सत्यमेव जयते

Compendium of Instructions, 2024 VOL-III

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

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ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

"No Voter to be left behind"

Document No.324.6.EPS:COI:020:2024

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Compendium of Instructions
Volume-III

A. MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

B. USE OF VEHICLE

C. POLLING AGENT

D. MEDIA

E. SVEEP

DISCLAIMER: *The Compendium of Instruction-2024 is a compilation of Instructions issued by the Commission time-to-time. Compilation has been prepared for the convenience of the user. In case of any discrepancy, original instruction of the Commission shall prevail.*

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Volume –III

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INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 1

By Speed Post/E-mail

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 437/6/INST/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2024(MCC ENFORCEMENT) **Dated: 2nd January, 2024**

To

(i) The Chief Secretaries
of all States and Union Territories.

(ii) The Chief Electoral Officers
of all States and Union Territories.

Subject:- Enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct – Do's and Don'ts – regarding

Reference: Commission's instructions:

(i) No. 437/6/2009-CC&BE, dated 05.03.2009
(ii) No. 437/6/16/2004, dated 09.03.2004
(iii) No. 464/INST/2007-PLN-I, dated 07.01.07
(iv) No. 437/6/INST/2008-CC&BE, dated 19.03.2009
(v) No. 437/6/INST-2008/CC&BE, dated 01.04.2009
(vi) No. 437/6/INST/2011-CC&BE, dated 05.04.2011
(vii) No. 437/6/2011/CC&BE, dated 11.10.2011
(viii) No. 437/6/1/INST/2013-CC&BE, dated 13.11.2013
(ix) No. 437/6/INST/2014/CC&BE, dated 14.03.2014
(x) No. 437/6/INST/2014/CC&BE, dated 20.03.2014
(xi) No. 437/6/ES023/94 MCS, dated 04.10.1994
(xii) No. 437/6/93 J.S. II, dated 31.12.1993
(xiii) No. 434/6/PLN-II, dated 22.03.1996
(xiv) No. 437/6/2002-PLN-III, dated 25.01.2002
(xv) No. 437/6/23/2004 PLN.III, dated 11.03.2004
(xvi) No. 437/6/INST/2009-CC&BE, dated 09.03.2009
(xvii) No. 437/6/2009/CC&BE, dated 24.03.2009
(xviii) No. 437/6/INST-2009/CC&BE, dated 26.04.2009
(xix) No. 437/6/INST-2012/CC&BE, dated 21.01.2012
(xx) No. 437/6/1/2014/CC&BE, dated 29.03.2014
(xxi) No. 437/6/2007(INST)-PLN-III, dated 21.11.2007
(xxii) No. 437/6/2004-PLN III, dated 30.12.2004
(xxiii) No. 437/6/INST/2014/CC&BE, dated 18.03.2014
(xxiv) No. 437/6/38/2004-PLN-III, dated 06.04.2004
(xxv) No. 437/6/2006-PLN-III (Vol. II) dated: 01.04.2006, and
(xxvi) No. 437/6/98-PLN-III dated 08.01.1998

Madam/Sir,

Model Code of Conduct comes into operation right from the time and day, the Election Commission issues the schedule of elections. The Commission has issued various instructions and clarifications on observance of code of conduct from time to time vide letters listed above. Following are the consolidated instructions in supersession of all the existing instructions in reference:

I. Applicability of Model Code of Conduct:

A. Duration of Application

(i) In the case of general elections to the Lok Sabha/State Legislative Assemblies, the Model Code of Conduct which comes into force on the date of announcement of election schedule by the Election Commission, will cease to be in operation once the Due Constitution Notification constituting the new House(s) concerned is issued by the Commission, irrespective of the date(s) before which the election is to be completed as mentioned in the election notifications.

(ii) In the case of bye-elections to the Lok Sabha/State Legislative Assemblies, the Model Code of Conduct will cease to be in operation immediately after the formal declaration of the result of the bye-election by the Returning Officer concerned.

(iii) In the case of all elections to the Legislative Councils of States, where the Model Code of Conduct is made applicable, it shall cease to be in operation on the declaration of result of election by the Returning Officer concerned.

B. Extent of Application

(i) At the time of a general election to the House of the People or to a State Legislative Assembly, Model Code of Conduct applies throughout India or, the state concerned, as the case may be.

(ii) At the time of a bye-election, MCC would be enforced in the entire district(s) covering the Constituency going for bye-election(s). However, if a constituency is comprised in State Capital/ Metropolitan Cities/Municipal Corporations, then Model Code of Conduct would be applicable in the area of concerned Constituency only and for any district in which Corporation/ Metropolitan City/ Municipal Corporation is located, MCC would be enforced in the particular Assembly Constituency Segment only and not in the whole of the district. For the district(s) with number of polling stations less than 10% of the total polling stations of the constituency concerned, the instructions would be applicable only in the area under jurisdiction of those polling stations. However, it must be ensured that the other instructions regarding deployment of staff, etc., are strictly observed in all districts irrespective of number of polling stations situated therein.

C. Who are Covered under Model Code of Conduct

(i) The provisions of Model Code of Conduct apply to all organizations/committees, corporations/ commissions etc., funded wholly or partially by the Central Govt. or any State Govt. like the Commonwealth Games Organizing Committee, DDA, Electricity Regulatory Commissions, Jal Boards, Transport Corporations, any other development authority etc.

(ii) The general provisions of Model Code of Conduct are applicable to all persons, including those who intend to be a candidate in an election, from the date of announcement of elections by the Commission. Election expenditure by the candidate shall be counted from the date he files his

nomination papers. However, it is clarified that expenditure on material which may have been produced before filing of nomination if used after filing of nomination by the candidate shall be included in the election expenditure of the candidate.

II. Welfare schemes and governmental works

1. Announcement of new projects or programmes or concessions or financial grants in any form or promises thereof or laying of foundation stones, etc., which have the effect of influencing the voters in favour of the party in power is prohibited.

2. These restrictions apply equally to new schemes and also ongoing schemes. But it does not mean that in the case of national, regional and State utility schemes, which have already been brought up to the stage of completion, their utilization or functioning in public interest should be stopped or delayed. The coming into force of the Model Code of Conduct cannot be given as an excuse for not commissioning such schemes or allowing them to remain idle. At the same time, it should be ensured that the commissioning of such schemes is done by civil authority and without associating political functionaries and without any fanfare or ceremonies whatever, so that no impression is given or created that such commissioning has been done with a view to influencing the electorate in favour of the ruling party. If in doubt, a clarification should be obtained from Chief Electoral Officer/Election Commission of India.

3. It is further clarified that simply because a budget provision has been made for any particular scheme or the scheme has been sanctioned earlier or a reference to the scheme was made in the address of the Governor or the budget speech of the Minister it does not automatically mean that such schemes can be announced or inaugurated or otherwise taken up after the announcement of elections while the Model Code of conduct is in operation, since they will clearly be intended to influence the voters. Such actions if undertaken will be considered a violation of the model code of conduct.

4. No fresh sanctions for governmental schemes should be made. Review by political executive (Ministers etc.) and processing of beneficiary-oriented schemes, even if ongoing, should be stopped till completion of elections. No fresh release of funds on welfare schemes and works should be made or contract for works awarded in any part of the state where election is in progress without prior permission of the Commission. This includes works under the Member of Parliament (including Rajya Sabha members) Local Area Development fund or MLAs / MLCs Local Area Development Fund, if any such scheme is in operation in the state.

5. No work shall start in respect of which even if work orders have been issued before the model code came into effect, if the work has actually not started in the field. These works can start only after the completion of election process. However, if a work has actually started, that can continue.

6. There shall be no bar to the release of payments for completed work(s) subject to the full satisfaction of the concerned officials.

7. Commission does not refuse approval for schemes undertaken for tackling emergencies or unforeseen calamities like providing relief to people suffering from drought, floods, pestilences, other natural calamities or welfare measures for the aged, infirm etc. In these matters, however, prior approval of the Commission should be taken and all ostentatious functions should be strictly

avoided and no impression should be given or allowed to be created that such welfare measures or relief and rehabilitation works are being undertaken by the Government in office so as to influence the electors in favour of the party in power which at the same time will adversely affect the prospects of the other parties.

8. The names of MPs/MLAs etc. appearing on moving vehicles like water tanks, ambulances etc. funded under MPLAD schemes should be covered suitably during the election period as such vehicles moving from one place to another may be considered as a form of election campaign in favour of the MP/MLA etc. concerned.

9. All Model Code of Conduct related directions shall be issued only by the Commission. The Cabinet Secretariat or any other government agency should reiterate and disseminate the directions of the Commission for compliance.

10. RBI may continue to take decisions unhindered on monetary policy issues.

11. After the Model Code of Conduct comes into effect, the Ministry of Finance will need to take prior approval of the Commission on any policy announcements, fiscal measures, taxation related issues and such other financial relief. Similarly, other Ministries/Departments will need to take prior approval of the Commission before announcing any relief/benefit.

12. All Government of India references to the Election Commission of India shall be made preferably through the Cabinet Secretariat. In so far as references from State Governments are concerned, the same shall be made to the Election Commission of India through the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of the state concerned.

13. The following types of existing works can be continued by the government agencies without reference to the Election Commission after the Model Code of Conduct comes into force:

    a. Work-Projects that have actually started on the ground after obtaining all necessary sanctions;

    b. Beneficiary-projects where specific beneficiaries by name have been identified before coming of the Model Code of Conduct into force;

    c. Registered beneficiaries of MGNREGA may be covered under existing projects. New projects under MGNREGA that may be mandated under the provisions of the Act may be taken up only if it is for the already registered beneficiaries and the project is already listed in the approved and sanctioned shelf of projects for which funds are also already earmarked.

14. There shall be no bar to release of funds for the completed portion of any work subject to observance of laid down procedures and concurrence of finance department.

15. The following type of new works (whether beneficiary or work oriented) that fulfill all the following conditions before Model Code of Conduct comes into effect, can be taken up under intimation to the Commission-

    a. Full funding has been tied up.

    b. Administrative, technical and financial sanctions have been obtained

    c. Tender has been floated, evaluated and awarded and

d. There is contractual obligation to start and end the work within a given time frame and failing which there is an obligation to impose penalty on the contractor.

e. In case of any of the above conditions not being met in such cases prior approval of the Commission shall be sought and obtained.

16. Global tenders already floated, can be evaluated and finalized where any time limits are specified for such purpose.

17. Tenders other than global tenders, that are already floated may be evaluated but not finalized without prior approval of the Commission. If they are not already floated, they shall not be floated without prior approval of the Commission.

18. Commission invariably takes a humanitarian view on the work that are necessitated due to man-made or natural calamities.

a. Ex-gratia payments and gratuitous relief in the aftermath of a disaster can be given directly to the persons affected at the current rates/scales of assistance presently in force, under intimation to the Commission. No change in the extant and prescribed scales of payments, however, shall be made in the existing rates/scales without prior permission of the Commission.

b. Payment directly to the hospitals from CM's/PM's Relief Fund, in lieu of direct cash payment to individual patients (beneficiaries) will be permissible without reference to the Commission.

c. Emergent relief works and measures that are aimed to mitigate the hardships, directly and solely, of the persons affected in a disaster may be taken up under intimation to the Commission.

d. However, new works that may be necessitated by way of preventive measures to mitigate the likely effects of natural disasters like repair of embankments, water channels etc. can be taken up only with prior permission of the Commission.

e. Also, an area shall not be declared drought/flood affected or any such calamity affected without prior approval of the Commission. The extent of area already declared to be calamity-affected cannot be expanded without prior approval of the Commission.

f. Similarly, any selective assistance to a group of persons from the PM's or the CM's Relief Fund will require prior approval of the Commission.

19. The medical assistance under PM's/CM's Relief Fund for various treatment/operation, like heart surgery, kidney transplantation, cancer treatment etc. which are time bound in nature and can't be postponed without endangering patient's health may be released, provided selection of beneficiaries/patients are done by the concerned Government Officials/Head of the concerned Private Hospitals.

20. The process required for the decision on the power tariff may be continued by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission. However, tariff award shall be made only on the completion of poll in the relevant State, i.e. after the poll date/dates in that State.

21. The following type of activities will require prior permission of the Commission:

a. New works and project cannot be taken up from discretionary funds of whatever nature. Discretionary fund, in this context, includes funds, which are provided for in the budget in a generic manner and for which no identified and sanctioned project exists prior to Model Code of Conduct coming into effect.

b. Proposals for revival of sick PSUs, governmental takeover of enterprises etc. (or any policy decision on similar lines) cannot be taken up.

c. Fresh auctions of liquor vends etc. cannot be held even if the annual auction time falls within the Model Code of Conduct period. Where necessary, the government should make interim arrangements as provided in their respective laws.

d. Area of operation of any existing project/scheme/programme cannot be extended or expanded.

e. No land allocation shall be made by the government to any entity, whether individual or an enterprise.

f. Signing a MOU or an agreement where the government is a party will also require prior clearance by the Commission.

22. Regular recruitment/appointment or promotion through the UPSC, State Public Service Commissions or the Staff Selection Commission or any other statutory authority can continue. Recruitments through non-statutory bodies will require prior clearance of the Commission.

23. While starting any work (including any relief work) or developmental activity no formal function shall be held involving any political functionary. As a matter of good practice, normal functions and publicity even with the presence of official functionaries should be kept to the minimum.

24. Where works are to be undertaken or functions are to be held in fulfillment of international commitments, prior concurrence of the Commission shall be taken.

III. Implementation of drought relief work

The Commission has been receiving various representations from the State Governments regarding the modalities of implementing relief work in areas which have been declared as "drought affected" in the respective States. The Commission after taking into account all relevant factors, directs the following:-

(i) The drought relief works by way of immediate relief measures to be taken up by the State Governments shall only be in the areas which have been declared as "drought affected" within the parameters laid down under the guidelines for managing of Calamity Relief Fund by the Central Government. No new areas are to be added to the existing list of such "drought affected" areas after the announcement of elections. Addition of any additional area/village will only be subject to obtaining prior concurrence of the Commission after following the due procedure laid down for seeking assistance under the Calamity Relief Fund/ National Relief Fund laid down by the Government of India for operation of such funds.

(ii) To provide immediate relief in the areas declared as drought affected, the Commission has provisionally approved the following measures: -

(a) Provision of drinking water by way of water tankers.

(b) Digging of bore-wells as well as dug-wells in scarcity areas on account of drying of the existing bore-wells/dug-wells.

(c) Provision of rice/wheat at prescribed rates for distribution among the destitute without support and who cannot go for work as per mechanism already prescribed in the Calamity Relief Fund Scheme.

(d) Provision of fodder for cattle.

(e) New works on wage employment (Food for work etc.) where such existing works have been completed.

(iii) No minister of the Government or a political functionary will be associated in the management of the drought relief operations in any capacity, supervisory or otherwise, during period of operation of the model code of conduct.

(iv) The entire relief operation would be taken up by the Division, District and Taluka/sub-District Administration without involving elected representatives and/or non-officials at any level.

IV. On Transfers and posting of officials

(1) No officer connected directly with elections shall be allowed to continue in the present district (revenue district) of posting:-

(i) if she/he is posted in her/his home district.

(ii) if she/he has completed three years in that district during last four (4) years or would be completing 3 years. The three years period shall be reckoned backwards from last day of the month of end of the term of Legislative Assembly of the State. While calculating the period of three years, promotion to a post within the district is to be counted.

(2) Applicability

2.1 District Officers: - These instructions shall cover not only officers appointed for specific election duties like DEOs, Dy. DEOs, RO/AROs, EROs/AEROs, officers appointed as nodal officers of any specific election works but also district officers like ADMs, SDMs, Dy. Collector/Joint Collector, Tehsildar, Block Development Officers or any other officer of equal rank directly deployed for election works.

2.2 Officers other than District Officers: - These instructions shall also cover the officers deputed in Municipal Corporations and Development Authorities, etc.

2.3 Police Officers: - These instructions shall be applicable to the police department officers such as Range ADGs/IGs, DIGs, Commandants of State Armed Police, SSPs, SPs, Addl. SPs, Sub-Divisional Head of Police, SHOs, Inspectors, Sub-Inspector, RIs / Sergeant Majors or equivalent ranks, who are responsible for security arrangement or deployment of police forces in the

district at election time. The police officials who are posted in functional departments like computerization, special branch, training, etc. are not covered under these instructions. Following shall be followed:

(i) The Police Sub-Inspectors and above should not be posted in their home district.

(ii) If a Police Sub-Inspector has completed or would be completing a tenure of 3 years out of four years on or before the cutoff date in a police sub-division, then he should be transferred out to a police sub-division which does not fall in the same AC. If that is not possible due to small size of district, then he/she should be transferred out of the district.

2.4 Prohibition and Excise Officers: - Further, these instructions shall also be applicable to the officers of the Prohibition and Excise Department of the State of the rank of Sub-Inspector and above.

(3) Ban on transfer/posting of election related officers-

During the period of implementation of Model Code of Conduct, there shall be a total ban on the transfer of all officers/officials connected with the conduct of the election. These include but are not restricted to: -

(i) The Chief Electoral Officer and Additional/Joint/Deputy Chief Electoral Officers;

(ii) Divisional Commissioners;

(iii) The District Election Officers, Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers and other Revenue Officers connected with the Conduct of Elections;

(iv) Officers of the Police Department connected with the management of elections like range IGs and DIGs, Senior Superintendents of Police and Superintendents of Police, Sub-divisional level Police Officers like Deputy Superintendents of Police and other Police officers who are deputed to the Commission under section 28A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951;

(v) Other officers drafted for election works like sector and zonal officers, Transport cell, EVM cell, Poll material procurement & distribution cell, Training cell, Printing Cell etc. Senior officers, who have a role in the management of election in the State, are also covered by this direction.

(vi) The transfer orders issued in respect of the above categories of officers prior to the date of announcement but not implemented till the time when model code came into effect should not be given effect to without obtaining specific permission from the Commission.

(vii) This ban shall be effective till the completion of the election process.

(viii) In those cases where transfer of an officer is considered necessary on account of administrative exigencies, the State Government may, with full justification, approach the Commission for prior clearance.

(ix) No appointments or promotions in Government / Public Undertakings shall be made during this period, without prior clearance of the Commission.

V. On Misuse of Official Machinery

1. Official vehicles cannot be used for electioneering work. 'Official Vehicles' include all vehicles belonging to

- o Central and State Government,
- o Public Sector Undertakings of the Central and State Government,
- o Joint Sector Undertakings of Central and State Government,
- o Local Bodies, Municipal Corporations, Municipalities,
- o Marketing Boards (by whatever name known),
- o Cooperative Societies,
- o Autonomous District Councils, or
- o Any other body in which public funds, howsoever small a portion of the total, are invested, and also
- o Vehicles belonging to the Ministry of Defence and the Central Police Organizations under the Ministry of Home Affairs and State Governments.

