **Meeting with Political Parties, Observance of Model Code of Conduct**

28. The P.R.O. will convene a formal meeting of the political parties and candidates with the Observers.

The broad features of the Model Code of Conduct and the general instructions of the Commission in this regard should be comprehensively touched upon during this discussion. A general consensus should be evolved for making the election in the area free and fair. The participants should be impressed upon to co-operate with the election machinery and the district administration to ensure a violence free, clean and peaceful election with fullest participation of the electorate. During this meeting, the general arrangements on how to reach the Observers with complaints or information should be spelt out. The fixed time during which the Observers will be available in the base station and its location should be clearly indicated during this meeting.

29. Observers should thoroughly familiarize themselves with the Model Code so that they can participate in a meaningful and effective manner in the above mentioned discussion.

#### **Review of Law & Order and Security Situation**

30. The Observers should take stock of the law & order and security situation. An in-depth review of the assessment of sensitive polling stations should be made.
31. The Observers should also make a quick assessment of any inter-personal issues which might impede in the smooth conduct of election in the constituency. If there is any major problem on this account, this should be brought to the notice of DPEO and to the

Commission by telephonic contact.

#### **RANDOMISATION FOR GROUPING OF POLLING PARTIES / PERSONNEL**

32. One of the important tasks for the Observers during the first visit would be to oversee the planning made by the PRO and the District Panchayat Election Officer for the proper selection and deployment of polling personnel, in accordance with the Commission's guidelines regarding use of randomisation techniques for selection and deployment of polling personnel.
33. **Randomisation of Polling Personnel is compulsory with no exception whatsoever**
34. Where computer facilities are not available, printed random number tables can be used for this purpose.
35. It is of utmost importance that the database containing the names of Polling Personnel and every essential information required is prepared sufficiently in advance. This will help in complying with the norms prescribed by the Commission regarding the formation of groups and deployment of polling personnel. During this visit the Observer will ensure that the paper work has been completed and the PRO and the DPEO are in control of the situation.

#### **NOMINATION**

36. The Observers should familiarize themselves with the nomination forms which are now in force. Apart from

it, the candidates have to furnish a declaration on their criminal antecedents, assets and liabilities, the assets and liabilities of their spouse and dependants and their educational qualifications. Furnishing of these declarations is mandatory. **However, the Panchayat Returning Officer is not empowered to reject a nomination paper merely on the grounds that the declaration is incomplete or incorrect.**

37. The information so furnished by each candidate in the declaration shall be disseminated by the respective Panchayat Returning Officers by displaying a copy of the declaration on the Notice Board of his office, office of the concerned G.P. having jurisdiction over the constituency from which the candidate is seeking election and also by making copies thereof freely available to all other candidates. If the rival candidates furnish information to the contrary, by means of a duly sworn affidavit, then such affidavit shall also be disseminated along with declaration of the candidate in the manner stated above.
38. The declarations of contesting candidates have to be scanned at the PRO/DPEO level and then they will put them on State Election Commission's website for wide dissemination.
39. The Observers are expected to ensure that the instructions of the Commission are on display and dissemination of the declarations is done properly and in time. Apart from these standard instructions, separate instructions may be issued from time to time and the Observers should obtain copies of these from

DPEO/PRO and ensure their compliance.

### **SCRUTINY**

40. The Observers are expected to be present during the Scrutiny of Nominations. However, before the scrutiny, it is important that the Observers verify from the Panchayat Returning Officers the latest instructions and orders of the Commission which are specially relevant for the Panchayat Returning Officers in discharging their statutory functions for scrutinizing the nominations.
41. Immediately after the process of withdrawal of nominations is completed, the process of Allotment of Symbols is taken up by the Panchayat Returning Officers. The Observers will be available for observing this important activity.
42. As soon as the allotment of symbols is completed a List of Contesting Candidates and Symbols allotted to them is published. A Statutory Report in Form 7 is prepared by the Panchayat Returning Officer. This is a very important document and it is of utmost importance that copies of the same reach the District Panchayat Election Officer at the earliest. The DPEO will consolidate this and send it through Special Messenger to the Commission.

### **COMPLIANCE OF MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT**

43. During this visit, an important focus of the Observers will be on the campaign and the compliance of the

Model Code of Conduct as well as Supplementary Instructions issued by the Commission from time to time, by all concerned. The latter include the political parties, including the ruling party, the candidates, the election machinery as well as the administrative machinery.

