

LOK SABHA ELECTION,2009

BEST PRACTICES FOLLOWED IN TRIPURA

1. SMS BASED SYSTEM FOR MONITORING OF POLLING STATIONS:-

On the 23rd April 2009, the day of the poll in the two Parliamentary Constituencies in Tripura the SMS based system of monitoring the polling stations and the votes cast was used.

With the communication arrangements that were made, it was possible to have a SMS based system to monitor the progress of votes cast. Through the SMS based reporting system, the information on the number of votes cast was sent at two hourly intervals from the polling stations. The Booth Level Officers (BLOs) assigned to the polling stations were trained to send formatted SMS messages on various poll related activities. The format and syntax of the SMS messages were suitably designed so that the message received by the system through the GSM modem could be automatically interpreted and up-dated into the database and made available to the CEO, ROs and AROs for monitoring the Polling Stations on line.

Because of lack of mobile connectivity and inaccurate reporting through the SMS by some of the communication officials, the information with regard to some of the polling stations could not be received through SMS and for such cases the Communication teams at the Sub Divisional and the District level obtained the information by other means and kept the information updated. It helped to get an idea of the average voting percentage and the progress of poll and could be directly monitored by the AROs, ROs and the CEO and in case there was any problem the same could be addressed.

The system has the complete information with regard to the votes cast in each polling station and report on voter turn out can be generated Polling Station wise, Assembly Segment wise and Parliamentary Constituency wise and this can be seen at <http://tsu.trp.nic.in/pollstat/>

(also linked from www.ceotripura.nic.in) using username: ceotripura and password:ceo_123.

The SMS based system was further improved for the Bye-election to the 8-Town Bardowali Assembly Constituency held in Tripura on the 28th May, 2009 and the information required as per ECI letter No. 404/OBS/2009/DPS dated 4th May,2009 regarding the poll process, tracking of the dispersal of the polling parties, arrival at the polling stations, conduct of mock poll, deployment of CPF, Video Camera, micro-observer etc. was collected by SMS through the BLOs and report generated as soon as the poll was over and was used during Register 17A scrutiny. The information regarding the poll process and two hourly progress of poll at the polling stations collected through SMS could be accessed online and may be seen at <http://tsu.trp.nic.in/pollstat2> (also linked from www.ceotripura.nic.in) using the username: eci and password: eci123@ .

With every two hourly record of the votes cast it can provide an additional check for the votes recorded in the Presiding Officers Diary. The system can be adopted by the other States and additional features such as EVM details, photograph of voters taken by digital camera at the polling booth can be added to the system to have a complete record of all the activities at the Polling Station and therefore be helpful in conduct of free, fair and peaceful polling even at remote polling stations.