2. It is open for a minister of the Union or State to make private visits using his or her private vehicle(s). For such private visits, the official personal staff of the ministers shall not accompany them. However, if a Minister is traveling in some emergent situation, out of his HQ on purely official business, which cannot be avoided in public interest, then a letter certifying to this effect should be sent from the Secretary concerned of the Department to the Chief Secretary of the state where the Minister intends to visit, with a copy to the Commission. During such tour, the Chief Secretary may provide the Minister with Government vehicle and accommodation and other usual courtesies for his official trip. However, immediately preceding or during or in continuation of such an official tour, no minister can carry out or combine any election campaign or political activity. The Commission will keep watch on such arrangements in due consultation with its Chief Electoral Officer.

3. No Minister, whether of union or state, will summon any election related officer of the constituency or the State, for any official discussions during the period of elections commencing with the announcement of the elections. Only exception will be when a Minister, in his capacity as in charge of the department concerned, or a Chief Minister undertakes an official visit to a constituency, in connection with failure of law and order or a natural calamity or any such emergency which requires personal presence of such Ministers/Chief Ministers for the specific purpose of supervising review/salvage/relief and such like purpose.

4. Ministers are entitled to use their official vehicles only for commuting from their official residence to their office for official work provided that such commuting is not combined with any electioneering or any political activity.

5. Ministers, whether of the Union or State, shall not combine in any manner their official tours with election work.

6. Whether on a private or official visit, no pilot car(s) or car(s) with beacon lights of any colour or car(s) affixed with sirens of any kind shall be used by any political functionary, even if the State administration has granted him a security cover requiring presence of armed guards to accompany him on such visit. This is applicable whether the vehicle is government owned or private owned.

7. Any official who meets the Minister on his private visit to the constituency where elections are being held shall be guilty of misconduct under the relevant service rules; and if he happens to be an official mentioned in Section 129 (1) of the Representation of People Act, 1951, he shall also be additionally considered to have violated the statutory provisions of that Section and liable to penal action provided there-under.

8. During the period when Model Code of Conduct is in force in connection with General Election to the Lok Sabha/State Legislative Assemblies, all references of Ministers, Politicians or Political Parties available on Central/State Government's official website highlighting their achievements but eulogizing the same as personal achievements of Politicians/Ministers shall be taken off/purged off. During bye-elections, these instructions may be confined to only those Politicians/Ministers, etc. who themselves become candidates at such bye-elections.

VI. Display of the photographs, calendars etc. of national leaders and prominent personalities in the government offices/premises, etc.

1. The photographs and images of the political functionaries, who deep influence on the minds of electors and many of whom are still active in public life and may even be contesting the current general elections, should not be displayed in the government buildings and premises as that would have the effect of disturbing the level playing field vis-à-vis the political functionaries of other parties and candidates.

2. While the photographs of Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, Ministers and other political functionaries should not be displayed, this instruction, however, is not applicable with regard to the images of national leaders, poets, and prominent historical personalities of the past, and the President of India and the Governors. In case of any doubt in this regard regarding removal of any photograph or images, the issue may be referred to the Chief Electoral Officer of the State/Union Territory concerned before taking action in the matter.

VII. Meeting of Local Bodies – Panchayats, Municipalities, etc.

1. A Writ Petition No. 4766(W) of 2011 (Shri Sujit Roy Vs the State of West Bengal & Others) was filed before the Hon'ble High Court of Calcutta seeking a declaration that no meeting of the Councilors of Kulti Municipality should be held during the period when Model Code of Conduct is in force.

2. The Hon'ble High Court, vide its order dated 11.03.2011, dismissed this Petition with the observation that the question would be for the Commission to decide and further directed that copy of the order be communicated to the Commission. Accordingly, a copy of the order of the Hon'ble High Court was referred to the Commission.

3. The Commission, after considering the matter, decided that there would be no objection on its part to the holding of the statutory meetings, which cannot be avoided by the Municipalities and Panchayats and other local bodies, subject to the condition that no new policy decisions and announcements shall be made in such meetings till the elections are over and only the decisions

related to routine day-to-day management issues, and on emergency issues may be taken in such meetings.

VIII. Briefing of CM/HM by police officers

1. The security briefings of Chief Minister or the Home Minister when considered essential should be undertaken by the Home Secretary or the Chief Secretary, who in turn should be briefed by the police agencies. In case where police agency's/official's presence is considered essential, the Chief Secretary/Home Secretary may require the police agency/official to be present in such briefings.

2. The spirit behind the Commission's instruction is to safeguard a free, fair and transparent election and provide a level playing field to all political parties as also to ensure that there is no scope for public complaints that the political executive/government of the day is misusing the government machinery for political purpose. These instructions should, however, not be construed as any restriction to any **security related activity** of the law-and-order enforcing agencies. Therefore, in situations where it is so warranted, the law-and-order enforcing agencies should not take the plea of ECI instructions for any inaction or delay in action to be taken by them. Whatever is required under the circumstances, including informing the political executives by the DGP and taking directions from them, should be undertaken by the police agencies in the bonafide performance of their duty or exercise of their authority.

IX. Misuse of free travel passes

1. Instances have come to the notice of the Commission where the free passes issued by the Railways and the Government Airlines have been misused to travel to and from the States/ constituencies/ areas having the elections. Issue of such passes enabled the holders to travel round the country free of cost and participate in election related activities and thus attempt to vitiate the holding of free and fair elections.

2. The Commission has decided that such activities should be stopped. Accordingly, the Commission has directed that in future no golden passes, free passes, concessional passes or any other types of passes be issued or allowed to be used for travel to and from the states/constituencies/area going to the polls during general elections/bye-elections. This ban will apply from the date of announcement of the general election/bye-election till the declaration of results.

3. No one shall be exempted from the ambit of the aforesaid ban. The only exception will be in the case of tour operators and travel agents.

X. Permission for allotment of liquor vends/finalization of wholesale liquors sale /major auctions relating to Tendu leaves, etc.

1. Each State has enacted a separated State Excise Laws governing the allotment of liquor vends. From the references received in the Commission, it is observed that varying models exist in different States for the sale of liquor through the venders. In some States/UTs the State Govt. Itself sells liquor through the outlets of the State-run corporation/undertaking. In some other States, supplies liquor to the retail venders who are selected on the basis of applications by the Excise Department. There are also States where liquor contracts are awarded either at the State level or at the district level directly to the liquor vendors through the system of tenders or by draw of lots on the price fixed by the Govt.

2. The contracts are annually awarded for the financial year. Some of the State Excise laws contain an enabling provision for extension by the Government of the contract for some period beyond the close of the financial year, whereas in some others, no such enabling provision is made in the existing law.

3. In view of the above position, the Commission has directed that the following procedure may be followed in the matter of allotment of liquor vends, during the period of operation of the Model Code of Conduct –

   (i) Where the extant Excise Laws of a State empower the State Govt. or the authorities thereunder to make an interim arrangement beyond the current financial year, pending arrangement, such interim arrangement may be made with the concerned contractor/vendors on the existing terms and conditions.

   (ii) Where no such enabling provision is available in the existing Excise Laws, the State Govt. may go ahead with the normal practice followed in the previous years strictly in accordance with the existing laws for the grant of new licenses/contracts for the ensuing financial year.

4. In all cases where major auctions etc. are to be held relating to matters such as tendu leaves and other such cases, they should be put off till the last date of completion of elections in the concerned areas and the State Government should make interim arrangements where unavoidably necessary.

XI. Presentation of Budgets

1. The Commission would like to point out the prevalent convention that is followed in most of the States is that instead of presenting full budget, only a vote on account is taken for 3-4 months in cases where a General Election is imminent or when the process of General Election has been announced and the Model Code of Conduct is in operation. It contributes to a healthy democratic practice.

2. The Commission, in deference to the State Legislatures, and having regard to such a convention and propriety, would not like to lay down a precept or prescribe a course of action. However, it would advise, in the case of States that are going for Assembly polls, that a vote on account should be taken.

XII. Waiving off of recoveries and bad debts by State Government financial institutions during election period.

1. State Government institutions of several types are nowadays engaged in commercial and banking activities. The Supreme Court has observed in Kirpal Singh Vs Uttam Singh (AIR 1986 SC 300) that 'Nowadays the activities of the State are so manifold and prolific that the State has been forced, in the interests of better management and administration and in order to further the Directive Principles of State Policy, to set up various Corporations which are but mere instrumentalities of the State'. The Supreme Court has further observed in Satrucharla Chandrasekhar Vs Vyricherla Pradeep Kumar (AIR 1992 SC 1959) that the incorporation of a body corporate may suggest that it is independent of the government, but that would not be conclusive of the fact, as, sometimes, the form may be that of body incorporate independent of the government, but, in substance, it may just be an alter ego of the government. Accordingly, several State Government financial institutions are undertaking commercial and banking activities, like, granting loans, rescheduling

the recovery of loans and, in many cases, writing off bad loans or defaulted loans. Whereas this normal activity of such State Government institutions may go on during non-election period these activities when the election process is underway, sometimes, get vitiated and are looked upon with suspicion by political parties, candidates and general public. It cannot be gainsaid that the party in power which wields considerable influence over the government of the day and which is also contesting the elections to get back to power, can get bad or defaulted loans to be written off, giving rise to allegations that the person or the business house whose loan is being written off makes contributions to the party, offers to help them in their election campaign. There could also be the other abuse of a flurry of loaning activities of a populist nature aimed to garner votes, which would, in the long run, affect the health of the loaning institution itself.

2. Keeping the above ground position and the realities of the situation in view, the Commission is of the considered view that all financial institutions funded, partly or wholly, by the State Governments should not take recourse to writing off loans advanced to any individual, company, firm, etc. during the period when the Model Code of Conduct is in force, without the prior concurrence of the Commission. Similarly, the financial limits that these institutions have to adhere to while granting or extending loans should not be enhanced by issuing of loans indiscriminately to beneficiaries when the Model Code of Conduct is in force.

XIII. Ban on Video Conferencing

No video conferencing should take place between the Chief Ministers of the States, Ministers and other political functionaries of the Union and State Governments and the officials individually or collectively, after the announcement of elections and from the date from which Model Code of Conduct comes into force in a state or the constituency.

However, in the immediate aftermath of any calamity of significant scale/magnitude, if video-conferencing is considered essential, then Chief Minister or Minister concerned may hold one video-conferencing with the officials concerned subject to the following conditions: -

(i) The CEO of the State shall be approached by the Department concerned and approval of the CEO should be obtained before holding the VC. For any subsequent VC, permission from the Commission shall be obtained;

(ii) Only the Collector/District Magistrate and senior officials in charge of the relief in connection with the natural calamity of the area concerned alone shall be called to attend the video-conferencing;

(iii) No issue other than rescue/relief and other aspects connected to the calamity shall be discussed in the VC;

(iv) No publicity whatsoever shall be given for the VC, either before or after the VC,

(v) The VC should not be open to media;

(vi) An Audio/Video recording of the proceedings of the VC shall be maintained by the Department concerned and a copy of the same given to the CEO;

(vii) No announcement or promise of any grant, assistance in cash or kind, and no statement of political nature or announcement capable of influencing the electors shall be made through the VC.

(viii) A representative of the CEO will be present during the VC.

XIV. Use of Rest Houses, Dak Bungalows and other Government accommodation

Rest houses, Dak bungalows or other Government accommodation shall not be monopolized by the party in power or its candidates and such accommodation shall be allowed to be used by other parties and candidates in a fair manner but no party or candidate shall use or be allowed to use such accommodation (including premises appertaining thereto) as a campaign office or for holding any public meeting for the purposes of election propaganda.

It shall be ensured that no functionary can use the Circuit House, Dak bungalow to set up campaign office as the Circuit Houses/Dak bungalows are only for temporary stay (boarding and lodging) during transit of such functionaries.

The Commission has further directed that:

(i) Even casual meeting by Members of political parties inside the premises of the Government owned guesthouse etc. are not permitted and any violation of this shall be deemed to be a violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

(ii) Only the vehicle carrying the person allotted accommodation in the guest house and not more than two other vehicles, if used by the person, will be permitted inside the compound of the Guest House,

(iii) Rooms should not be made available for more than 48 hours to any single individual.

However, 48 hours before the close of poll in any particular area, there will be freeze on such allocations till completion of poll or re-poll. The Commission directs that the Chief Electoral Officers will oversee strict and impartial implementation of these guidelines.

Accommodation in Government Guest houses / Rest houses or Guest Houses of Public Sector Undertakings of the Centre or State Government in the States (or the districts) where elections have been announced or are taking place can be given to the political functionaries who are provided security by the State in Z scale or above or equivalent by various State Governments under provisions of their laws, on equitable basis. This shall be subject to condition that such accommodation is not already allotted or occupied by election related officials or observers. Such political functionaries shall not carry out any political activity while staying in the Government Guest Houses / Rest Houses or Guest Houses of Public Sector Undertakings as mentioned above.

XV. Restrictions on use of Government Guest Houses, Bhawans and State Sadans located at Delhi for holding of political parties meeting regarding election purposes

The Commission has taken note of utilization of various State Guest Houses, Bhawans and Sadans at Delhi for election related activities by some of the political parties. These include holding of party meeting press conference and consultations. The Commission after taking all factors into account has decided that no part of such premises is utilized for any political activities of the kind already mentioned. The Resident Commissioners and Liaison Officers of all States and Union Territories at Delhi are hereby instructed to ensure that no violation in this regard is made.

There are, however, no restrictions for use of Bhawans for genuine requirements for accommodation of officers and other visitors including political functionaries purely for purposes of their official tour to Delhi. The Resident/Liaison Commissioners are also advised that allocation of rooms should be done in a fair and equitable manner and that it would be improper to provide entire floors and large blocks for exclusive use and for extended period by political functionaries and parties.

XVI. Other Do's and Don'ts for the guidance of the Candidates and Political Parties to be observed from the announcement of an election and until the completion of process of election

The Commission has drawn up a list of 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' to be followed by candidates and political parties after the announcement of elections and till the completion of the process of elections. The Commission has directed that this be given the widest possible publicity and its contents brought to the knowledge of all candidates and political parties including in the official language of the State.

It must be clearly brought to the notice of candidates and political parties that the list of Dos' and Donts' is only illustrative and not exhaustive and is not intended to substitute or modify other detailed directions/ instructions on the above subjects, which must be strictly observed and followed.

DO'S'

(1) On-going programmes, which actually started in the field before the announcement of elections may continue.

(2) Relief and rehabilitation measures to the people in areas affected by floods, drought, pestilence, and other natural calamities, can commence and continue.

(3) Grant of cash or medical facilities to terminally or critically ill persons can continue with appropriate approvals.

(4) Public places like maidans must be available impartially to all parties/contesting candidates for holding election meetings. So also, use of helipads must be available impartially to all parties/contesting candidates, to ensure a level playing field.

(5) Criticism of other political parties and candidates should relate to their policies, programme, past record and work.

(6) The right of every individual for peaceful and undisturbed home life should be fully safeguarded.

(7) The local police authorities should be fully informed of the venue and time of the proposed meetings well in time and all necessary permissions taken.

(8) If there are any restrictive or prohibitory orders in force in the place of the proposed meeting, they shall be fully respected. Exemption, if necessary, must be applied for and obtained well in time.

(9) Permission must be obtained for the use of loudspeakers or any other such facilities for the proposed meetings.

(10) The assistance of the police should be obtained in dealing with persons disturbing meetings or otherwise creating disorder.

(11) The time and place of the starting of any procession, the route to be followed and the time and place

at which the procession will terminate should be settled in advance and advance permissions obtained from the police authorities.

(12) The existence of any restrictive orders in force in the localities through which the procession has to pass should be ascertained and fully complied with. So also, all traffic regulations and other restrictions.

(13) The passage of the procession must be without hindrance to traffic.

(14) Cooperation should be extended to all election officials at all times to ensure peaceful and orderly poll.

(15) All Workers must display badges or identity cards.

(16) Unofficial identity slips issued to voters shall be on plain (white) paper and not contain any symbol, name of the candidate or name of the party.

(17) Restrictions on plying of vehicles during the campaign period and on poll day shall be fully obeyed.

(18) (Except voters, candidates and their election/polling agents), only persons with a specific valid authority letter from the Election Commission can enter any polling booth. No functionary however highly placed (e.g. Chief Minister, Minister, MP or MLA etc.) is exempt from this condition.

(19) Any complaint or problem regarding the conduct of elections shall be brought to the notice of the observer appointed by the Commission/Returning Officer/Zonal/Sector Magistrate/Election Commission of India.

(20) Directions/orders/instructions of the Election Commission, the Returning Officer, and the District Election Officer shall be obeyed in all matters related to various aspects of election.

(21) Do leave the constituency after the campaign period is over if you are not a voter or a candidate or candidate's election agent from that constituency.

DON'Ts

(1) Any and all advertisements at the cost of the public exchequer regarding achievements of the party/ Government in power is prohibited.

(2) No Minister shall enter any polling station or the place of counting, unless he or she is a candidate or as a voter only for voting.

(3) Official work should not at all be mixed with campaigning/electioneering.

(4) No inducement, financial or otherwise, shall be offered to the voter.

(5) Caste/communal feelings of the electors shall not be appealed to.

(6) No activity, which may aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension between different castes, communities or religious or linguistic groups shall be attempted.

(7) No aspect of the private life, not connected with the public activities, of the leaders or workers of other parties shall be permitted to be criticized.

(8) Other parties or their workers shall not be criticized based on unverified allegations or on distortions.

(9) Temples, Mosques, Churches, Gurudwaras or any place of worship shall not be used as places for election propaganda, including speeches, posters, music etc., on electioneering.

(10) Activities which are corrupt practices or electoral offences such as bribery, undue influence, intimidation of voters, personation, canvassing within 100 meters of a polling station, holding of public meetings during the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for the close of the poll and conveyance of voters to and from polling stations are prohibited.

(11) Demonstrations or picketing before the houses of individuals by way of protesting against their opinion or activities shall not be resorted to.

(12) Subject to the local laws, no one can make use of any individual's land, building, compound wall, vehicles etc. for erecting flag staffs, putting up banners, pasting notices or writing slogans etc. without specific permission of the owner (to be shown to and deposited with the District Election Officer).

(13) No disturbances shall be created in public meetings or processions organized by other political parties or candidates.

(14) Processions along places at which another party is holding meetings shall not be undertaken.

(15) Processionists shall not carry any articles, which are capable of being misused as missiles or weapons.

(16) Posters issued by other parties and candidates shall not be removed or defaced.

(17) Posters, flags, symbols or any other propaganda material shall not be displayed in the place being used on the day of poll for distribution of identity slips or near polling booths.

(18) Loudspeakers whether static or mounted on moving vehicles shall not be used either before 6 a.m. or after 10p.m. and without the prior written permission of the authorities concerned.

(19) Loudspeakers shall also not be used at public meetings and processions without the prior written permission of the authorities concerned. Normally, such meetings/processions will not be allowed to continue beyond 10.00 p.m. in the night and will be further subject to the local laws, local perceptions of the security arrangements of the area and other relevant considerations like weather conditions, festival season, examination period, etc.

(20) No liquor should be distributed during elections.

(21) On the day of the poll, no person who has been assessed to be having a security threat and therefore given official security shall enter the vicinity of a polling station premise (within 100 meters) with his security personnel. Further, on the day of the poll no such person shall move around in a constituency with his security personnel. If the person provided with official security happens to be a voter also, then he or she shall restrict his / her movement - accompanied by security personnel, to voting only.