44. All instructions of the Commission have to be followed by the contesting candidates, administration, police and others in so far as the application of the Model Code of Conduct is concerned. Any breach should be brought to the notice of the PRO / DPEO/ Commission immediately.

#### **ENSURING PEACEFUL AND VIOLENCE-FREE POLLS**

45. The Commission is particularly concerned that the campaign period remains free from violence. The spirit of a healthy contest and a level-playing field is crucial and this should be respected and adopted by all concerned. Political parties and candidates should, therefore, cooperate with the district administration to keep the contest free from tension and violence. The district and police administration has an important role in ensuring this. The Observers will particularly keep close coordination with and monitor the functioning of the district administration and observe the activities of the political parties and candidates from this angle and oversee that no undue advantage is taken by any party in whatsoever manner during the campaign. They should also be watchful to ensure that the level of confidence of the electors in general but more particularly of the weaker sections,

disadvantaged sections and women are not eroded or compromised in any manner during the campaign period or during the polling.

#### **PREPAREDNESS TO CONDUCT POLL**

46. A further review of the preparedness to conduct poll should also be taken up with the PRO and other key authorities.

#### **PREPARATIONS FOR COUNTING**

47. The Observers will also take stock of the preparations made by the PROs for counting of votes. They may visit the strong room and the counting centres during the course of their tour in the field. They should also check on the training given to the counting staff.
48. Detailed instructions regarding counting arrangements have been issued by the Commission. The Observers may confirm that the PROs are well conversant with these procedures and that the preparations for counting have been made accordingly.

#### **PREPARATIONS FOR DATE OF POLL**

49. Electoral malpractice or vitiation of poll process by way of booth capturing, rigging, creating an atmosphere of fear and panic among electorate and effectively preventing them from casting their votes are of major concern. The methods adopted by unscrupulous elements vary from constituency to constituency. The Observers are expected to

familiarize themselves about the past experience in the area as well as identify the specific areas prone to such mischief.

### **VISIT TO DISPERSAL CENTRES**

50. The Observers will visit the dispersal centre for dispatching the polling parties to different locations and make a brief report on the manner in which the operations are being conducted. They will particularly see that the random formation of polling parties is being truly and correctly implemented.

### **DATE OF POLL**

51. On the date of poll Observers should tour the maximum number of booths as is physically possible during the hours of polling. They should, therefore, plan to carry some packed food so that no time is lost on this account. The presence of the Observers in the field on the date of poll and their visits to polling stations should be an effective deterrent against electoral malpractice and vitiation of the poll process. The Observers will ensure prompt and effective action on this score by interacting with the District Administration constantly through telephone, wireless, etc.
52. One of the most important responsibilities of the Observers is to oversee the actual poll which takes place on the Date of Poll as approved by the Commission. Since the polling starts very early in the morning, the Observers should plan to start their work from a convenient point sufficiently before the start of the poll.

53. They should look for any unusual activity or lack of activity around a polling station to sense whether any electoral malpractice has vitiated or is likely to vitiate free and fair polls. **Absence of women in the queues may be an indicator for something unusual.** As mentioned earlier the Observers should in advance study and acquaint themselves with the pattern of electoral malpractices in the past elections in different areas. On this basis, they can look for tell tale signs of any irregularities. They should constantly remain in touch with the PRO, APRO, Sector Magistrate and other officers on duty to get feed back as well to convey anything specific for corrective action to be taken by the concerned authorities on the basis of what the Observers have actually seen in the field.
54. They should also go inside the Polling Stations and check for the progress of polling, the compliance of prescribed procedures by the polling officials in conducting the poll, the presence of polling agents, the updating of entries in the Presiding Officer's Diary and such other matter that needs verification..

### **RE-POLL AND ADJOURNED POLL CASES**

55. The report of the Observer is the most important input for the Commission for taking a decision on ordering re-polls. The Observers should, therefore, be vigilant and alert about any incident or activity which might or might have vitiated the poll process so that they can send a specific report to the Commission on this matter. Sometimes, information received from other sources are referred back to the Observers on

telephone by the Secretary/ Joint Secretary of the Commission and the Observers are expected to make such enquiries and verification as are possible within the constraints of the time available. After this and after taking into consideration any other input that may be available with the Commission, re-poll would be ordered in such of the polling stations as is considered necessary and appropriate by the Commission.

