

## Multi-Member Election Commission

There was a long standing demand to make the EC a multi-member body. The Supreme Court in the *S.S. Dhanoo versus Union of India* case had observed: "When an institution like the Election Commission is entrusted with vital functions and is armed with exclusive and uncontrolled powers to execute them, it is both necessary and desirable that the powers are not exercised by one individual, however wise he may be. It also conforms to the tenets of democratic rule." With the 1993 Constitutional Amendment Act, the Election Commission was made a multi-member body.

The EC was made a multi-member body by the government in the wake of certain controversial decisions taken by the Chief Election Commissioner, T. N. Seshan. The act provided that the decision of three members shall, as far as possible, be unanimous. "But in case of difference of opinion among 3 members, the matter shall be decided according to the opinion of the majority." It was a significant step to remove a one-man show in such an important function as that of conducting elections. A single member EC would have no longer 'unbridled' powers. In view of the large size of the country and the huge electors, the EC also made a proposal for the appointment of Regional Commissions to different zones to reduce its burden.