(22) No person who has been assessed to be having a security threat and therefore provided official security or who has private security guards for himself, shall be appointed as an election agent or polling agent or counting agent.

NOTE: The above list of Do's' and Don'ts' is only illustrative and not exhaustive and is not intended to substitute any other detailed orders, directions/instructions on the above subjects, which must be strictly observed and followed.

The clarification/approval of the Election Commission of India/Chief Electoral Officer of your state should be obtained in case of doubt.

The above instructions of the Commission shall be brought to notice of all concerned for strict compliance. Please acknowledge the receipt of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

(NARENDRA N. BUTOLIA)

SR. PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 2

By Speed Post/E-mail

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 437/6/INST/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2024 (BYE ELECTIONS) **Dated: 2nd January, 2024**

To

(i) The Chief Secretaries
of all States and Union Territories.

(ii) The Chief Electoral Officers
of all States and Union Territories.

Subject:- Model Code of Conduct – Instruction- Bye-election of Parliamentary/Assembly Constituency – Regarding.

Reference: Commission's instructions:

(i) No. 437/6/INST/2016-CCS dated 29.06.2017
(ii) No. 437/6/1/ECI/INST/FUNCT/MCC/2017, dated 18.01.2018
(iii) No. 437/6/MISC/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2019, dated 14.10.2019
(iv) No. 437/6/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2021, dated 21.10.2021
(v) No. 437/6/INST-2013/CC&BE, dated 25.06.2013
(vi) No. 437/6/1/2014 dated 16.08.2014, and
(vii) No. 437/6/1/2016-CCS, dated 21.04.2016

Madam/Sir,

The Commission has issued various instructions from time to time on observance of code of conduct during bye-elections. Following are the consolidated instructions in supersession of all the instructions issued vide letters listed above:

I. Enforcement of MCC

(i) In case the constituency is comprised in State Capital/Metropolitan Cities/Municipal Corporations, then aforesaid instructions would be applicable in the area of concerned Constituency only.
(ii) In case of a district in which Corporation/ Metro/Municipal Corporation is located, MCC would be enforced in the particular Assembly Constituency Segment only and not in the whole of the district.
(iii) In all other cases the MCC would be enforced in the entire district(s) covering the Constituency going for bye-election(s).
(iv) The above instructions shall cover the district in which all or maximum number of polling stations of constituency going to bye-election are located. For the district(s) with number of polling stations less than 10% of the total polling stations of the constituency concerned, the instructions would be applicable only in the area under jurisdiction of those polling stations. However, it must be ensured that the other instructions regarding deployment of staff, etc., are strictly observed in all districts irrespective of number of polling stations situated therein.
(v) Further, it is advised that the political parties not to organize any political activities directly related to the bye-elections even in the areas adjoining the district/constituency where the bye-election

are being held. The District Election Officers concerned will ensure that the MCC instructions and COVID guidelines relating to the norms of social distancing are followed in the districts adjoining to the poll going district/constituency.

II. Publishing of Advertisements

The release /publishing of advertisements during the period of operation of Model Code of Conduct in connection with bye-elections would be regulated as follows: -

(i) Advertisement of general nature in connection with specific occasions of importance may be published. However, such publishing shall be restricted to the dates coinciding with the special occasion only, and it shall not be published on other days. The advertisement shall not bear photographs of any Minister and other political functionaries.

(ii) No advertisement having any specific/pointed reference or connotation to the areas covered by the bye-election constituencies shall be released/published on any date during the period.
Further, it is clarified that no new schemes should be advertised in the districts where the bye-election is being conducted.

III. Tours of Ministers

During bye elections from any constituencies, either Parliamentary or Assemblies, the following restrictions are applicable with regard to the tours of Ministers:-

(i) All Ministers, whether Central or State, shall not combine in any manner their official tours with election work after the announcement of the bye elections. All and any visits to the district(s) where bye-election is being held and where Model Code of Conduct is, therefore, in force, have to be completely private in nature.

(ii) In case where a Minister travelling on official work transits through the district(s) where the bye-election is being held en route to any other district on official visit, he shall not attend to any political work.

(iii) No official of any rank of the district(s) where the bye-election is being held, shall be called to attend any meeting by any Minister in any district, that is to say, even in other districts where election is not being held.
Further, it is clarified that the Ministers or persons holding equivalent rank/status cannot combine their official visit with campaign by en routing their journey for official purposes to a place where MCC is not in force and then proceeding from that place to the area where MCC is in force for election campaign. In case it is done, the entire journey expense shall be treated as election expense.

IV. Transfer/Posting of Officers

1. Bye-election to the Assembly Constituency (ies):

(1.1) The Commission, in supersession of existing instructions, has decided that no officer connected directly with the conduct of Bye-elections, should be allowed to continue in the present posting within the Assembly Constituency limits:-

(i) If she/he is posted in her/his home Assembly Constituency limit;

(ii) If she/he has completed three years during last four years or would be completing 3 years on or before the last day of the sixth month from the date of occurrence of the casual vacancy.

Such officers shall be shifted out of the Assembly Constituency limit.

(1.2) (i) These instructions cover Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers of the Assembly Constituencies going for bye-elections. These instructions will also cover other officers viz. Deputy/Assistant Collectors, Sub-Divisional Magistrates, Tehsildars and Block Development Officer located in Assembly Constituency Limits.

It is however clarified that officers appointed as Sector Officers, though directly involved in election duties will not be covered under these instructions as their duties are such that they are deployed in field duties where their knowledge of the area/terrain is crucial to their effective performance. The CEO, DEO and RO should, however, keep a close watch on them during the election period to ensure that their performance is strictly impartial.

(ii) As far as officer in the Police Department are concerned, these instructions shall be applicable to the Sub-Divisional Head of Police, Dy.SPs/Circle Officers, Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors or equivalent ranks posted in the field within the Assembly Constituency Limit.

(1.3) The Commission further desires that a detailed review may, therefore, be undertaken and all such officers be posted out of their home constituency limits where they have completed or will complete, on the aforesaid date, tenure of three years in Assembly constituency limit out of the last four years, immediately. Further, for uniformity, the three year period shall be reckoned backwards from the last day of the sixth month as mentioned at para 2.1(ii).

2. Bye-election to the Parliamentary Constituency (ies):

(2.1) The Commission, in supersession of existing instructions, has decided that no officer connected directly with the conduct of Bye-elections to the Parliamentary Constituency going for bye-election, shall be allowed to continue in the present posting within the Parliamentary Constituency limits:-

(i) If she/he is posted in her/his home district within the concerned Constituency limit;

(ii) If she/he has completed three years during last four years or would be completing 3 years on or before the last day of the sixth month from the date of occurrence of the casual vacancy.

Such officers shall be shifted out of the Parliamentary Constituency limit.

(2.2) (i) These instructions cover Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers of the Parliamentary Constituencies going for bye-elections. These instructions will cover only that District Election Officer who is designated as Returning Officer. Other District Election Officers, even if some part of their district falls in the Parliamentary Constituency going for bye-elections shall not be covered under these instructions. The instructions will however cover other officers viz. Additional Collector, Additional District Magistrate, Deputy Collectors, Assistant Collectors, Sub-Divisional Magistrates, Tehsildars and Block Development Officer located in Parliamentary Constituency Limit.

It is however clarified that officers appointed as Sector Officers, though directly involved in election duties will not be covered under these instructions as their duties are such that they are deployed in field duties where their knowledge of the area/terrain is crucial to their effective performance. The CEO, DEO and RO should, however, keep a close watch on them during the election period to ensure that their performance is strictly impartial.

(ii) As far as officer in the Police Department are concerned, these instructions shall be applicable to the Superintendent of Police located in the District whose District Election Officer is also the Returning Officer. Other Superintendent of Police, even if some part of their district falls in the Parliamentary Constituency going for bye-elections shall not be covered under these instructions. These instruction will however cover Additional SP, Sub-Divisional Head of Police, Dy.SPs/Circle Officers, Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors or equivalent ranks posted in the field within the Parliamentary Constituency Limit.

(2.3) The Commission further desires that a detailed review may, therefore, be undertaken and all such officers be posted out of their home constituency limits where they have completed or will complete, on the aforesaid date, tenure of three years in Assembly constituency limit out of the last four years, immediately. Further, for uniformity, the three year period shall be reckoned backwards from the last day of the sixth month as mentioned at para 2.1(ii).

3. The Commission also desires that the officers/officials against whom Commission has recommended disciplinary action or who have been charged for any lapse in any election or elections related work in the past, shall not be assigned any election related duty.

4. The Commission further desires that no officer/official against whom a criminal case is pending in any Court of Law be associated with the election work or election related duty.

5. The Commission has in the past received complaints that while the State Government transfers officials in the above categories in pursuance of the direction issued by the Commission, the individuals try to circumvent the objective by proceeding on leave and physically not moving out of the district from which they stand transferred. The Commission has viewed this seriously and desires that all such officials who stand transferred in pursuance of the instructions referred to above shall be asked to move physically out of the district from which they stand transferred immediately on receipt of the transfer orders.

6. Normally, bye-election is held to fill up a casual vacancy within a period of six months from the date of occurrence of vacancy (excepting a situation beyond control of the Commission). Hence, it would be advisable if the State Government initiates steps for implementation of these guideline immediately after occurrence of a casual vacancy in a constituency so that last moment dislocation of officers can be avoided.

7. Any officer who is due to retire within coming six months will be exempted from the purview of the above-mentioned directions of the Commission. Further officers falling in category (home/3+ criteria) shall not be engaged for performing election duties during the elections, if they are due to retire within 6 months.

While implementing this policy the DEO/RO should take care that in case of deployment of any officer from outside the constituency for any election related duty, shall also conform to the transfer policy of the Commission.

V. Announcement of D.A.

The Commission has decided that announcement of D.A. by the state government may be done as a routine affair but it should not be publicized as the Government's achievement.

VI. Promises made by the Ministers/sitting MPs/MLAs on religious/communal grounds in those areas where MCC is not in force

It has come to the notice of the Commission that during the Bye-elections, the party in power as well as the sitting MPs/MLAs tend to make promises/appeals on religious/communal grounds in those parts of the districts/areas in their State/UT where Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is not in operation so as to avoid the violation of MCC. This has, however, indeed far-reaching implications as it would certainly influence the minds of electors of the Assembly Constituency/Parliamentary Constituency where the bye election(s) is going on and, thus, vitiate the free and fair elections in that Constituency(ies).

In view of the above, it is directed that as soon as Bye- election(s) to any Assembly Constituency/ Parliamentary Constituency is announced in a State/UT, the CEO concerned shall issue an advisory to all the recognized political parties in the State/UT to request their Ministers and sitting MPs/MLAs not to make promises or statements on religious or communal ground even in areas where MCC is not in force and during the Bye-elections period so that the purity of election process is maintained and no ill feeling is generated among the general public which is essential for conducive atmosphere for conducting free and fair elections.

The above instructions of the Commission shall be brought to notice of all concerned for strict compliance.

Yours faithfully,

(NARENDRA N. BUTOLIA)
SR. PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 3

By Speed Post/E-mail

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 437/6/INST/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2024(ADVERTISEMENTS) **Dated: 2nd January, 2024**

To

(i) The Chief Secretaries
of all States and Union Territories.

(ii) The Chief Electoral Officers
of all States and Union Territories.

Subject: -Model Code of Conduct – Publication of Advertisements – Regarding.

Reference: Commission's instructions:

(i) No. 437/6/28/2004/PLN-III, dated 29.09.2004
(ii) No. 437/6/2004-PLN III, dated 24.12.2004
(iii) No. 3/9/2007/JS-II, dated: 03.08.2007
(iv) No. 437/6/INST/2009-CC&BE, dated 23.02.2009
(v) No. 437/6/INST/2008-CC&BE, dated 13.04.2009
(vi) No. 437/6/CG/2013/CC&BE, dated 09.10.2013
(vii) No. 437/6/CG/2013/CC&BE, dated 17.10.2013
(viii) No. 437/6/CG/2013-CC&BE, dated 30.10.2013
(ix) No. 437/6/1/2014/CC&BE, dated 01.04.2014
(x) No. 437/6/ ECI/INST/FUNCT/MCC-2017, dated 06.01.2017
(xi) No. 437/6/1/ECI/INST/FUNCT/MCC/2021, dated 13.03.2021
(xii) No. 437/6/INST/2014/CC&BE, dated 11.09.2014, and
(xiii) No. 437/6/INST/2015-CCS, dated 29.12. 2015

Madam/Sir,

The Commission has issued various instructions from time to time on Publication of Advertisements during the period of enforcement of Model Code of Conduct. Following are the consolidated instructions in supersession of all the instructions issued vide letters listed above:

I. Advertisements at the cost of Public Exchequer

(a) Sub-para (iv) of para VII - 'Party in Power'- of the Model Code of Conduct for the Guidance of Political Parties and Candidates provides that: -

"The party in power whether at the Centre or in the States/UTs concerned, shall ensure that no cause is given for any complaint that it has used its official position for the purposes of its election campaign and in particular-

(iv) Issue of advertisement at the cost of public exchequer in the newspapers and other media and the misuse of official mass media during the election period for partisan coverage of

political news and publicity regarding achievements with a view to furthering the prospects of the party in power shall be scrupulously avoided."

(b) Those hoardings, advertisements, etc., put up by the Government which purport to give general information or convey general messages to the masses on family planning, social welfare schemes etc. may be allowed to be displayed. However, all those hoardings, advertisements, etc. which seek or purport to project the achievements of any living political functionaries or political party and which carry their photos or name or party symbol should be removed forthwith as no political functionary or political party can use public resources and incur or authorize expenditure from public exchequer to eulogize himself or itself or enhance his/its own or any political leader's personal image. Such hoardings, etc. undoubtedly amount to their individual/party election campaign at public cost. Accordingly, the photos of political leaders in such advertisement should be removed/ covered suitably. The continuing display of such hoardings and advertisements at the cost of public exchequer, even if such hoardings, advertisements or posters were displayed prior to the date of announcement of elections, constitutes a violation of the Model Code of Conduct as it provides an undue advantage to the party in power and has the effect of influencing the voters in favour of the party in power.

(c) No advertisements should hereafter be issued in the newspapers and other media, including electronic media, at the cost of public exchequer during the election period and the misuse of mass media during the election period for partisan coverage of political news and publicity regarding achievements with a view to furthering the prospects of the party in power should be scrupulously avoided.

II. Use of space in Railway Stations, Bus Stands, Airport, Bridges-Railway and Roadways, Govt. Buses, Govt. and public buildings, Electric and telephone poles, Municipal/local bodies' buildings, space and assets for political advertisement

(i) Display of election posters, hoardings, banners, etc., in any Government/PSU premises is not permitted even if it is a commercial space. The Commercial spaces of Govt and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) during election periods cannot be used for displaying political advertisements.

(ii) In case there is no specific provision in the by-laws of PSUs, or in their agreements with the advertisement agencies to whom they let out space for advertisement for prohibiting display of political advertisement, the PSUs may be instructed to add a para in their commercial agreements with commercial agencies/companies while providing space on lease to the advertisement agency for placing commercial advertisements that "No political advertisement shall be displayed/pasted at the space provided on lease for commercial advertisement like airport, railway stations, inter state/local bus stands, Govt. transportation, post offices, Government hospitals/dispensaries etc. (except on main highways, main roads etc.) during the period of Model Code of Conduct . If there is any political advertisement in the provided space, the same shall be removed immediately on enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct."

(iii) In the case of Halls/Auditoriums/Meeting venues owned/controlled by the Government/local authorities/PSUs/Cooperatives, if the law/guidelines governing their use do not preclude political meetings therein, there is no objection to it but, it shall be ensured that the allocation is done on equitable basis and that there is no monopolization by any political party or candidates. In such venues, displaying of banners, buntings, flags, cut-outs, may be permitted during the period of meetings subject to any restrictions under the law/guidelines in force. Such banners, flags, etc.

shall be got removed by the party/individual who used the premises immediately after conclusion of the meeting, and in any case within a reasonable period after the meeting is over. Permanent/ semi-permanent defacement such as wall writing/pasting of poster etc. shall not be permitted in such premises. The ECI Observers shall closely monitor compliance, and will specifically mention it in their reports to ECI.

III. Broadcasting of election related matter over Radio during period of forty – eight hours ending with hour fixed for conclusion of poll

Clause (b) of sub-section (1) of Section 126 prohibits display of election matter through T.V. or similar apparatus. It is clarified that radio would be treated as 'other similar apparatus' for this purpose and hence broadcasting /propagating any election matter through Radio would be covered under clause (b) and would not be permissible during the period of 48 hours mentioned in the said section.

IV. Publication of advertisements in connection with occasions like World Habitat Day, Pulse Polio/HIV awareness campaigns and celebrations of various 'Diwas' like Independence Day, Republic Day, Gandhi Jayanti, State Formation days, etc.

(i) The Commission receives various references from the Ministries/Departments seeking clearance for the publication of advertisements on the occasions of World Habitat Day, Pulse Polio Immunization/ HIV awareness campaigns, etc. during the run-up to General/Bye-elections to the Lok Sabha/State Legislative Assemblies when the model code of conduct is in force. Objecting to the publication of advertisement on important social issues is never intended by the Commission. It only wants to ensure that the party in power does not misuse the Government machinery in the garb of spreading a social message which is against the spirit of providing a level playing field and so violate the spirit of free and fair election. Election Commission of India has therefore, taken a clear stand that there will be no objection to the release of such advertisements <u>if they do not contain the photograph or political message of any Minister/political dignitary and do not highlight the achievements of the party</u> which may influence the voters and induce them to vote in their favour.

(ii) Different important historical days like Independence Day, Republic Day, Gandhi Jayanti, Shivaji Jayanti and State Formation Days are celebrated with much fanfare which are attended to by Central/ State Ministers who, at time, make it a platform for gaining political advantage by highlighting the achievements of the party in power or their political functionaries contesting the elections. The Commission has taken a serious note of this and decided that while the Ministers can participate in such celebrations the theme of their speeches should be confined only to the historical background, deeds and achievements of the historical figures and they must take utmost care not to make any political speech converting the forum into a platform for political campaign.

(iii) There will be a complete ban on celebrations like "xxx years/days in power" during this period as such occasions are virtually utilized to highlight the achievement of the party in power.

(iv) The Aadhaar related publicity can be done which has the objective to give information about Aadhaar Card to the general masses. Any publicity highlighting the achievements of the scheme or Authority or Government will not be allowed to be made.

(v) On the occasion of Birth/Death Anniversaries of political leaders, photographs and messages related to departed political leaders except those leaders who passed away in recent past, may be published in the advertisements in this regard.

V. Display of Photos of Political Functionaries on beneficiary cards, electric bills, construction site plaques etc.

(i) Beneficiary cards distributed to beneficiaries, constructions site plaques etc. erected during the enforcement of Model Code of Conduct shall not contain photographs, messages of Chief Ministers, Ministers and other political functionaries. However, no interference is called for in respect of photos of political functionaries on beneficiary cards, construction site plaques etc. that are distributed/ erected prior to the enforcement of model code of conduct.