56. It is of utmost importance that the re-poll itself is not vitiated in any manner. The Observers will give specific comprehensive report on the actual conduct of the re-poll.

#### **END OF POLL REPORT**

57. The Observers will send a brief report at the end of the poll highlighting any specific point which needs to be brought to the notice of the Commission. In case of re-polls, the Observers shall send a comprehensive report at the end of re-poll.

#### **VISIT (S) COVERING COUNTING PROCESS :**

##### **COUNTING**

58. **The statutory provisions** regarding Observers specifically focus on their role during the counting process and **empower them to stop counting and to direct the PRO /APRO not to declare the result under certain circumstances.** The Statute thus enjoins a special responsibility on the part of the Observer to

oversee and supervise the counting process and also to provide a direct immediate communication to the Commission. **The Commission accordingly expects that the Observers will have a key role in the superintendence of the counting process.**

59. The Commission is particularly concerned that the entire counting arrangement should be orderly and well-structured. The Commission attaches great importance to the actual counting is being done in such a manner that it is not only smooth and efficient but more importantly transparent and correct. Reasonable opportunity is to be afforded, as per existing instructions of the Commission, to let the counting agents of the candidates get a clear view of the counting process in each counting table. There should be no room for any doubt.

60. The Commission has issued detailed orders regarding the arrangements for counting. These include selection of counting centres and for managing the counting process.

61. The Observers will also ensure that as soon as the final results and the winning candidates are announced and all the relevant papers are signed by the PRO the final detailed result is transmitted to the Commission's website.

62. **The Commission expects at least four reports from the Observers:**

- I. **The first, after the finalization of the list of contesting candidates;**

- II. **The second, there days prior to the date of poll**
- III. **The third, after the polling is over.**
- IV. **After completion of counting and declaration of results.**

63. All the reports must reach the Commission at the earliest. It is now common to send these by Fax. **The submission by Faxes should be invariably followed by sending a post copy.** In addition, the Observers shall keep the Commission informed of the developments during the date of poll/ counting through spot reports through wireless/fax/telephone or any other fast means of communication.
64. The Commission has prescribed sample format for the reports of the Observers. While situations and perceptions in regard to maintaining the purity of the elections can materially differ from constituency to constituency there can be some common points of interest also, viz.
- i) That the conduct of election machinery in the field is free from bias and impartial and is not influenced by any local extra-constitutional authorities.
  - ii) That the complaints received from the candidates and their agents are being suitably and with due and deliberate speed disposed of by the election machinery.
  - iii) That the location of polling stations the composition of the polling parties, the deployment of police forces, the preventive action of the local

law and order machinery to curb poll violence and intimidation and counting of votes, are being carried out in a manner which minimizes vitiation of the process to conduct peaceful, fair and free elections.

- iv) That the local election machinery is taking all practicable steps to ensure the observance of the Model Code of Conduct.
65. **All reports of the Observers shall be sent to the Commission in closed envelopes. Observers shall not, under any circumstances, share the contents of the reports or any information therein with any one repeat any one except the Commission** They are specifically forbidden from compromising the confidentiality of their Reports. PROs and DPEOs are not authorized to access these reports. Utmost care should be taken while faxing or mailing the report to ensure that no unauthorized person can access such reports.
66. Oral communication with the Commission or urgent matters which cannot be kept pending till the written report through telephone or through any other fast and reliable means, are sent during the field visit will be welcome. **All telephonic communication should preferably be held with the concerned authority and must be followed by a written message in confirmation.**

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

67. Under no circumstances, should the Observers

communicate or talk with the Press.

68. The Observers should not call meetings of the political parties independently. They should, however, attend the meetings of the political parties called by the Panchayat Returning Officer.
69. The District Panchayat Election Officers will ensure that the place of the stay, the phone number, the dates of visit of the Observers are duly publicized in the constituencies. The Observers shall check this. They have to make themselves easily accessible to whoever wants to meet them with an election-related complaint or information.
70. The State Election Commission will take all practicable steps to ensure that the Observers are protected against victimisation due to their reports.
71. The Observers will indicate the constituencies / Blocks in which he/ she has been appointed as Observer in all communications to the Commission. This will facilitate easy identification and quick procession of the communication.
72. Each report, should be clearly mentioned as the first report, second report or third report.
73. These are intended only as General Guidelines and changes, if any, to suit each constituency will be indicated at the time of briefing or by written instructions subsequently.

