

PRESS- NOTE

PROHIBITION OF MISUSE OF SHORT MESSAGE SERVICES

April 7, 2009

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has issued strict order for prohibition of misuse of text messages during the election process.

Considering the increasing percolation of mobile telephone services, the ECI has decided to clamp down on the objectionable SMSs.

The SMSs, which are violating the provision of election law, model code of conduct and the Commission's directions issued in this behalf, the police authorities shall be advertising special mobile numbers in which the receiver of such SMS can forward it along with the number of the sender of objectionable SMS.

The police authorities shall initiate appropriate enquiry and trace back the original sender such SMS and take appropriate action under the relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code, representation of the People Act, 1951, the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.

Bulk SMS's transmitted during the campaign period as an alternative electioneering, as and when noticed by returning Officer or District Election Officer shall be brought to the notice of Chief Electoral Officer, who in turn, shall find out the cost involved as the case may be.

The election commission has also prohibited transmitting bulk SMSs of political nature during the period of 48 hours prior to the ending of polls.