(ii) The electricity bills, water bills, boarding passes, vaccination certificates, etc. to be generated after the enforcement of Model Code of Conduct should not contain any photographs or messages/ symbols of political functionaries/parties.

(iii) Similarly, the fertilizer bags, paper cups or any other merchandise to be used in the areas where Model Code of Conduct is enforced, should not contain any photographs or messages/symbols of political functionaries/parties.

VI. Publication of any advertisements of Central Government in the newspapers of non-poll going States having circulation in poll going States

(i) It has been observed that certain advertisements highlighting welfare schemes and achievements of the Central Government and State Governments are published by some non-poll going State Governments, in the editions of newspapers in the States where elections are going on. The Commission considers this to be a violation of the spirits of the Model Code of Conduct.

(ii) The Commission has directed that all such advertisements, issued by non-poll going State Governments during the Model Code of Conduct period shall be forwarded to the Commission for clearance before they are sent for publication in newspapers having edition or having circulation in the poll bound States.

(iii) If any violation of the above instructions come to the notice of the Election Commission, the Secretary/Director of Information & Public Relations of the concerned State government shall directly be held responsible for such lapse.

VII. Equitable opportunity to have access to advertisement spaces for election related advertisement

(i) If the local law expressly permits or provides for writing of slogans, displaying posters, etc., or erecting cut-outs, hoardings, banners, political advertisement, etc., in any public place, (as against a Govt. premise) on payment or otherwise, this may be allowed strictly in accordance with the relevant provisions of the law and subject to Court orders, if any on this subject. It should be ensured that any such place is not dominated/monopolized by any particular party(ies) or candidate(s). All parties and candidates should be provided equal opportunity in this regard.

(ii) If there is a specifically earmarked place provided for displaying advertisements in a public place, e.g. bill boards, hoardings etc. and if such space is already let out to any agency for further allocation to individual clients, the District Election Officer through the municipal authority concerned, if any, should ensure that all political parties and candidates get equitable opportunity to have access to such advertisement space for election related advertisements during the election period.

The above instructions of the Commission shall be brought to the notice of all concerned for strict compliance.

Yours faithfully,

(NARENDRA N. BUTOLIA)

SR. PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 4

By Speed Post/E-mail

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 437/6/INST/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2024 (CAMPAIGN) **Dated: 2nd January, 2024**

To

(i) The Chief Secretaries
of all States and Union Territories.

(ii) The Chief Electoral Officers
of all States and Union Territories.

Subject: -Model Code of Conduct – Instruction- Election Campaign – Regarding.

Reference: Commission's instructions:

(i) No. 3/8//2000 J.S.II, dated 26.12.2000
(ii) No. 464/INST/2007-PLN-I, dated 12.10.2007
(iii) No. 464/INST/2009-EPS, dated 18.03.2009
(iv) No. 437/6/2009-CC&BE, dated 15.09.2009
(v) No. 437/6/INST/2013/CC&BE, dated 28.11.2013
(vi) No. 437/6/INST/2013/CC&BE, dated 04.12.2013
(vii) No. 437/6/INST/2014-CC&BE, dated 26.04.2014
(viii) No. 437/INST/2015-CCS, dated 17.09.2015
(ix) No. 437/6/INST/2015-CCS, dated 09.10.2015
(x) No. 437/6/Campaign/ECI/INST/FUNCT/MCC-2016, dated 04.01.2017
(xi) No. 437/6/2017(Policy), dated. 10.01.2017
(xii) No. 437/6/2017 (policy), dated 25.02.2017
(xiii) No. 437/6/INST/2016-CCS, dated: 24.05.2017
(xiv) No. 437/6/INST/2016-CCS, dated: 24.05.2017
(xv) No. 437/6/INST/2016-CCS, dated: 24.05.2017
(xvi) No. 437/6/2007(INST)-PLN-III, dated 12.11.2007
(xvii) No. 464/GJ-LA/2007, dated 26.11.2007
(xviii) No. 464/INST/2014-EPS, dated 9.04.2014
(xix) No. 437/6/INST/2019/MCC, dated 09.03.2019
(xx) No. 437/6/INST/2019/MCC, dated 19.03.2019
(xxi) No. 437/6/INST/2019/MCC, dated 05.04.2019
(xxii) No. 437/6/INST/2019/MCC, dated 29.04.2019
(xxiii) No. 437/6/INST/2020/MCC, dated 29.01.2020
(xxiv) No. 437/6/INST/2008-CC&BE, dated 18.02.2009, and
(xxv) No. 437/6/INST/ECI/LET/FUNCT/MCC/2022, dated 22.01.2022

Madam/Sir,

With a view to maintain the election campaign in line with statutory provisions and to avoid clashes and conflicts between stakeholders i.e. political parties or their supporters and also to ensure peace and order during the campaign period, the Commission has issued, in the past, a number of instructions. Following are the consolidated instructions in supersession of all the instructions issued vide letters listed above:

1. Use of Bike

The Commission, having considered inputs that there is a need to regulate the use of bikes for electioneering purposes, issues the following instructions-

(i) Bike is a two-wheeler and its use shall be restricted only for campaign purpose Number of bikes may be restricted as per convoy rules of vehicle, which inter-alia provides that cars/vehicles shall, under no circumstances, be allowed to move in convoy of more than ten vehicles excluding the security vehicles. All bigger convoys exceeding ten vehicles shall be broken up, even if they are carrying any minister of central or state government or any other person. This shall, however, be subject to any security instructions issued in respect of any such individual. If any person moves in a convoy of vehicles exceeding the limits prescribed above, in spite of the convoy having been broken, it shall be the duty of the local administration to ensure that such vehicles are not allowed to be used by flouting the Commission's directions, till the process of election is completed.

(ii) Use of Bikes, other than those permitted to campaign purpose, would be regulated under the prohibitory order, viz. Sec 144 CrPC.

(iii) Only one flag (of maximum dimension of 1 ft by ½ ft) shall be permitted on one bike.

(iv) Length of pole/stick for carrying flag shall not be more than 3 feet.

2. Road Shows

There is a total and absolute ban on the use of official vehicle for campaigning, electioneering or election related travel during elections. It also provides that car/vehicles shall not be allowed to move in convoys of more than ten vehicles (excluding security vehicles) and all bigger convoys shall be broken even if they are carrying any Minister of Centre/State Government or any other person, subject to any security instructions issued in respect of any such individual. The Commission, after considering the fact that there is a need to regulate road shows to avoid any inconvenience to the general public/commuters during road shows, issues the following instructions-

a. Prior permission for road shows shall be taken from the Competent Authority.

b. In order to avoid inconvenience to general public, as far as possible, road shows, subject to court orders and local laws, should be permitted only on holidays and during no-peak hours on routes other than that having big hospitals, trauma centers, blood banks and heavily crowded markets.

c. Number of vehicles and persons joining for road show shall be intimated in advance.

d. The road show shall not cover more than half the road width to ensure safety of the general public.

e. The convoy of vehicles being used in road show shall be broken after every 10 vehicles and a gap of 100 meters would be maintained.

f. Safety of public and persons in the road show shall be ensured. Bursting of fire crackers and carrying of fire arms shall not be permitted at all.

g. The maximum size of banner to be carried with hand would be 6x4 feet.

h. Loudspeakers can be used as per existing ECI's instruction and subject to Local Laws and Court orders on this subject.

i. Display of animals in road shows is totally banned. Children, particularly school children in uniform, should not take part in road shows.

j. Only one flag of the size 1 ft X ½ ft with permission of the RO concerned would be allowed on campaign vehicles in a road show.

3. Use of Loudspeakers in processions and election meetings

(i) A public address system or loudspeaker or any sound amplifier, whether fitted on vehicles of any kind whatsoever, or in static position, used for public meetings for electioneering purposes, shall not be used at night between 10.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. subject to the local law/court orders/any order of state pollution control board. Local perceptions of the security arrangements of the area and other relevant considerations like weather conditions, festival season, examination period, etc. should also be considered.

(ii) All loudspeakers whether used for general propaganda or for public meetings or procession, and whether used on moving vehicles or otherwise, shall be used during the restricted hours only mentioned above and never beyond.

(iii) All loudspeaker being used beyond the hours as prescribed above, shall be confiscated along with all the apparatus connected with the use of these loudspeakers.

(iv) The Commission has further directed that it should be ensured by the concerned authorities of state pollution control boards that decibels of the sound generated by loud speakers/amplifiers doesn't exceed the permissible limit as fixed under relevant law/guidelines. DEO shall monitor this by putting in place suitable mechanism.

(v) All political parties, candidates and any other persons using any loudspeakers on moving vehicles including but not restricted to trucks, tempos, cars, taxis, vans, three-wheeler scooters, cycle rickshaws, etc. shall intimate the registration identification number of those vehicles to the authorities granting permission to use the loudspeakers and such registration identification numbers of the vehicles shall be indicated on the permits granted by the authorities concerned.

(vi) Any vehicle on which a loudspeaker is used without the said written permit shall be confiscated forthwith along with the loudspeaker and all the apparatus used along with it.

(vii) All political parties, candidates and even other person using a loudspeaker either on a moving vehicle or at a fixed place shall intimate -

(1) the Returning Officer of the Constituency, and

(2) local Police authorities, in writing, the full details of the permits obtained by them before using any of those loudspeakers. In the case of mobile loudspeakers, the registration identification numbers of the vehicles shall also be registered by them with the Returning Officer and the local Police authorities.

(viii) It shall be the responsibility of the State Government authorities granting permits for use of loudspeakers and the local Police authorities to strictly enforce that no loudspeaker is used by anyone in violation of any of the above directions.

(ix) No loudspeakers fitted on vehicles of any kind or in any other manner whatsoever shall be permitted to be used during the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for the conclusion of the poll in any polling area. Even after the close of poll proper law and order is required to be maintained till completion of election after the declaration of result. Use of loudspeakers is generally regarded as source of public nuisance and can often give rise to tension in a politically charged atmosphere. The District Administrations should, therefore, consider any application for permission to use loudspeakers after the aforesaid prohibitory period of 48 hours, on merit of each application and keeping in view the need to maintain proper law and order till the completion of election.

4. Use of flags

(i) Subject to any restrictions under any local law or any court orders in force, the political parties, candidates, their agents, workers and supporters may put up banners, buntings, flags, cut-outs, on their own property, provided they do so on their own volition, voluntarily and without any pressure from any party, organization or person, and provided further that these do not cause any inconvenience in any manner to anyone else. Also, if such display of banners, flags etc. aims to solicit vote for any particular candidate, then, under section 171 H of IPC, general or special authority in writing of candidate is necessary. The Commission has now clarified that there should be only three number of flags of a party/candidate to be used at party workers'/supporter' residence and at party offices. In case, some person wants to display flags of more than one party or candidate, then it shall be restricted to only one flag of each party/candidate. Display of flags would be subject to Local law and court orders, if any.

(ii) As far as the use of banners, flags etc. on vehicles, it shall be regulated as below-

a. No spot/focus/flashing/search lights and hooters shall be put on any campaign vehicle.

b. Chief Electoral Officer shall ensure that all the provisions of local law, Court's directions and Motor Vehicle Act are uniformly applied throughout the State.

c. No person shall put any flag or banner or sticker of big size on any vehicle except with prior permission of the competent authority subject to the relevant provisions of law and Court direction/orders if any on the subject.

d. The maximum number and size of flags/banners by a party or candidate will be as follows-

i. Two wheelers – one flag of maximum size 1ft X 1/2 ft. No banner will be allowed. 1 or 2 small stickers of appropriate size may be permitted on each vehicle.

ii. Three wheelers, four wheelers, e-Rickshaws- No banner will be allowed. Only one flag of maximum size 1ft X 1/2 ft.1 or 2 small stickers of appropriate size may be permitted on each vehicle.

iii. It is clarified that if a political party is having a pre- poll alliance/seat sharing arrangement with another party then campaign vehicle of a candidate/political party may display one flag each of such parties.

e. Simultaneous plying of number of vehicles on road including e-Rickshaws to be limited to 10 and if it exceeds the limit of 10 vehicles then the convoy shall be broken after every 10 vehicles.

f. While using flags, or stickers on any vehicle, due care shall be taken that visibility of any of the driver (of the concerned vehicle or any other vehicle on road), passengers from front or rear view is not hampered in anyway.

(iii) Further, it is the bounden duty of the authorities concerned to ensure proper use of National Flag in the rallies and to ensure strict compliance and observation of the provisions of the Flag Code and the provisions of Emblem and names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950 and the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

5. Temporary Campaign Office

The candidates of various parties including independent candidates set up and operate temporary offices for the purpose of local campaign. The Commission, after taking into consideration all relevant factors, has prescribed the following guidelines to be followed in this regard:-

(i) No such office will be opened by way of any encroachment either of public or private property.

(ii) No such offices will be opened in any religious places or campus of such religious places.

(iii) No such offices will be opened contiguous to any educational institution/ hospital.

(iv) No Such offices will be opened within 200 meters of an existing polling station.

(v) Such offices can display only one party flag and banner with party symbols/photographs.

(vi) The size of the banner used in such offices should not exceed '4 feet X 8 feet' subject to the further condition that if the local laws prescribe a lower size for banner / hoarding etc.; then the lower size prescribed by local law shall prevail.

(vii) The expenditure observer should closely monitor to ensure that expenditure, on it is properly booked in the account of candidate.

6. Associating defence personnel/forces with electoral campaign

The Armed Forces of a nation are the guardian of its frontiers, security and the political system. They are apolitical and neutral stakeholders in a modern democracy. It is therefore necessary that the political parties and leaders exercise great caution while making any reference to the Armed forces in their political campaigns. The Commission is of the view that:

(i) Photographs of Chief of Army Staff or any other defence personnel and photographs of functions of Defence forces should not be associated with or used in any manner in advertisement/ propaganda/campaigning or in any other manner in connection with elections by Political Parties and candidates.

(ii) The political parties/candidates are further advised that their campaigners/candidates should desist, as part of their election campaigning, from indulging in any political propaganda involving activities of the Defence forces.

7. Prohibition of misuse of Short Message Services (SMSs)

(i) Sometimes, certain objectionable messages on Short Message Services (SMSs) are being transmitted by some persons with vested interests in the ensuing election, violating the provisions of election law, model code of conduct and the Commission's directions/instructions issued in this behalf. By the aforesaid acts, the atmosphere for free, fair and peaceful elections process may get vitiated. In this regard, the Commission has issued the following directions:

(a) For objectionable SMSs, which are violating the provisions of election law, model code of conduct and the commission's direction/instruction issued in this behalf, the Police

Authorities should advertise special mobile number on which the receiver of such SMS can forward the said SMS (along with the number of the sender of the objectionable SMS). The Police authorities should initiate appropriate inquiry and trace back the original sender of 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, instructions/ direction issued there under by the Commission and any other law applicable in the case.

(b) Bulk SMS (es) transmitted during the campaign period as an alternative electioneering, as and when noticed by RO or DEO will be brought to the notice of CEO, who in turn, will find out the cost involved from the Service Provider and apportion it to the candidate or candidates concerned as the case may be.

(c) There shall be prohibition of transmitting bulk SMSs of political nature for a period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for conclusion of poll.

(ii) This shall be brought to the notice of all concerned immediately including Mobile Service Providers in the State and given wide publicity. A copy of this letter shall also be handed over to all Observers through the District Election Officers.

8. Wearing of political party's Name/ Symbol/ Badges/ Signs/ slogan inside the Polling Station

The Section 130 of Representation of the People Act, 1951 inter-alia provides that no person shall canvass for votes or exhibit any notice or signs relating to the election within the polling station on the day of poll. In view of the above, it is further clarified that wearables like caps, shawl etc. with political party's name, symbol or slogan are not allowed inside the polling stations on the poll day. However, plain cap without any symbol or slogan is not prohibited. This may be adhered to in the counting centers on the counting day also.

9. Election related campaign activities undertaken by persons other than political parties and candidates

The Commission, has laid down the following guidelines to be observed in the matter of election related campaigns by organizations and persons other than political parties/candidates, during the period when Model Code of Conduct is in operation in connection with an election:

(i) They should not invoke, in any manner, religion or religious grounds in any manner, or any activities likely to create disharmony among different classes or groups of people, in their campaign. Such activities/ statements are prohibited being offences under various provisions of the law, like, section 125 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 sections 153A, 153B, l7lC, 295A, 505(2) of the Indian Penal Code and Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988.

(ii) They should not indulge in any activities or make any statements that would amount to attack on personal life of any person or statements that may be malicious or offending decency and morality. [When persons and organizations seek permission to hold public programmes, they should be asked to give a declaration/undertaking to abide by the above guidelines.]

(iii) The public programmes of such persons and organizations should be closely monitored through videography. If anyone indulges in violation of the above guidelines' the state and district authorities concerned with the maintenance of proper law and order should take appropriate remedial and penal actions expeditiously in all such cases. Further, the District Administration shall ensure that

such persons who violated the undertaking are not granted any permission to hold any further programmes during the period of that election.

(iv) If the programmes involve incurring expense and amounts to directly promoting the electoral prospects of any particular candidate or candidates, prior special authority from the candidate concerned for incurring the expense shall be obtained in writing, as required under Section l7lH of the IPC, and such authorization should be submitted to the District Election officer within 48 hours. Any violation should result in action for prosecuting the person concerned.

10. Restrictions on presence of political functionaries in a Constituency after the campaign period is over

Under Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, in the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for the close of poll, the campaign will come to an end. During the course of campaign, the political parties mobilize their supporters, including from outside the constituency of poll, in order to bolster that campaign. In view of the fact that on the closure of campaign period, no campaign can take place within the constituency, presence of political functionaries/party workers/procession functionaries/ campaign functionaries etc., who have been brought from outside the constituency and who are not voters of the constituency, should not continue to remain present in the constituency as their continued presence after campaign ends may undermine the atmosphere for free and fair poll.

(i) The district election administration/police administration shall ensure that all such functionaries leave the constituency immediately after the campaign period is over. This shall be brought to the notice of all political parties, candidates and their agents in order them to comply.

(ii) The Commission further directs that in order to ensure that the above instruction is carried out, the election administration/police may take all necessary measures which may include:

a. Checking of kalian mandapams/ community halls etc., where such people are kept housed and find out whether the outsiders have been accommodated in these premises.

b. Verification of lodges and guesthouses to keep a track of the list of occupants.

c. Set up check-posts in the constituency borders and track the vehicular movement from outside the constituency.

d. Verify the identity of the people/group of people in order to find out whether they are voters or not and establish their identity.

e. This may be brought to the notice of all concerned and ensure strict compliance. Action taken in the matter may be informed to the Commission

(iii) In case some political functionary seeks exemption on medical grounds:

a. The DEO concerned, in consultation with CEO, would constitute a Medical Board for health check-up of the political functionary seeking exemption. The Medical Board shall, after medical examination of the patient and his/her medical history, will give report whether the condition of the patient (political leader) is such that he can't move or be shifted under medical attendance out of the constituency in an ambulance or vehicle.

b. The exemption would only be considered by the ECI after consideration of report of the Medical Board received through CEO concerned.

c. Such political functionary to whom exemption has been granted may be allowed to stay in the constituency subject to the condition that this is in no manner be used for any political/ election related activities in any way. To ensure this, a video surveillance team shall be deployed at all the entrances of place of stay headed by a magistrate with suitable police personnel to be deployed, till completion of poll. Expenditure incurred for such stay should be duly accounted for in Election Expenditure accounts of the contesting candidates for that constituency.