## **DOs AND DON'Ts FOR OBSERVERS**

### **Dos**

1. Attend the briefing sessions fixed by the Commission.
2. Notify your correct office and residential addresses and telephone/fax/mobile numbers by filling the Personal Information Sheet at the Registration Desk. Also please notify changes, if any, from time to time, to the Secretary of the State concerned.
3. Draw up your tour programmes sufficiently in advance and intimate the same to the Commission, District Panchayat Election Officer and the Panchayat Returning Officer of the constituency concerned.
4. Note carefully the number of visits, duration of visits and the period of visits as directed by the Commission and strictly act according to this.
5. Ensure that your tour programme is duly publicised within the constituencies allotted to you.
6. Identify areas / polling stations which might require closer attention.
7. Monitor that stocks of all election materials are actually available in adequate quantities.
8. Make an independent assessment of the Law and Order situation in general.
9. Make a random check of as many polling stations as possible and verify them as to their suitability for conduct of poll.

10. Monitor instances of violation of Model Code, ban on transfer etc.
11. Attend some training seasons.
12. Ensure that ballot boxes & polling material in adequate numbers have been provided for each polling station.
13. Monitor the deployment of Security Personnel to have maximum impact.
14. Send a report to the Commission within 24 hours of your return to the headquarters after the visit. In addition, also please send spot report (s) from time to time as considered necessary.
15. Bring any development that merits immediate remedial action or attention of the Commission, to District Panchayat Election Officer's and Panchayat Returning Officers / Commission's notice without any loss of time. Such information should not be deferred till the regular reports are submitted.
16. Send your report in a closed envelope addressed to the Secretary, State Election Commission.
17. Attend meetings of the political parties called by the District Panchayat Election Officers / Panchayat Returning Officers.
18. Check whether adequate Security measures have been put in place for vulnerable polling stations.
19. Speak to the local people and check posters, pamphlets etc. to arrive at an independent assessment.
20. Obtain prior permission of the Commission before

leaving the headquarters.

21. Maintain proper conduct in the Constituency as Observers are keenly observed.

#### **DONT's**

1. Do not ask for any exemption from the briefing session.
2. Do not travel to the Constituency with your families.
3. Do not talk to the Press.
4. Do not call meetings of the political parties on your own.
5. Do not make any unreasonable demands to the District Panchayat Election Officer / Panchayat Returning Officer regarding accommodation, vehicles, security etc.
6. Do not leave your headquarters once you have been allotted specific constituencies without the prior written permission of the Commission.
7. Do not plan for departure from the Constituency on the day next to the day of poll or on the day of counting.
8. Do not defer submitting reports of any development which requires immediate remedial action till submission of your regular report(s), but bring it to the Commission's notice by fastest means.

# WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTION COMMISSION

## First report of Observer-after finalisation of the Lists of Contesting Candidates.

### OBSERVER REPORT-1

POLL PREPAREDNESS REPORT (please indicate  
done or not done\*)

Name of the Observer	
Block	
District	

1.	Is there any critical vacancy? If yes, give details	Yes	No	
2.	Electoral roll published and handed over to the political Parties?	Yes	No	
3.	Affidavits uploaded on the Commission's website, put on notice boards and published?	Yes	No	
	Arrangements for	Done	Not Done	
	(a) Ballot Boxes	Done	Not Done	
4.	(b) Ballot Paper printing	Done	Not Done	
	(c) Providing ED ballot papers to police/security Personnel/ drivers/cleaners/helpers	Done	Not Done	
	(d) Delivery of ED Ballot Papers to Voters on Election Duty	Done	Not Done	
5.	Polling personnel list preparation Dates of second randomization	Done	Not Done	

## 6. Training

	Day	Month	Year
First Training Date			
Second Training Date			

7.	Adequate preventive steps taken for maintenance of Law & Order	Yes	No
8.	Vulnerability mapping done and critical polling stations and clusters identified	Yes	No
9.	Arrangements for despatch, receiving and storage room	Done	Not done
10.	Arrangements for model code of conduct implementation	Done	Not done
	Enforcement squads formed	Yes	No
	System for receiving complaints and monitoring of disposal of complaints done	Yes	No
11.	Communication plan done	Yes	No
12.	Establishment of control rooms done	Yes	No
	a) whether physical verification of all Polling Stations have been done	Yes	No
	b) whether arrangements made to keep watch on wall posters, walking and hoarding on public buildings	Yes	No
13.	c) Arrangement for covering major public meetings, rallies etc.	Yes	No
	d) Arrangement for keeping watch on unauthorized vehicles used for election campaign and confiscation thereof	Yes	No
14.	Whether a plan has been formalized for flow of communication between -		
(i)	authority granting permission for deploying vehicles for electioneering and the Designated Officer	Yes	No

(ii)	Excise authorities granting liquor license and the Designated Officer to have upto date information on stock position and disbursals	Yes	No
(iii)	Authorities enforcing model code of conduct and the Designated Officer to keep track of wall posters and holdings on public buildings, videography of meetings, rallies, etc.	Yes	No
(iv)	Police authorities who confiscate unauthorized vehicles which are illegally used for electioneering and the Designated Officer.	Yes	No
15.	Number of polling stations visited and their suitability		

Overall observation - (Indicate any arrangements not made, requiring improvements, overall coordination assessment) Indicate areas of concern at least three in order or priority

Date :

Signature of the Observer

Place :

## WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTION COMMISSION

**The observer has to send the second report, 3 days before the poll**

### OBSERVER REPORT-2

Name of the Observer	
Block	
District	

1.	Number of complaints received for violation of MCC		
2.	Number of notices issued to persons violating MCC		
3.	Number inquired and action taken		
4.	Any pending for inquiry and corrective action		
5.	Reasons for pendency		
6.	Vulnerable villages, critical clusters identified	Yes	No
7.	Police plan done	Yes	No
8.	Allotted force has reached the district	Yes	No
9.	Authenticated copy of electoral roll has been prepared and supplied to candidate	Yes	No
10.	Whether the communication plans has been put in place	Yes	No
11.	Whether all arrangements for Conduct Poll such as formation of Polling parties, reserve polling personnel, providing ballot boxes and other polling materials procured in adequate numbers.	Yes	No
12.	Whether Magistrates and Sector officers appointed for all polling areas	Yes	No

Any special input:-

Date :

Signature of the Observer

Place :

## WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTION COMMISSION

The observer has to send the third report a day after the polling is over/after the scrutiny of Register of Voters (17A) and other documents.

### OBSERVER REPORT-3

Name of the Observer	
Block	
District	

1.	Total number of polling stations			
2.	Number of polling stations where there were no polling agents (indicate the specific number of polling stations)			
3.	Number of polling stations where there was only one election agent was present (indicate the specific number of polling stations)			
4.	Number of polling stations where poll was interrupted for more than two hours or delayed in starting (indicate the specific number of polling stations)			
5.	Number of polling stations where the interrupted poll could not continue (indicate the specific number of polling stations)			
6.	Number of Additional Ballot Boxes provided after the start of poll (indicate the specific number of polling stations)			
7.	Strong room sealing time and date	Time	Date	
	All Presiding officers diaries and other documents received	Yes	No	
	Total voting	Total number of electors	Number voted	Percentage
	Male			
	Female			
	Total			

Events relating to law and order, bogus/false voting, unauthorized entry, electoral roll, EPIC have to be listed clearly with name and event

Any need for repoll

If yes, then the details of reasons

Fixing the responsibility for the reason leading to repoll

Date :

Signature of the Observer

Place :

# WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTION COMMISSION

Observer fourth report has to be sent after the counting

## OBSERVER REPORT-4

Name of the Observer	
Block	
District	

1.	Total Number of ED ballot papers issued	
2.	Total Number of ED ballot papers received	
3.	Valid ED Ballot papers	
4.	Invalid ED ballot papers	

Candidate wise break up of votes polled :

S. No.	Name of the candidate	Number of votes polled	Party Affiliation

Election result declared Yes / No

## DEPARTURE REPORT

Date of reporting by the observer in the district for election duty :

Date of departure of observer :

Was there any break taken by the observer from the duty :

If Yes, give details :

Was there late reporting to duty :

If Yes, by how much time. :

Any other point / suggestion

On the election process :

Date :

Signature of the Observer

Place :