11. Use of School Grounds for campaign purpose during election Process

The school and college grounds may be used for political meetings provided: -

i) schools and colleges academic calendar are not disturbed under any circumstances.

ii) the School/College Management has no objection for this purpose and prior permission for such campaigning is obtained from the school/college Management as well as Sub Divisional Officer.

iii) such permission is granted on first-come-first served basis and no political party is allowed to monopolize the use of those grounds.

iv) any violation in the allotment of school/college grounds for political meetings will be viewed seriously by the Commission. The accountability in this regard lies with the Sub Divisional Officer, and

v) the Political Parties and candidates and campaigners shall take care to ensure that the above norms are not violated.

vi) the ground should be returned to the authority concerned, without any damage or with the requisite compensation for the damage caused, if any. The political party/parties restoring back the campaign ground to the concerned school/college authority should be responsible for the payment of such compensation, if any.

The above instructions would apply to all States/UTs except Punjab and Haryana where there is express prohibition of the Punjab & Haryana High Court in the matter.

12. Maintenance of High Standards during Election Campaign

(i) The Commission duly recognizes the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution guaranteed to citizens of India, but it also needs to be pointed out that such right to freedom of speech and expression is not absolute and is to be exercised in such a manner that it does not transcend, inter alia, the boundaries of decency and morality or disturb public order or amount to defamation or give incitement to an offence as ordained in clause (2) of that Article 19. The Model Code of Conduct aims and seeks to achieve that very objective by its various provisions.

(ii) Hon'ble Supreme Court, in the matter of Gadakh Yashwantrao Kankarrao Vs ES Balasaheb Vikhe Patil (AIR 1994 SC 678) observed that:

"the duty of the top echelons of leadership at the state and national levels of all political parties is to set the trend for giving the needed information to the electorate by adopting desirable standards so that it percolates to the lower levels and provides a congenial atmosphere for a free and fair poll. A contrary trend of speeches by the top leaders tends to degenerate the election campaign as it descends to the lower levels and at time promotes even violence leading to criminalization of politics. The growth of this unhealthy trend is a cause for serious concern for the proper functioning of the democracy and it is the duty of the top leaders of all political parties to reverse this trend to enable movement of the functioning of democracy in the proper direction."

(iii) The Hon'ble Apex Court has also expressed its deep concern in the matter of mixing religion and caste with election campaign, vide its Order dated 02.01.2017 in Civil Appeal No. 37 of 1992 (Abhiram Singh Vs C.D. Commachen) and with civil appeal no. 8339 of 1995.

In view of above, the Commission's has directed that:

a. No appeal shall be made on basis of caste/communal feelings of the electors.

b. No activity, which may aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension between different castes/communities/religious/linguistic groups, shall be attempted.

c. No aspect of the private life, not connected with the public activities, of the leaders or workers of other parties is to be criticized.

d. Criticism of other parties or their workers on basis of unverified allegations or on distortions shall be avoided.

e. No temples/mosques/churches/gurudwaras or any place of worship is to be used for election propaganda, including speeches, posters, music etc., or electioneering.

f. The candidates/campaigners/political leaders are to desist from displaying photograph of defence personnel or photograph of functions involving defence personnel in advertisement, or otherwise as part of their election propaganda/campaigning. They are also advised to desist from indulging in any political propaganda involving activities of defence forces.

g. The political leaders need to ensure that nothing in their statements may be construed as mixing of religion and caste, etc., with their election campaigns.

h. The political parties and candidates should refrain from any deeds/action/utterances/ otherwise that may be construed as being repugnant to honour and dignity of women.

(iv) Sometimes, such statements are being made from a place which is not in the state where MCC is in force due to elections. In this electronic age, when a statement is made by a political functionary, it doesn't remain confined to the audience or place where it is made but instantly travels through TV, social media or print media even to those places/states where election is going on. It undoubtedly has the pernicious effect of influencing the minds of voters of the poll bound state. The far-reaching implications of the statements made thus, disturb the level playing field and often adversely affect the peace, tranquility and harmony of the poll bound areas. The leaders should desist from making such statements which are against not only the words but also the spirit of law and the MCC, even at places where elections are not being held since it will have an undesirable impact on the mind of electors of the poll bound states/areas. The spirit of the Model Code of Conduct is not just avoidance of direct violation. It definitely also prohibits attempts to vitiate the electoral space through suggestive or indirect statements or innuendoes.

13. Campaign by Star Campaigners

In context of violation of Model Code of Conduct by star campaigners, the following actions are required to be taken on the part of the Chief Electoral Officers/District Election Officers/Returning Officers/ Observers:-

(i) For clarity and uniformity, the Commission has decided that in future, in cases involving violation of Model Code of Conduct or any provision of law by any candidate duly set up by the party, or by

the leaders of political parties whose names have been communicated by the party to the Election Commission/Chief Electoral Officer in terms of Explanations 1 & 2 under sub-section (1) of Section 77 of Representation of the People Act, 1951, if notice is issued to any such leader, or any candidate of the political party, a notice will also be issued to the political party concerned. It may be noted that leaders are nominated by the political parties under the aforesaid Explanation Clauses 'for propagating programme of the political party'. Therefore, it would only be reasonable and logical to hold the political party concerned responsible for any act of omission or commission by such leaders. In this context, attention of political parties is also invited to the provisions of paragraph 16A of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.

(ii) The campaign by the leaders specified under Section 77(1) [star campaigners] should be meticulously tracked. Any violation by Star Campaigner observed by the District Election Officers and Returning Officers in their respective district/constituency, shall immediately be brought to the notice of the Chief Electoral Officer for taking appropriate guidance/approval. The Chief Electoral Officer shall report the action taken to the Commission for immediate follow up action so that the action receives required visibility.

(iii) The Chief Electoral Officers and District Election Officers shall maintain a party-wise register to track the instances of violations being committed by various candidates and campaigners of various political parties. This should be a sort of daily register indicating names of the candidate, campaigner and political party. Brief description of violation, date of violation, follow up action taken and the order passed by any election official/the Commission, if any.

(iv) The above document (violation index) should also to be put in public domain so that interested parties including the media can pick up the input and this may work as a deterrence for the candidates and political parties against indulging in any violation.

The above instructions of the Commission shall be brought to notice of all concerned for strict compliance.

Yours faithfully,

(NARENDRA N. BUTOLIA)
SR. PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 5

By Speed Post/E-mail

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 437/6/INST/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2024 (IMPORTANT DAYS) **Dated: 2nd January, 2024**

To

(i) The Chief Secretaries
of all States and Union Territories.

(ii) The Chief Electoral Officers
of all States and Union Territories.

Subject: -Model Code of Conduct – Instruction- Celebration of Important Days – Regarding.

Reference: Commission's instructions:

(i) No. 437/6/98-PLN-III, dated 10.01.1998
(ii) No. ECI/GE98-437/6/BR/98-PLN-III, dated 27.01.1998
(iii) No. 437/6/99-PLN-III, dated 28.07.1999
(iv) No. 437/6/99-PLN-III, dated 16.08.1999
(v) No. 437/6/2004/PLN-III, dated 28.09.2004, and
(vi) No. 437/6/INST/2012-CC&BE, dated 24th January 2012

Madam/Sir,

The Commission has issued, in the past, a number of instructions in regard to celebration of important days during the period of enforcement of Model Code of Conduct. Following are the consolidated instructions in supersession of all the instructions issued vide letters listed above:

I. Celebration of Independence Day/Republic Day - attendance of political functionaries

(i) There is no objection to Central Ministers/Chief Ministers/Ministers in the States to do the honours in the main Republic Day/Independence Day functions at various locations subject to the condition that in their speeches, they should confine themselves to extolling the achievements of the Martyrs in securing freedom of the country, glory of the Indian State and so on. Under no circumstances, they should become a platform for political campaign.

(ii) In view of the fact that Republic Day celebrations will come during the election process and that the Central Ministers, Chief Ministers and Ministers in the States belong to political parties and alliances and may even be the candidates, the Commission, purely in the interest of ensuring a level playing field, directs that no Central Minister/Chief Minister/Minister or any other political functionary in the States/Ex-MPs shall do the honours at any such function at any location of within their home district or constituency or from where he or she is a contesting candidate or intends to contest. The Prime Minister and Chief Minister may however do so from the National Capital and State headquarters during Independence Day as per long standing conventions. Further, the dignitaries who will hoist the National Flag at

the functions may travel directly to that place from the place of election campaign, if any. The travel expenditure for this purpose may be borne by the State Government concerned. They do not need to travel between these places via headquarter.

(iii) The Commission has no objection to organisation of Kavi Sammelan, Mushairas or other cultural functions organised in connection with the celebrations and being attended by the Central Ministers, Chief Ministers, Ministers in the States and other political functionaries. However, utmost care should be taken to ensure that no political speeches are made on the occasion.

(iv) The investiture ceremonies at the National and State level and distribution of Tamra Patras to freedom fighters, etc. should be done according to the existing conventions.

II. Celebration of Sadbhavana Diwas/Gandhi Jayanti - participation of political functionaries

(i) Central Ministers/Chief Ministers/Ministers in the States can participate in the Celebration of *Sadbhavana Diwas/Gandhi Jayanti* subject to the condition that the theme of their speeches should be confined only to the Promotion of harmony among the people and extolling deeds and achievement of Mahatma Gandhi and utmost care should be taken to ensure that no political speeches highlighting the achievements of party in power are made on the occasion. Under no circumstances, it should become a platform for political campaign.

(ii) Messages, if any, issued in the name of Ministers, should be confined to the theme of National Integration and Mahatma Gandhi only and should carry no photograph of the concerned Minister.

III. Hosting of Iftar Party

The Commission is of the view that any entertainment at State cost on a religious occasion would not be correct and specially during the continuance of the election process. However, any individual is free by all means to host any such party in his personal capacity and meeting the expense with his or her personal account on their own.

The above instructions of the Commission shall be brought to notice of all concerned for strict compliance.

Yours faithfully,

(NARENDRA N. BUTOLIA)
SR. PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 6

By Speed Post/E-mail

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 437/6/INST/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2024 (Tour of Ministers) **Dated: 2nd January, 2024**

To

(i) The Chief Secretaries
of all States and Union Territories.

(ii) The Chief Electoral Officers
of all States and Union Territories.

(iii) President/Chairperson/General Secretaries
of all recognized National and State Political Parties.

Subject: -Model Code of Conduct – Instruction- Tour of Ministers during Election period – Regarding.

Reference: Commission's instructions:

(i) No. 437/6/96/PLN-III/, dated 17.01.1996

(ii) No.437/6/2007-PLN-III, dated 23.11.2007

(iii) No.437/6/INST/2010-CC&BE, dated 07.06.2010

(iv) No.437/6/INST/2011-CC&BE, dated 24.03.2011

(v) No.437/6/INST/2011-CC&BE, dated 01.04.2011

(vi) No.437/6/INST/2010-CC&BE/Vol.II, dated 05.04.2011

(vii) No.437/INST/2009/CC&BE, dated 25.03.2009

(viii) No.437/6/INST/2011-CC&BE, dated 27.04.2011

(ix) No.437/6/CG/2014-CC&BE, dated 07.10.2014

(x) No. 437/6/MISC/2015-CC, dated 19.06.2015

(xi) No. 437/6/GUJ/98-PLN-III, dated 16.01.1998

(xii) No. 437/6/INST/2008-CC&BE, dated 21.04.2009

(xiii) No. 437/6/CG/LA-Multi/ECI/LET/FUNCT/MCC/2018, dated 22.11.2018

(xiv) No. 437/6/ECI/INST/FUNCT/MCC/2021, dated 14.03.2021

(xv) No. 437/6/INST/2009-CC&BE dated 25.10.2009

(xvi) No.437/INST/2009/CC&BE, dated 25.03.2009, and

(xvii) No. 437/6/2007/PLN.III, dated: 24.10.2007

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to state that Ministers may be undertaking visits to the State(s) where election is being held or have been announced and the provisions of Model Code of Conduct are in force, in connection with electioneering. The Commission, in order to ensure a level playing field which is a precondition for free and fair elections, has issued instructions from time to time governing such tours of ministers and has prescribed certain guidelines to ensure that the official machinery is in no way engaged in any election related work by such touring dignitaries. These have been upheld by the Supreme Court of India in the case of Narendra Kumar Gaur vs. Election Commission of India in Writ Petition No. 339 of 1999 on 16.08.99. The Commission's instructions in this regard in suppression of all the instructions issued vide letters listed above have been consolidated below for the sake of convenience: -

I. Tours of Ministers

(1) No minister of Central or State Government shall undertake an official visit to any constituency for which elections have been announced by the Commission during the period commencing with announcement of the elections up to end of the election process.

(2) Minister will not summon any election related officer of the constituency or the State in which any elections have been announced, to a place or office or guest house inside or outside the aforesaid constituency for any official discussions during the period of elections commencing with the announcement of the elections from such constituency and ending with the completion of election process.

(3) The only exception to these instructions will be when a Minister, in his capacity as in charge of the department concerned, or a Chief Minister undertakes an official visit to a constituency, or summons any election related officers of the constituency to a place outside the constituency, in connection with failure of law and order or occurrence of a natural calamity or any such emergency which requires personal presence of such Ministers/Chief Ministers for the specific purpose of supervision review/salvage/relief and other similar purposes.

(4) If a Minister of the Union is traveling from his/her headquarters to a poll bound state/district on purely official business, which cannot be avoided in public interest, then a letter certifying to this effect should be sent from the Secretary of the department/ministry concerned of the Government of India, to the Chief Secretary of the state which the Minister intends to visit, with a copy to the Commission. On receipt of such information from the Secretary that the Union Minister is proposing a purely official visit and no political activity of any kind is envisaged during such tour, the Chief Secretary may provide the Union Minister with a Government vehicle and accommodation and extend other usual courtesies for his official trip. While doing so, the Chief Electoral Officer of the State, who is entrusted with the task of monitoring of electoral activity in the State, including the implementation of the Model Code of Conduct, shall be alerted in advance by the Chief Secretary. The Commission will keep watch on such arrangements in consultation with its Chief Electoral Officer. It is hoped that the Union Ministers will avoid making official visits to their home States, Constituency state and particularly to the constituencies from where they are contesting elections while it is open for them to make private visits.

(5) The Ministers are entitled to use their official vehicles in their headquarters from their place of residence to their office for official work provided that such commuting is not combined with any electioneering or any political activity which would include a visit to party office even if it were enroute. No pilot car(s) or car(s) with beacon lights of any colour or car(s) affixed with sirens of any kind making his presence conspicuous

shall be used by any Minister during his/her electioneering visits, even if the State administration has granted him a security cover requiring presence of armed personnel to accompany him on such visit.

(6) During bye elections from any constituencies, either Parliamentary or Assemblies, the following restrictions will be applicable with regard to the tours of Ministers:-

(i) All Ministers, whether Central or State, shall not combine in any manner their official tours with election work after the announcement of the bye elections. They shall return to their headquarters on completion of their official tours. All and any visits to the district(s) where bye-election is being held and where Model Code of Conduct is, therefore, in force, have to be completely private in nature and such private visits should begin and end at the Minister's headquarters.

(ii) In case where a Minister traveling on official work transits through the district(s) where the bye-election is being held en route to any other district on official visit, he/she shall not halt in the district(s) where Model Code of Conduct is in force and shall not attend to any political work.

(iii) No official of any rank of the district(s) where the bye-election is being held, shall be called to attend any meeting by any Minister in any district, that is to say, even in other districts where election is not being held.

(iv) Any official who meets the Minister on his private visit to the constituency where elections are being held shall be guilty of misconduct under the relevant service rules; and if he happens to be an official mentioned in Section 129 (1) of the Representation of People Act, 1951, he shall also be additionally considered to have violated the statutory provisions of that Section and liable to penal action provided thereunder.

(v) No pilot car(s) or car(s) with beacon lights of any colour or car(s) affixed with sirens of any kind making his presence conspicuous shall be used by any Minister during his/her private visit to the constituency where a bye election is under way even if the State administration has granted him a security cover requiring presence of armed guards to accompany him on such visit. (See ECI instruction No. 437/6/4/2003 – PLN III dated 12.06.03)

(7) The Commission further directs that the Chief Electoral Officer of the State who is entrusted with the task of monitoring of electoral activities in the State including the implementation of Model Code of Conduct shall be kept informed in advance by the District Election Officer of any visit proposed to be undertaken by any Minister of the State Govt. or any Central Minister to the district where bye-election is being held and the Chief Electoral Officer shall communicate the same to the Election Commission.

(8) During the Model Code period, one member of personal staff **(non-gazetted officer)** of the Chief Ministers of States/Union Territories may be allowed to accompany them on personal/private tour. However, such personal staff shall not take part in any political activity or assist the Chief Minister in his political work. These instructions will be applicable also in the case of the Union Cabinet Ministers except Prime Minister.

(9) During such visit, all Ministers both Union and State and all other leaders of political parties will be allowed security as per the threat perceptions assessed by official agencies and other professional agencies. The expenditure on the bullet proof cars and all other cars used by these individuals will be borne by the individuals concerned/political party concerned. However, expenditure on the security staff will be borne by the State Government/UT Administration concerned

II. Tours of Prime Minister for Election Campaign

(1) The restriction regarding personal staff members who can accompany on personal/private tours shall not apply to the Prime Minister.

(2) The Prime Minister has been exempted from the operation of the model code of conduct provision pertaining to the combining of official visit with electioneering visit.

(3) In regard to the construction of helipad during election tours of the Prime Minister, the State Administrations can be requested to undertake construction of helipads. However, the expenses incurred on the construction of such helipads will be borne by the political party concerned in accordance with the Commission's instructions related to charging of expenditure for star campaigners.

(4) In view of the concerns raised by the security agencies, official staff of Doordarshan may be deployed for operation and transportation of teleprompter equipments to assist the Prime Minister in delivery of election speeches. However, it should be ensured that the said services by Doordarshan shall be made available on the terms and conditions stipulated by the Ministry of Information & broadcasting for providing such services.

III. Tours of Chairmen and Members of Commissions like the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Minorities, National Commission for Backward Classes, National Commission for Economically Backward Classes, etc.

(1) The Election Commission is aware of the fact that the various Commissions like, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, National Economically Backward Classes Commission, National Commission for Minorities etc. are entrusted with certain responsibilities connected with the welfare of the respective communities. In this context, the Commission would like to stress that during enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, unless it becomes unavoidable in an emergent situation, the official visits of the Members of the said Commissions to the States going to polls may be deferred.

(2) In case of any emergency which calls for an immediate field visit and review by the Members of the Commissions mentioned above which cannot be avoided or deferred in public interest:

(a) A programme for their visit can be made under intimation to the Chief Electoral Officer of the State concerned.

(b) The Secretary of the said Commissions must take enough precaution that the visit is kept totally official and no political activity is undertaken by the Chairmen/Members during their visit. In such a situation, the Secretary of the Commissions should furnish a certificate to the Commission to the above effect before the visit is undertaken.

(c) A copy of the said certificate shall also be endorsed to the Chief Secretary as well as the Chief Electoral Officer of the State/UT where the visit is being undertaken.

(d) During such visits, the Chairmen/Members should not meet any Ministers/Politicians and they should also not hold public hearings or meet the public. Their meetings etc. should be only with the Government officials.

(3) The above instructions would be applicable mutatis mutandis to similar Commissions established by the State Governments.

IV. Adherence to prescribed security protocols during the MCC period

(1) At some occasions, the Star Campaigners do not adhere to the security protocols laid down by the security agencies and exposing themselves to security risk during the campaign. Attention has also been drawn that the safety provisions as prescribed in the Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 (as amended) (e.g. applying seat belt etc.) are also not being followed in some cases thereby violating the existing statutory provisions punishable under law.

(2) Commission has, time and again, emphasized on the safety and security of all candidates during campaign specifically the use of bullet proof car by the persons provided with Z+ security cover as prescribed by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Star campaigners, who have been provided with security cover by the security agencies, must adhere to the security protocols laid down to avoid any security breach which may expose them to risk. Also, all Candidates including Star Campaigners must follow the safety instructions during the use of any vehicle including helicopter etc. as prescribed under the relevant laws to avoid any mishap or accident, which may endanger the life and property of individual(s) and/or public at large.

V. Use of vehicles for election campaign—Bullet-proof vehicles provided for security reasons — instructions

(1) In the case of persons provided with Z-plus security cover and allotted bullet-proof vehicle in view of security considerations, would be permitted to use such state-owned bullet-proof vehicle during the period of operation of Model Code of Conduct. The cost of propulsion of such bullet-proof vehicles will be borne by the person concerned when it is used for non-official purposes during such period. If the person is a leader of political party in terms of the Explanations 1 and 2 under Section-77(1) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the expenditure on propulsion of the vehicle may be borne by the political party concerned for any journey referred to in the said Section-77(1). In no case, the expenditure will be borne by the government in such cases.

(2) There would be no objection, if any other person, including any political functionary or candidate, travels along with a Z+ category political functionary, who has been provided with bullet proof vehicle and for which payment is being made by him or his party.

(3) If the political functionary provided with bullet proof car is a 'Star Campaigner' in terms of Explanation (2) to Section 77(1) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the expenditure on the use of bullet proof car would not be deemed to be expenditure incurred or authorized by any candidate.

(4) If such political functionary is, however, not a Star campaigner, the expenditure on use of bullet proof car would be included in the account(s) of the candidate(s) in relation to whose election campaign such car is used.

(5) The SPG Protectees **(other than Prime Minister)** are also covered under these instructions, further subjected to the following conditions:-

(a) If the use of spare multiple vehicles has been prescribed in the case of the SPG Protectee by the security authorities due to security reasons, the same may be allowed at Govt. cost (except the vehicle used by the SPG Protectee).

(b) There may be no objection to the personal staff of the SPG Protectee accompanying the said Protectee in the B.P. car as the cost of propulsion of such bullet proof vehicle is to be paid by the Protectee or his political party where such SPG Protectee is a person covered by Section 77(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1951 (i.e. leader of the political party concerned who is called a star campaigner for the party). If any other political dignitary is allowed to accompany the SPG protectee, if the situation so warrants, then 50% of the cost of propulsion shall be booked in the election expenditure of the Party candidate from the particular Constituency concerned. However, it is further clarified that if such companion is also a star campaigner under the said Section 77(1), no such apportionment of expenditure shall be called for.

The above instructions of the Commission shall be brought to notice of all concerned for strict compliance.

Yours faithfully,

(NARENDRA N. BUTOLIA)
SR. PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 7

By Speed Post/E-mail

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 437/6/INST/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2024 (Vehicles) **Dated: 2nd January, 2024**

To

(i) The Chief Secretaries
of all States and Union Territories.

(ii) The Chief Electoral Officers
of all States and Union Territories.

Subject: -Model Code of Conduct – Instruction- Use of vehicles during elections – Regarding.

Reference: Commission's instructions:

(i) No. 437/6/94/MCS-Vol V, dated 20.10.1994

(ii) No. 437/6/98-PLN-III, dated 18.08.1999

(iii) No. 4/2001/J.S.II, dated 30.03.2001

(iv) No. 4/2001/JS-II, dated 08.05.2001

(v) No. 437/6/2006-PLN-III, dated 23.11.2007

(vi) No. 437/6/2008/CC&BE, dated 19.10.2008

(vii) No. 437/6/1/2008-CC&BE, dated 24.10.2008

(viii) No. 437/6/INST/2008-CC&BE, dated 31.10.2008

(ix) No. 437/6/INST/2008-CC&BE, dated28.03.2009

(x) No. 437/6/INST/2008-CC&BE, dated09.04.2009

(xi) No. 437/6/INST/2010-CC&BE, dated 05.10.2010

(xii) No. 464/INST/2011-EPS, dated 23.03.2011

(xiii) No. 464/INST/2011-EPS, dated 23.03.2011

(xiv) No. 464/INST/2011-EPS, dated 23.03.2011, and

(xv) No. 464/INST/2011-EPS, dated 23.03.2011

Madam/Sir,

The Commission has, in the past, issued various instructions from time to time regarding applicability of Model Code of Conduct on prevention of misuse of vehicles during elections. For convenience of all concerned, these instructions have now been consolidated in supersession of all the instructions listed above, for observance during the period when the Model Code of Conduct is in force. These instructions regarding restrictions on misuse of vehicles during elections have been issued under Article 324 of the Constitution and all other powers enabling the Commission in this behalf.

I. Ban on use of official vehicles

(1) Subject to exceptions mentioned herein, there shall be a total and absolute ban on the use of official vehicles for campaigning, electioneering or election related travel during elections. Such vehicles include helicopters, aircrafts, cars, jeeps, automobiles, goods carriers, e-vehicles or e-rickshaws, two wheelers, boats, hovercrafts, etc., except as regulated by the Commission's order on the subject, owned or hired or controlled by the Central and State Governments, Central Public Sector Organizations, Public Sector Undertakings and Joint Sector Undertakings of the Central and State Governments, Local Authorities and Local Bodies, Marketing Boards (by whatever name known), Cooperative Societies, Autonomous District Councils or any other body in which public funds, howsoever small a portion of the total, are invested. The functionaries of all the autonomous organizations viz. Chairman, Dy. Chairman, President, Vice President, Commissioners etc. may be instructed to use the official vehicle provided to them by the State Government only for commuting between office and residence and to attend any official meeting within the Head Quarters itself.

(2) The restrictions on the use of official vehicles for campaigning, electioneering or election related travel are applicable in the case of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha and the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha at the time of General Elections to the Lok Sabha and also in the case of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly at the time of General Election to any State Assembly irrespective of whether the Speaker and/or the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly is a contesting candidate or not at the General Election to the State Assembly.

(3) The District Administration shall keep a close watch to find out if any such official vehicle is being used for campaigning, electioneering or election related travel purpose. In such cases, the District Magistrate shall, forthwith, requisition or cause to be requisitioned such vehicles, after following due procedure, for election work, under Section 160 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and such requisitioned vehicles shall not be released until the completion of the process of elections.

(4) The ban on the use of official vehicles will equally apply to vehicles in or from any States not going to the polls but whose official vehicles are attempted to be used for campaign, either openly or clandestinely, in any other State going to poll. The Chief Secretary of each State/Union Territory or the Secretary to the Government of India in the concerned Department or Ministry, as the case may be, shall ensure that there is no misuse of any such vehicles. The officers under whose charge such vehicles are entrusted will be personally responsible for any violation. The use of such vehicles belonging to any of these authorities by anyone, including Ministers of the Central or a State Government, even on payment basis, for campaigning or on tours connected with elections, in the guise of, official work in their capacity as Ministers is totally prohibited.

(5) The only exception from the above prohibition will be the Prime Minister and other political personalities, who might, in view of extremist and terrorist activities and threat to their lives, require security of a high order and whose security requirements are governed by statutory provisions made by the Parliament or the State Legislature in this behalf. These restrictions shall also not be applicable in case of the Hon'ble President and Vice President of India, Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha and Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha and other such dignitaries visiting the State from other States. It is clarified here that in the case of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha and Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, these restrictions will be applicable at the time of General Elections to the Lok Sabha but not during Legislative Assembly Elections. However, such exceptions shall not be available in respect of any Ministers of the Union or any State Government.

II. Prevention of misuse of vehicles during period of Electioneering

(1) It has been experienced that during the period of electioneering private vehicles are used by the candidates, their agents and party leaders and supporters for carting the supporters of a candidate within the constituency and on many occasions anti-social elements with muscle power are openly paraded to instill a sense of fear in the minds of the electorate, so that they either vote in favour of particular party/candidate or abstain from voting altogether. These vehicles are also used sometimes to smuggle illicit arms and ammunition with a view to creating disturbances during elections. In order to curb such undesirable/illegal activities, the District Administration shall keep a close watch on the vehicles used by persons accompanying the contesting candidates and their party's leaders for any possible mischief, including criminal activities like carrying of illegal arms and weapons. If any of these vehicles, either of a party or a private owner, is found to be involved in any such act or for carting anti-social elements with a view to intimidating or creating terror in the mind of the electorate, it shall be the duty of the local administration to impound such vehicles and not to release them till the process of elections is completed. In addition, criminal action against the owner, the occupant(s)and the candidate/political party which is involved in such illegal activities shall also be taken as per law.

(2) So as to ensure free, fair and peaceful elections, the District Administration shall launch such drive for checking the vehicles immediately upon the announcement of the elections and shall continue the drive till the completion of the process of elections.

(3) Cars/vehicles being used for electioneering purposes shall, under no circumstances, be allowed to move in convoys of more than ten vehicles, excluding the security vehicles. All bigger convoys shall be broken up, even if they are carrying any minister of Central or State Govt. This shall, however, be subject to any security instructions issued in respect of any such individual. Such broken up convoys must have a distance of at least 100 meters between them.

(4) If any person moves in a convoy of vehicles exceeding the limits prescribed above, in spite of the convoy having been broken, it shall be the duty of the local administration to ensure that such vehicles are not allowed to be used by flouting the Commission's directions till the process of election is completed.

(5) In case of Video – Vans etc. to be used by a political party for campaign across the states, before any permission to use Video-Vans for campaign is given, it should be ensured by Chief Electoral Officer that such use of vehicle is in accordance with the Motor Vehicle Act. Attention in this context

is invited to the judgments dated 23.06.2006 and 14.02.2007 of the Allahabad High Court in writ petition No. 3648 (MB) of 2006.

(6) From the date of notification of the election till the completion of election process in any constituency, the district administration shall keep a close watch on the vehicles used by the contesting candidates, persons accompanying the contesting candidates and other party leaders and ensure that the Commission's instructions are not abused.

(7) The contesting candidates be asked to get the details of all the vehicles that they are using in the election campaign lodged with the District Election Officer or such other officer(s)as may be specifically authorized by the District Election Officer in this behalf before the campaigning commences. Any further deployment of any additional vehicles can take place only after notice to this effect is given by the candidate or his agent well before the actual deployment of the vehicles. While conveying the details of the vehicles that are being deployed for election campaign the details of the areas, tehsil(s) in which the vehicle would operate, should also be conveyed.

(8) The details so obtained should be conveyed by District Election Officer to the Election Expenditure Observers. The vehicles employed for election campaign as per intimation given by the candidates or their election agents to the District Administration should not be requisitioned by the administration. Any vehicle that has not been registered for campaigning with the district administration if found being used for campaigning, shall be deemed to be unauthorized campaigning for the candidate and may attract penal provisions of Chapter IX A of the Indian Penal Code and shall therefore be immediately taken out of the campaigning exercise.

(9) A cycle rickshaw is also a vehicle as defined in Section 160 of Representation of People Act, 1951, which may be used for election campaign. If it is being used, then a candidate has to account for its expenditure in his account of election expenses. To ensure this, the candidate should give details of such rickshaws being used for his election campaign and, if the rickshaw does not have any municipal registration/permit for its identification, the rickshaw driver may be given a permit in his personal name by the Returning Officer which the rickshaw driver should carry on his person while using that rickshaw for campaign purposes. However, rickshaws being used for normal purposes of carrying passengers in ordinary course etc. may be exempted, if they are displaying only one poster showing the name or party symbol of a candidate, presuming they are doing so on their own free will.

(10) If any political party(ies) having electoral alliance or seat sharing, who apply(ies) with full detail thereof, for the display on their campaign vehicles of the flags of such parties with whom they are having such alliance/seat sharing, they may be given such permission. The use of flags on the vehicles will however be subject to the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act.

III. Use of Aircraft / Helicopter by Political Parties

(1) During the election process there in a complete ban on use of aircraft by political functionaries including Chief Minister and Ministers. The only exemption is for the Prime Minister in office.

(2) Other political functionaries including Chief Ministers may, if required, hire private aircrafts and use them for their political campaign and other election related activities.

(3) Full records of all non-scheduled flights through privately owned aircrafts should be maintained by the appropriate authorities as required under law and relevant rules. Details like passenger manifests, exact times of departure and arrival of aircrafts at various places need to be maintained. Commission may seek information on these details to verify complaints which are received from time to time.

(4) The Political Functionaries/Political parties using helicopters/aircraft, for election campaign and other purposes should intimate three days in advance, regarding their itinerary and the details of persons who will travel and the materials that will be carried in the helicopter/aircrafts. The District Administration/District Election officers should maintain a log book and enter the details of the helicopters/aircraft which landed and took off in their Districts and the purpose for which they landed and the persons who were in the said aircraft/helicopter and also indicate whether the aircraft/helicopter had taken permission for landing. The District Election officers shall send daily report about the arrival and departure of such helicopters/aircrafts to the Chief Electoral Officer, concerned and endorse a copy to the Commission.

(5) No leader of a political party shall use private fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters for the purposes of supervising and monitoring the polling and counting process on the days of poll and counting as it will amount to interfere in the performance of the functions of the Election Commission as most of the leaders of all political parties have been categorized under various security grading and if they move from constituency to constituency on the days of polling and counting, adequate security precautions will have to be taken and security covers provided to each of them. The Director General of Civil Aviation shall keep the above directions of the Commission in view and shall not permit the flights of private fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters for the movement of leaders of political parties for the above purpose on the days of poll and counting, except with the prior permission of the Election Commission in the case of any emergencies.

(6) A candidate who has been declared as leader by a Political Party for the purposes of Explanation to Section 77(1), cannot not considered to be a leader of his political party **in his own constituency** within the meaning of Explanation (1) to section 77(1), whatever may be his standing in relation to other candidates of his party in the other constituencies. In his own constituency(ies), he is a candidate first. Thus, whatever expenditure he incurs on his own travel within his constituency(ies), on his travel whether by helicopter/aircraft or by any other means of transport, the same has to be accounted for within his overall limit of maximum expenditure prescribed for his constituency. When he goes out of his constituency to the other constituency as a star campaigner, the expenditure on his travel from his constituency to the other constituency would fall within the exempted category under Explanation (1) to section 77(1), and so also his travel expenditure from the other constituency to his own constituency when he comes back for his own campaign would be so exempted. But once he reaches his constituency and travels within the said constituency, his expenditure on such travel within his constituency would be liable to be accounted for by him.

IV. Vehicle permit for district officer bearers of recognized political party

(1) If any political party applies for permission for vehicles to be used by their district level office bearers/leaders (other than star campaigners) for their visit to multiple Assembly Constituencies within the District for electioneering purposes, necessary permission should be given by the DEO of the District concerned.

(2) In such cases, the permit shall be in the name of the person, while also mentioning the registration No. of the vehicle. The expenditure on this vehicle shall be booked/distributed in the election expenses of the party's candidate(s) of the district where they have visited. This permit should not be used for travel in other districts.

(3) The permit should be issued indicating the name of the political leader, the (regn.) No. of the vehicle and also the period for which issued. The permit may be issued on a paper of a colour different from those used for issuing permits to candidates and star campaigners, so that it can be easily recognized. An attested copy of the permit shall be prominently displayed on wind screen of the vehicle and the original be kept by the person for checking by police or any other authorities. The surveillance teams should also be informed in the matter.

V. Use of Road Transport by Party Campaigners availing benefit to clause (a) of explanation given under Section 77(1) of the RP Act, 1951

1) In case the mode of road transport is to be availed by political parties availing the benefit of clause (a) of explanation given under Sec. 77(1) of Representation of the People Act, 1951, the permit will be issued centrally by the Chief Electoral Officer irrespective of whether the same vehicle is to be used by any leader for election campaigning throughout the State or different vehicles are to be used by such party leaders in different areas. The permit will be issued against the name of the person concerned who will display it prominently on the windscreen of the vehicle being used by him/her in any area. The permits so issued by the Chief electoral Officer will be of distinctly different colours from the permits to be issued by the District Election Officers/Returning Officers for candidates.

2) If the vehicle so permitted in item (i) above is also occupied by any other person than the leader referred to in item (i), in that case, the 50% expenditure of the same shall be booked in the expenditure of concerned party contesting candidate from that constituency.

The above instructions of the Commission shall be brought to notice of all concerned for strict compliance.

Yours faithfully,

(NARENDRA N. BUTOLIA)
SR. PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 8

By Speed Post/E-mail

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 437/6/INST/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2024 (Election Manifestos) **Dated: 2nd January, 2024**

To

(i) (i) The Chief Secretaries
of all States and Union Territories.

(ii) The Chief Electoral Officers
of all States and Union Territories.

(iii) President/Chairperson/General Secretaries
of all recognized National and State Political Parties

Subject: - Model Code of Conduct – Instruction- Election Manifestos – Regarding.

Reference: Commission's instructions:

(i) No. 437/6/Manifesto/2015/CC dated 24.04.2015

(ii) No. 437/6/Manifesto/2015/CC dated 24.04.2015

(iii) No. 437/6/INST/2016/CCS dated 23.08.2016, and

(iv) No. 437/6/INST/2016/CCS dated 27.12.2016

Madam/Sir,

As you are aware that on the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Commission, after consultation with the political parties, framed guidelines for election manifestos and incorporated the same in the "Model Code of Conduct for the Guidance of the Political Parties and Candidates". A number of instructions in the matter have been issued by the Commission since then. Following are the consolidated instructions in supersession of all the instructions issued vide letters listed above:

(i) Chief Electoral Officer should obtain three copies of the Election Manifestos from the Political Parties along with its Hindi/English version (if the original version is in regional language) within three days of its release.

Further, the Commission is of the view that the Political Parties and candidates while releasing their election manifesto for any election to the Parliament or State Legislatures, should adhere to the guidelines, particularly, Para 8(iii) of Model Code of Conduct. In this regard, all the political parties should submit a declaration along with its manifesto that the program/policies and promises made therein are in consonance with Para-VIII of MCC which inter-alia provides that:-

"(iii) in the interest of transparency, level playing field and credibility of promise, it is expected that manifesto also reflect the rationale for the promises and broadly indicate the ways and means to meet the

financial requirement for it. Trust of voters should be sought only on those promise which are possible to be fulfilled."

(ii) Prohibitory period of Release of Manifesto during elections(s)

a. In case of single-phase election, manifesto shall not be released during the prohibitory period, as prescribed under Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

b. In case of multi-phase elections, manifesto shall not be released during the prohibitory periods, as prescribed under Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, of all the phases of those elections.

The above instructions of the Commission shall be brought to notice of all concerned for strict compliance.

Yours faithfully,

(NARENDRA N. BUTOLIA)
SR. PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 9

By Speed Post/E-mail

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Tel. No. 011-23052144
Fax 011-23052001
Website: www.eci.gov.in

निर्वाचन सदन,
अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001
Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No.464/L&O/2023/EPS(Use of Veh.) **Dated:26th June, 2023**

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
all States/UTs

Subject: USE OF VEHICLE DURING ELECTIONS BY POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES DURING ELECTION PERIOD-REGARDING.

Reference: Commission's Instructions on the subject:

(i) No.464/INST/2006/PLN-I dated 17.03.2006

(ii) No.464/BR-LA/2010 dated 16.10.2010

(iii) No.464/BR-LA/2010 dated 22.10.2010

(iv) No.464/INST/2011/EPS dated 23.03.2011

(v) No.464/INST/2011/EPS dated 23.03.2011

(vi) No.464/INST/2011/EPS dated 28.03.2011

(vii) No.464/INST/2011/EPS dated 28.03.2011

(viii) No.464/INST/2013/EPS dated 08.10.2013

(ix) No.464/INST/2013/EPS dated 11.11.2013

(x) No.464/INST/2014/EPS dated 20.03.2014

(xi) No.464/INST/2014/EPS dated 03.04.2014

(xii) No.464/INST/2014/EPS dated 10.04.2014

(xiii) No. 464/INST/2014/EPS dated 19.09.2014

(xiv) No.464/INST/2015/EPS dated 30.09.2015

(xv) No.470/INST/2018-EPS dated 18.11.2018

Madam/Sir,

All political parties and candidates contesting election use various kinds of vehicles for their election campaigns. In order to regulate use of vehicles by political parties and candidates to ensure level playing field amongst all contesting political parties and candidates, it is essential to issue detailed guidelines on use of

vehicles, owned or hired or controlled by the Governments or its PSUs or any local authorities, which are termed as 'official vehicles' here, during the election period. It is also essential that use of private vehicles used by political parties and candidates are regulated during election period to control use of money power.

Section 160 of Representation of the People Act 1951 has definition of "vehicle", although in a different context of requisition of vehicles by election authorities, and provides a benchmark for reference.

Following are the consolidated instructions, in supersession of the Commission's instructions under reference, on the use of vehicles by political parties and candidates during election period:

1. Ban on use of official vehicles:

(a). Subject to exceptions mentioned herein, there shall be a total and absolute ban on the use of official vehicles for campaigning, electioneering or election related travel during elections. Such vehicles include helicopters, aircrafts, cars, jeeps, automobiles, goods carriers, e-vehicles or e-rickshaws, two wheelers, boats, hovercrafts, etc., except as regulated by the Commission's order on the subject, owned or hired or controlled by the Central and State Governments, Central Public Sector Organizations, Public Sector Undertakings and Joint Sector Undertakings of the Central and State Governments, Local Authorities and Local Bodies, Marketing Boards (by whatever name known), Cooperative Societies, Autonomous District Councils or any other body in which public funds, howsoever small a portion of the total, are invested.

(b). The District Administration shall keep a close watch to find out if any such official vehicle is being used for campaigning, electioneering or election related travel purpose. In such cases, the District Magistrate shall, forthwith, requisition or cause to be requisitioned such vehicles, after following due procedure, for election work, under Section 160 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and such requisitioned vehicles shall not be released until the completion of the process of elections.

(c). The ban on the use of official vehicles will equally apply to vehicles in or from any States not going to the polls but whose official vehicles are attempted to be used for campaign, either openly or clandestinely, in any other State going to poll. The Chief Secretary of each State/Union Territory or the Secretary to the Government of India in the concerned Department or Ministry, as the case may be, shall ensure that there is no misuse of any such vehicles The officers under whose charge such vehicles are entrusted will be personally responsible for any violation.

The use of such vehicles belonging to any of these authorities by anyone, including Ministers of the Central or a State Government, even on payment basis, for campaigning or on tours connected with elections, in the guise of, official work in their capacity as Ministers is totally prohibited.

(d). The only exception from the above prohibition will be the Prime Minister and other political personalities, who might, in view of extremist and terrorist activities and threat to their lives, require security of a high order and whose security requirements are governed by statutory provisions made by the Parliament or the State Legislature in this behalf. These restrictions shall also not be applicable in case of the Hon'ble President and Vice President of India, Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha and Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha and other such dignitaries visiting the State from other States. It is clarified here that in the case of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha and Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, these restrictions **will be applicable at the time of General Elections to the Lok Sabha but not during Legislative Assembly Elections**. However, such exceptions shall not be available in respect of any Ministers of the Union or any State Government.

2. Review or assessment of security cover:

It is clarified that if there is any material to doubt that the assessment of security requirements made by the authorities under Special Protection Group Act, 1988 or any other special enactment/instruction of the appropriate Governments have been manifestly or unduly excessive with the intention of promoting indirectly the electoral interests of a particular political party or candidates, the Commission shall bring the matter to the notice of the concerned Government for immediate and appropriate corrective steps.

The Commission may also call for any information from the Central Government or the State Government concerned with regard to the assessment of the security requirements made in respect of any such personality. Such information shall be furnished to the Commission by the concerned Government forthwith.

3. Issue of permits for vehicles by DEO:

(a) There is no limit on number of vehicles a candidate may use for campaigning or electioneering purpose. The candidate has to furnish following details, before the campaigning commences, to the District Election Officer or such other officer(s) as may be specifically authorized by the District Election Officer in his behalf, who after necessary scrutiny would issue permits for every vehicle:

i) Details of vehicles such as registration details, fitness certificates, name and particulars of the owners and drivers.

ii) Areas in which vehicles would be used for campaigning purposes;

The original copy (not the photo copy) of permit shall be displayed on the wind screen of the vehicle. The copy of the permit should be of such dimension which can easily be seen from a distance. Permit must contain the vehicle number, date of issue of permit, name of candidate and area where it shall be used for campaigning. Such vehicles shall be subject to checks by any competent authorities or FST, SST etc.

(b) Vehicles can only be used after obtaining necessary permits for every such vehicle, as above, by the candidate or his/her election agent.

(c) Details of vehicles used for campaigning or electioneering purpose by candidates shall be conveyed to Election Expenditure Observers by District Election Officer to check whether the expenditure in this regard has been included in the expenditure account of the candidates.

(d) Any vehicle used for campaigning without due authorization or permit shall be deemed unauthorized for campaigning for the candidate and may attract penal provisions of Chapter IX A of the Indian Penal Code (Offences Relating to Elections) and shall therefore be immediately taken out of the campaigning exercise.

(e) The vehicles duly deployed for election campaign as per intimation given by the candidates or their election agents to District Administration should not be requisitioned by the administration.

(f) On request of a recognized political party, the DEO shall issue permit for one vehicle to be used by the district level office bearer of a recognized political party (other than the star campaigner) for their visit to multiple ACs within the district for electioneering purposes. The permit should be issued indicating the vehicle number, the name of political party, name of district, route map, date wise movement plan

and the period for which it is issued and should be of different color so that it can easily be identified. An attested copy shall be pasted on wind screen and original be kept with the driver for checking by police or other competent authorities or FST, SST etc. The expenditure in this regard shall be booked against the political party and not in the election expense account of the candidate(s). It is clarified that this provision will be applicable in case of any by-election in a constituency.

(g) The District Administration shall keep a close watch and prevent the misuse of private vehicles by candidates, their agents, political party leaders or supporters. This misuse may include transporting anti-social elements with the intent to instill fear among the electorate or smuggling illicit arms and ammunition to create disturbances. If any of these vehicles, either of a political party or candidates or a private owner, are found to be involved in any such act, it shall be the duty of the local administration to impound such vehicles and not to release them till the process of elections is completed. In addition, legal action in accordance with the law shall be taken against the owner, occupant(s) and the candidate/ political party involved in such unlawful acts.

4. Issue of permits for vehicles by CEO-

The Chief Electoral Officer may issue permits for vehicles that can move throughout the State for use of officer bearers of recognized political parties for distribution of campaign material in following manner:

(a) If any recognized political party makes a request to CEO for grant of vehicle permission for distribution of publicity material to their various party offices in the State, the CEO may grant permission for number of vehicles equal to Number of Assembly Constituencies in the State divided by 25 (Twenty-five) or Number of Parliamentary Constituencies in the State divided by 3 (Three), as the case may be, rounded off to the nearest integer. It is clarified that this provision will not be applicable in case of any by-election.

(b) The recognized political party (the applicant) will have to furnish the details regarding the names of the districts, the route map and details of the vehicles, name of the driver, fitness certificate, date-wise movement plan of the vehicle etc. For such vehicles, the CEO may issue permission, but ensure that such vehicles will also be subject to normal checks by competent authorities, police, check-posts, FST, SST etc. and these vehicles will not be used for election campaigning in anyway. The expenditure on account of such vehicles shall be incurred by the political party and not by the candidates.

(c) For any permission to be issued by CEO for use of Video Vans for campaigning by political parties, the compliance of the following guidelines shall be ensured *(Order dated 23rd June 2006 and 14th February 2007 of the Allahabad High Court in Writ Petition 3648 (MB) of 2006)*:

(i) The permission to use Video Vans for campaign purpose can be granted at Chief Electoral Officer level only.

(ii) Any political party/candidate seeking permission to use video vans from Chief Electoral Office should first obtain necessary permissions/no objection certificates from the Competent Authority under the relevant Motor Vehicle Act. This certification is required to ensure the conformity with the Motor Vehicle Act/relevant provisions of law and Court orders, if any, on this subject for plying of Video Vans on the road.

(iii) The contents of material for election publicity on the Video Van shall be pre-certified from MCMCs. The video van of the political party should be used to campaign based on its program and policies. Votes or support for any particular candidate should not be solicited. However, if

it is used for seeking votes/support for a candidate/candidate then expenditure of video van shall be accounted for by such candidate/candidates appropriately. Expenditure Observers to closely monitor this.

(iv) Though there is no restriction on the number of Video Vans which can be used in campaigning, but the expenditure incurred shall be duly included in the election expenditure account of the political party, to be submitted to the Commission, as provided, subject to condition in point (iii).

(v) Route of Video Vans to be used for publicity/campaigning should be informed to local administration/District Election Officer in advance to ensure equitable use of campaign sites or public places. In case of violation, the permissions for Video Van may be withdrawn, after due notice, by CEO.

(d) For availing the benefit of clause (a) of explanation (1) of Section 77 (1) of Representation of the People Act 1951 by the leaders of the political parties ***(i.e., star campaigners)***, the permission for the mode of road transport will be issued centrally by the Chief Electoral Officer, irrespective of whether the same vehicle is to be used by the star campaigner for election campaigning throughout the State or different vehicles are to be used by such star campaigner in different areas. The permit will be issued against the name of the star campaigner concerned and shall be displayed prominently on the windscreen of the vehicle being used by him/her in any area. The permits so issued by the CEO will be of distinctly different color from the permits to be issued by the CEO, DEO or any competent authorities for other campaign vehicles of candidates.

5. Restriction on number of vehicles to be used during different phases of election:

I. When vehicles are moving in convoy:

(a) The Commission directs that cars/vehicles shall, under no circumstances, be allowed to move in convoys of more than ten vehicles, excluding the security vehicles. All bigger convoys exceeding ten vehicles shall be broken up, even if, they are carrying any Minister of Central or State Government or any other person subject to any security instructions issued in respect of any such individual. Further, the convoy of vehicles being used in road show shall be broken after every 10 vehicles and a gap of 100 meters would be maintained.

(b) Even when a convoy of vehicles is adhering to the regulations stated in sub para (a) above, it shall be the duty of the local administration to ensure that such vehicles are not allowed to be used by flouting any directions of the Commission, till the process of election is completed.

II. During Filing of Nominations:

The maximum of three vehicles shall be allowed to come within the periphery of 100 meters of offices of Returning Officers/Assistant Returning Officers. This periphery of 100 meters should be clearly demarcated by RO/DEO.

III. Use of vehicles on poll day:

(a) Section 123(5) of the Representation of the People Act 1951 provides that hiring or procuring or use of vehicles by a candidate/his agent or by any other person with the consent of the candidate or his election agent to provide free conveyance to the voters for the polling station shall be a 'corrupt

practice' and it is also an electoral offence punishable under Section 133 of the Representation of the People Act 1951.

(b) The Commission has issued the following directions to curb such malpractices effectively:

(I) For an election to Lok Sabha, each contesting candidate, on the day of poll, will be entitled to:

(i) One vehicle for his own use in respect of entire PC;

(ii) One vehicle for use of his election agent in respect of PC; and

(iii) One vehicle for use of his election agent or workers or party workers, as the case may be, in every assembly segment comprised in the PC.

(II) For an election to the State Legislative Assembly, on the day of poll each contesting candidate is entitled to:

(i) One vehicle for his own use;

(ii) One vehicle for use of his election agent in respect of AC; and

(iii) One vehicle for use of his election agent or workers

(c) The permits for the vehicles indicated above will be issued by the Returning Officer (RO). The candidates must furnish particulars of their vehicle to be used on poll day to RO concerned and shall display the permits issued on the wind-screen of the vehicles. No other vehicle shall be allowed to be used by the leaders of the political parties including Ministers, workers, agents and sympathizers of any candidate and no exception shall be made, irrespective of the status of the candidates.

IV. Use of vehicle by public: There is no intention on the part of the Commission to put a complete ban on all vehicular traffic on the polling day and thereby create difficulties or cause harassment to the public. For genuine *bona fide* use for purposes other than election, the following types of vehicles shall also be allowed on the day of poll and there will be no exception to this:

i) Private vehicles being used by the owners for their private use, not connected with elections;

ii) Private vehicles being used by owners either for themselves or for members of their own family for going to the polling booth to exercise their franchise, but not going anywhere within a radius of 200 meters of any Polling Stations;

iii) Vehicles used for essential services namely hospital vans, ambulances, milk vans, water tankers, electricity emergency duty vans, police on duty, officer on election duty etc.;

iv) public transport carriages like buses playing between fixed terminals and on fixed routes;

v) Taxis, three-wheeler scooters, rickshaws etc. for going to airports, railway stations, inter-state bus stands, hospitals for journey which cannot be avoided;

vi) Private vehicles used by sick or disabled persons for their own use;

vii) Vehicles being used by the Govt. officers on duty to reach their duty point.

The abovementioned restrictions shall apply to all vehicles propelled by mechanical power or otherwise, including but not restricted to taxies, private cars, trucks, tractors with or without trailers, e-vehicles, auto-rickshaw, e-rickshaws, two wheelers, mini buses, station wagons etc., also, and shall be made applicable for a period of 24 hours before the time fixed for closure of poll and till the completion of poll.

6. Use of vehicles not propelled by mechanical power:

A cycle rickshaw, horse drawn carriages, bullock carts etc. are capable of being used for election campaigning; hence, the candidate has to account for its expenditure in his/her account of election expenses. The candidate shall give details of such vehicles being used for his/her election campaign and, if such vehicles do not have any municipal registration/permit for its identification, the drivers/ owners may be given a permit in their personal names by the Returning Officer which the drivers/ owners should carry on their person while using such vehicles for campaign purposes.

7. Display of vehicles:

Display of flag, stickers, posters etc. on commercial vehicles shall not be permitted unless such vehicle is a vehicle being validly used for election campaign after obtaining the requisite permit from the specified authority.

8. Responsibility to comply with all Laws:

Candidates or leaders of Political Parties shall have responsibility to follow all the guidelines or directions issued by competent authority under the Motor Vehicles Act for all such vehicles against which permission is given to use during election period. Penal action, under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1951, Chapter IX A of the Indian Penal Code, Motor Vehicles Act etc., shall be taken against anyone offending the above directions.

9. Compliance of Model Code of Conduct to be ensured:

All provisions of the Model Code of Conduct, issued by the Commission, pertaining to use of official vehicles, use of air assets, use of private vehicles, exemptions and all connected issues shall be complied, if not already covered in this instruction for compliance, by the political parties and candidates, as the case may be.

10. Permits to be expeditiously issued:

District Election Officer shall ensure that permits to use vehicles during elections are issued expeditiously and hassle-free manner, preferably, on the same day of the submission of the applications by political parties and candidates, provided all the required documents are submitted along with the applications. If applications are submitted after 6:00 pm on the day, it shall be ensured that permits are issued on the next day.

11. Suvidha Portal:

This Portal allows the candidates, political parties or any representatives of the candidates to apply online for the permission inter alia for vehicles, meetings, rallies, loudspeakers, venue etc. through SUVIDHA Portal https://suvidha.eci.gov.in/ and they may track their application status through the same portal.

This is for compliance by all concerned.

Yours faithfully

(SANJEEV KUMAR PRASAD)
SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 10

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

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निर्वाचन सदन,
अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001
Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 464/INST-PA/2023-EPS **Dated:14th June, 2023**

To

The Chief Electoral Offices of
all States & Union Territories.

Subject: General Election and Bye election to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies – Appointment of Polling Agents – comprehensive directions – reg.

Reference:

i.	464/INST/2006-PLN-I	Dated 07.04.2006
ii.	464/INST/2007/PLN-I	Dated 24.02.2007
iii.	464/INST/2007-PLN-I	Dated 12.10.2007
iv.	464/INST/2008/EPS	Dated 14.10.2008
v.	464/INST/2008/EPS	Dated 18.12.2008
vi.	464/INST/2008/EPS	Dated 21.01.2009
vii.	464/INST/2009/EPS	Dated 10.03.2009
viii.	464/INST/2009/EPS	Dated 25.04.2009
ix.	464/INST/2009/EPS	Dated 28.04.2009
x.	464/INST/2009/EPS	Dated 09.05.2009
xi.	464/INST/2009/EPS	Dated 12.05.2009
xii.	464/INST/2011/EPS	Dated 11.04.2011
xiii.	464/INST/2014/EPS	Dated 01.04.2014
xiv.	464/INST/2014/EPS	Dated 04.05.2014
xv.	464/INST/2014/EPS	Dated 05.05.2014
xvi.	464/INST/2021/EPS	Dated 18.03.2021

Madam/Sir,

It is not feasible for a candidate to be physically available at every Polling Station on the day of poll. Section 46 of the Representation of the People Act 1951 read with Rule 13 of the Conduct of Elections Rules 1961 provides that a candidate or his Election Agent can appoint one Polling Agent and two relief Polling Agents for each Polling Station.

The presence of Polling Agents of the contesting candidates during the poll is a sure indicator of transparency in the process and also reduces the scope for malpractices and complaints. Hence, it becomes imperative on the part of electoral authorities and Observers to keep a vigil and monitor whether Polling Agents of the contesting candidates are present during the poll or not.

The Commission, in the past, had issued above 16 referred instructions regarding Polling Agents from time to time. For the sake of clarity, following consolidated instructions are being issued in supersession of all the above instructions.

1. Qualification for Polling Agent:

(i) The law does not prescribe any qualification for a person to be appointed as a Polling Agent.

(ii) The Polling Agents is expected to see the interest of the candidate in the Polling Station on Poll Day, it is expected and preferable that a local person who is an elector and ordinary resident of the same or, at most, neighbouring Polling Station is appointed as a Polling Agent. The Commission has further relaxed the norms and now the Polling Agents can be appointed, in case of any difficulty to appoint Polling Agents as above, from amongst any elector of the same Assembly Constituency area.

(iii) The polling agent must have Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC) or any other alternative document as prescribed by the Commission.

(iv) There is no restriction on appointing Gram Panchayat Pradhan/Gram Panchayat Sarpanch/ Panchayat members, Councillors or Members of Municipal Corporation or Municipality and local persons, as Polling Agents.

2. Dis-qualification for appointment of Polling Agents:

(i) To ensure level playing field among the candidates and political parties, following categories are **not** allowed to be a Polling Agent and relief Polling Agent:

(a) Sitting Minister either of Union Government or of a State Government, Member of Parliament, Member of Legislative Assembly, Legislative Council.

(b) Mayor of a Corporation or Chairperson of Municipality/Zila Parishad/Panchayat Union, etc.

(c) Chairpersons and Members of Central PSUs/State PSUs, Govt. Bodies/Corporation.

(d) Persons receiving any honorarium from Government or Persons working on part time in any Govt./ Govt. Aided Institutions.

(e) Para Medical/Healthcare staff working in Govt./Govt. Aided institutions, Fair Price Shop dealers, Anganwadi Employees.

(f) Person in the service of the Government *[This is an offence and Under Section 134-A of the R.P. Act 1951 and such appointees are punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 (three) months, or with fine, or with both]*.

(ii) It is further clarified that any person having security cover will not be allowed to surrender his security cover to act as such Polling Agent of a candidate during an election.

3. Appointment of Polling Agent:

(i) Based on the qualification and dis-qualification criteria as mentioned in para 1 & 2 above, the Polling Agents and relief Polling Agents can be appointed by the Candidate or by his Election Agent.

(ii) This appointment is to be made in Form 10 *(Rule 13 of Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961)*, sufficiently in advance and not less than seven days before poll day, to avoid any last-minute changes and revocation by the Candidate.

(iii) This Form is to be duly signed by the Candidate or his Election Agent, which is to be handed over to the Presiding Officer by the Polling Agent at the Polling Station. Polling Agent has to sign the declaration mentioned in Form 10 before the Presiding Officer.

(iv) The Presiding Officer shall check genuineness of the appointment of the Polling Agent by checking specimen signature of Candidate/Election Agent from the Format **(Annexure-I)** supplied by the Returning Officer.

(v) The Polling Agents shall display their appointment order and EPIC on their person throughout their presence inside Polling Station.

(vi) In case of any change of the Election Agent of the candidate at the last moment, when the Presiding Officer has already been supplied with the copy of the format containing the specimen signature as originally furnished by the candidate, then it shall be the responsibility of the candidate concerned to supply a copy of revocation of the Election Agent *(Form-9 of Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961)* and a copy of the appointment of new Election Agent *(Form-8 of Conduct of Elections Rules,1961)*.

4. Revocation of Appointment and Intimation of Fresh Appointment:

(i) The candidate or his Election Agent can also revoke the appointment of a Polling Agent by filling Form-11 (Conduct of Elections Rules 1961).

(ii) If the appointment of any Polling Agent is revoked or if any Polling Agent dies before the close of the poll, the candidate or his Election Agent can appoint another Polling Agent at any time before the poll is over.

5. Polling Agents in Polling Stations:

(i) Returning Officer shall issue written notice to all contesting candidates or their Election Agent, in advance, that their Polling Agents should reach the Polling Station at least 90 minutes before the time fixed for the commencement of poll, so that they do not miss the important events like Mock Poll, sealing of EVMs etc.

(ii) Seating arrangements of polling agents should be made inside the polling station in such a way that they can recognise the electors entering the Polling Station but could not see actual recording of votes by the electors.

(iii) The seating order of priority of polling agents in the Polling Stations shall be as under:

- Candidates of recognized National parties,
- Candidates of recognized State parties,
- Candidates of recognized State parties of other States who have been permitted to use their reserved symbols in the constituency,
- Candidate of registered unrecognized parties, and
- Independent candidates.

(iv) In case polling station has no sufficient space or the respective constituency is having abnormally large number of contesting candidates warranting the presence of a large number of Polling Agents, the DEO shall take appropriate fair decisions in advance. A list of such polling station(s) shall be prepared and provided to concerned Observer(s).

(v) Out of Polling Agents or relief Polling Agents, only one can remain present inside the polling station at one time. Whoever is inside the Polling Station, will be treated as Polling Agent of the candidate for that time being and has the same rights and responsibilities as given to the Polling Agent by law.

(vi) Polling Agent is allowed to carry his/her copy of electoral rolls inside the polling station and make tick marks whenever voters cast their vote. **Under no circumstances, the polling agent should be allowed to bring his/her copy of the electoral roll outside the polling station, either by himself or through the relieving agent, during the course of the polling and till the polling is closed. Further, they cannot be allowed to send slips outside indicating the serial numbers of the voters who have voted or not voted**.

(vii) The Polling Agents shall remain present in the Polling Station throughout the polling so they don't miss the last crucial events such as signing of various declaration/forms, closure of poll, sealing process etc.

(viii) To ensure not more than one Polling Agent or relief Polling Agent of a particular candidate remains present inside the polling station at any given point of time, Presiding Officer shall issue the **Entry Pass (Annexure-II)** in favour of the Polling Agent of each of the candidates and maintain a record of entry passes in the prescribed format as enclosed at **Annexure-III** and kept in the envelope for depositing with other election materials at the Reception Centre. Polling Agent or Relief Polling Agent can enter and remain present inside the Polling Station, only after showing his entry pass, which is to be displayed on his person.

(ix) Polling/Relieving Polling Agent's Movement Sheet **(Annexure-IV)** should be provided for each Polling Station, in which each and every Polling Agent shall be required to sign indicating the time during which he was at the Polling Station. This sheet shall be handed over after poll at the Reception Centre along with other documents. The Observer, Sector Officer/ Magistrate, senior officers who visit the Polling Station during the course of poll shall also ensure that the aforesaid sheet is being properly maintained.

6. Material to be brought by polling agents:

Polling Agent should bring the following items to the polling station:

(i) Original Letter of appointment in Form -10;

(ii) A copy of the latest integrated electoral roll for the Polling Station.

(iii) A small brass seal, if he/she desires to put seal on the carrying case(s) of the Ballot Units(s), Control Unit and VVPAT before they are transported to the Counting/Receipt Centre;

(iv) Pen, paper and pencil;

(v) Details of EVM (Control and Ballot units) and VVPAT to be used in the polling station as provided by the Returning Officer and/or by the Candidate.

7. Role and functions of Polling Agent:

(a) Conduct of Mock Poll before start of actual Poll in Polling Station:

(i) Polling Agent should be available at the respective Polling Station at least 90 minutes before the start of actual poll to participate in mock poll. They may ensure that Ballot Unit(s) and VVPAT are kept inside the voting compartment and Control Unit is kept on the table of Polling Officer-III/Presiding Officer.

(ii) Mock Poll shall be started 90 minutes before the commencement of actual poll time in the presence of at least two candidates/Polling Agents. The Presiding Officer may wait for 15 minutes before conducting the mock poll, if minimum two candidates/Agents are not present. In such cases, Presiding Officer shall make a specific mention in this regard, in the prescribed Mock Poll Certificate. Polling Agent is authorised to sign the mock poll certificate. In the Mock Poll, at least 50 votes are cast (minimum one vote to each candidate button including NOTA).

(iii) The Polling Stations not having the presence of Agents of the candidates of recognized parties and where the Mock Poll had to be conducted in the absence of any agent or in the presence of only one Polling Agent, Presiding Officer shall intimate the same to the Returning Officer/Sector Officer. In such case, interventions such as deployment of Micro Observers, deployment of video cameras (if not already done or webcasting provided), frequent visits by Sector Officer and other senior officers should be ensured.

(b) Sealing of EVMs and VVPATs before start of actual Poll:

(i) Before starting of actual poll, the Presiding Officer seals the Control Unit and VVPAT drop box with paper seals. The Polling Agents are allowed to sign the paper seals.

(ii) Polling Agents are allowed to note down the serial numbers of paper seals so supplied for use and actually used.

(c) Demonstration before commencement of poll by the Presiding Officer (Rule 33/33A Conduct of Election rules 1961):

(i) Marked copy of the electoral roll to be used at the Polling Station *(It shall not contain any entry or mark other than those made for Postal Ballot/EDC in pursuance of Rule 20(2) (b)/ Rule 23(2) (b) of the Conduct of Elections Rules 1961)*.

(ii) The list of Classified Services Voters (CSVs) appointed proxies/if any.

(iii) Register of Voters (Form 17A) to show that the register is blank and no entry in respect of any elector has already been made therein.

(iv) Before the first voter signs in Form-17 A (Register of Voters), the **Polling Officer-1** shall check with the Presiding Officer and record in ink in Form 17A that "Total in the Control Unit checked and found to be Zero".

(v) The Presiding Officer reads out the declaration prescribed by the Commission and sign the declaration. The willing Polling Agents may also sign. If any Polling Agent declines to affix

his signature on the declaration, the Presiding Officer shall record the name of such Polling Agent in that declaration.

8. Voting Procedure:

(i) First Polling Officer is in-charge of the marked copy of electoral roll and responsible for identification of the voters. A Voter enters the Polling Station, First Polling Officer identifies the voter and marks his/her presence in Marked Electoral Roll.

When an elector is allowed to cast vote at the Polling Station, a line will be drawn, in red ink, diagonally across the box containing the particulars pertaining to that elector in the Marked Electoral Roll. Further, for easy verification and calculation of number of male and female voters, the serial number of the voter will be rounded off in the case of female voters.

(ii) Second Polling Officer, who is in-charge of Register of Voters (Form-17A), Indelible Ink and Voter's slips *(NOT Voter Information Slip)* makes the entries of the voter's name including EPIC/any of the other alternative document prescribed by the Election Commission of India and obtain the signature of the voters or the thumb impression (in the case of illiterate voters) in the Register of Voters (Form 17A). Thereafter, marks the indelible ink *(Rule 37 Conduct of Election rules 1961)* and issues voter's slip to the voters indicating his/her serial number as mentioned in Form 17A.

(iii) Third Polling Officer is the custodian of the Control Unit (CU) and activates the Ballot Unit (BU) by pressing BALLOT button of the CU and allows the voter to go inside the voting compartment to cast vote, in the order of the serial number on the voter's slip issued by the Second Polling Officer.

(iv) In order to ensure that no elector has committed any mischief by pasting any paper, tapes etc., on the symbol/ names / ballot button, the presiding officer may from time to time make an inspection of Ballot Unit (BU) but he should make it a point to do so in the immediate presence of polling agents under *Rule 49Q of Conduct of Election Rules, 1961*.

9. Challenged Vote *(Rule 36 of Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961)*:

The Polling Agents can also challenge the identity of a person claiming to be a particular elector by depositing a sum of Rs.2 in cash with the Presiding Officer for each such challenge. The Presiding Officer shall hold a summary inquiry into the challenge. If after the inquiry the Presiding Officer considers that the challenge has not been established, he shall allow the person challenged to vote. If he considers that the challenge has been established, the Presiding Officer shall debar the person challenged from voting and shall handover such person to the police with a written complaint. All such complaints to the Police should be vigorously pursued and prosecutions launched against the offenders so that they are convicted and suitably punished.

10. Voting by ASD (Absent, Shifted, Dead) Voters:

In order to prevent impersonation of ASD electors at the time of poll, following procedure may be adopted by the Presiding Officer, which shall be closely observed by the Polling Agents:

(i) A list of ASD voters should be prepared Polling Station wise and provided to Presiding Officer.

(ii) On the day of poll, in order to cast one's vote, the elector, who is in such list, shall have to produce EPIC for his identification or any one of the alternative photo documents prescribed by the Commission.

The Presiding Officer shall verify the identification document personally and the details properly registered by the Polling Officer concerned in the Register of Voters (Form-17A).

(iii) The first Polling Officer shall inform the Polling Agents about the ASD electors who have come to vote by reading out his/her name loudly. Thumb impression of such electors, even in the case of an elector who is literate and can sign, shall also be obtained in addition to signature against the column of signature/thumb impression" of Register of Voters (Form-17A).

(iv) Presiding Officer shall maintain a record and give a certificate (Annexure-V) at the end of the poll (to be kept with Form-17A for scrutiny, if decided).

(v) ASD electors may be photographed for record, wherever possible.

11. Precautions Against Voting by Underage Voters:

(i) The eligibility of a person whose name is included in the electoral roll to be a voter cannot be questioned or enquired into by the Presiding Officer at the Polling Station.

(ii) If the Presiding Officer is prima facie satisfied about the identity of a voter and also about the fact of inclusion of his name in the electoral roll but considers such person to be below the minimum voting age based on his/her own assessment or based on complaint by any Polling Agent, then the Presiding Officer shall obtain a declaration in the prescribed form **(Annexure-VI)** from the person concerned about his age.

(iii) Before obtaining the declaration from such elector, the Presiding Officer will inform him of the penal provisions in *Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act 1950* for making a false declaration relating to the inclusion of his name in the electoral roll.

(iv) Such voters are to be photographed, as far as possible, for record.

12. Printing Errors in the Electoral Rolls to be overlooked:

The particulars in respect of a voter as entered in the electoral roll are sometimes incorrectly printed. Polling Agent should overlook mere clerical or printing errors in any entry relating to a voter's age in the printed roll and should not raise any objection about such voter, if Polling Agent is otherwise satisfied about the identity of that voter. When the electoral roll has been prepared in more than one language and the name of a person has not been included in the marked copy of the electoral roll, the Presiding Officer has been instructed to allow such voter to vote if his name appears in the version of the electoral roll in the other language. Polling Agent is advised not to raise any objection in respect of such a voter.

13. Tendered Votes:

(i) It may happen that a person claiming to be a particular elector comes forward to vote after some other person has already voted as such elector. In that case, if the Presiding Officer is satisfied about the identity of such person to be the real voter after necessary questioning, the Presiding Officer will permit him to vote by means of a tendered ballot paper, but not by means of the Voting Machine.

(ii) The Presiding Officer will make necessary entry in the list of tendered votes *(Form 17B, the Conduct of Elections Rules 1961)* and obtain the signature or thumb impression of the voter therein. The voter will be supplied with a ballot paper which shall be similar to the ballot paper affixed on the Balloting

Unit of the voting machine and the words 'Tendered Ballot Paper' will be stamped or written on its back.

(iii) The voter will record his vote on the tendered ballot paper by placing a mark by means of the arrow cross mark rubber stamp, which is used for marking ballot papers under the traditional marking system of voting.

(iv) Such voters are to be photographed, as far as possible.

(v) Such tendered ballot paper, after it is marked by the voter in the voting compartment and folded, shall be handed over to the Presiding Officer, who will place it separately in a cover specially kept for the purpose.

14. Voting by Blind or Infirm Voters:

(i) Infirm voters who are capable of voting by himself by pressing the button of the candidate of his choice on the Balloting Unit of EVM shall be permitted one authorized companion only up to Voting compartment in the Polling Station and not inside the voting compartment. This will apply in cases where the nature of physical infirmity is such that the elector needs assistance only for his movement and not for voting. The presiding Officer has to take decision in such cases.

(ii) If the Presiding Officer is satisfied that a voter is unable to recognize the symbols on the ballot paper affixed on the Balloting Unit(s) of the EVM or to record his vote on it without assistance on account of being blind or infirmity, he will permit such voter to take an adult companion of not less than 18 years into the voting compartment with him for recording the vote on his behalf and in accordance with his wishes.

(iii) Illiteracy of a voter is not a sufficient cause for giving him assistance of a companion to record vote on his behalf.

(iv) None of the polling staff can act as a companion to record vote on his behalf.

(v) Numeric in Braille signage (1 to 16) has been provided on the Balloting Unit (BU) top cover on the right of the blue button for each contesting candidate for the convenience of the visually challenged (blind) persons.

(vi) Rule 49N of Conduct of Election Rules 1961 provides that one person cannot act as the companion of more than one elector. The person acting as such companion is required to make a declaration in the prescribed form **(Annexure-VII)** to the effect that he will keep secret the vote recorded by him/her on behalf of the elector and that he has not already acted as a companion of any other elector at any polling station on that day.

(vii) A candidate, his election agent or Polling Agent (provided he is not less than 18 years of age) can also act as such companion to a blind or infirm voter. He can act as such companion of only one voter on that day and signs the prescribed declaration **(Annexure-VII)**.

(viii) In order to facilitate the polling staff to ensure compliance of these provisions, application of indelible ink shall also apply to the companion, in addition to the infirm voter who has taken help of companion. Indelible ink shall be applied on the right index finger of the companion.

(ix) Rule 49N Conduct of election Rules 1961 provides that the Presiding Officer shall keep a record of cases where electors record vote with the assistance of the companion in Form 14A. This should cover all cases where the companion is permitted to go into the voting compartment with the elector to assist him in recording the vote. Cases where a companion only comes to assist the elector in his movement and does not go into the voting compartment shall not be included in Form 14A.

15. Replacement of non-functional EVM/VVPAT:

The following protocol shall be followed:

(i) If BU or CU or VVPAT becomes non-functional during Mock Poll, then only respective unit will be replaced.

(ii) If the CU or the BU becomes non-functional during actual poll, then the entire set of BU(s), CU and VVPAT shall be replaced. In such case, mock poll shall be conducted by casting of one vote to each contesting candidate including NOTA and other instructions of Mock Poll be followed.

(iii) If only VVPAT becomes non-functional during actual poll, then only VVPAT shall be replaced. In such case no MOCK POLL is required to be conducted.

16. Closure of Poll:

(i) The poll shall be closed by pressing 'CLOSE" button on CU at the hour fixed for the purpose, if no elector is in queue at the polling station. If some electors are in queue at the hour appointed for the close of poll, the following procedure shall be followed:

- All electors present at the Polling Station at the hour appointed for the close of poll should be permitted to cast their votes irrespective of the appointed closing hour.
- The Presiding Officer shall distribute pre-numbered slips to all electors standing in queue, starting from the last person in queue at the prescribed time for end of poll.
- After the last voter has recorded his vote, the voting machine has to be closed by pressing CLOSE button on CU, so that no further recording of votes in the machine is possible.

(ii) After all electors have cast their votes, the Presiding Officer shall put a red line after entry of last voter and sign on Register 17A giving date and time. All polling agents may also be allowed to put their signature, if they desire so.

(iii) Under Rule 49S Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, at the close of poll, Presiding Officer shall furnish an attested true copy of the account of votes recorded as prepared by him/her in Form 17C to each Polling Agent, after obtaining a receipt from them. Copies of the accounts should be furnished to every Polling Agent present even without his/her asking for it.

17. Sealing of Machines and Election Papers- Affixing of Seal thereon by the Polling Agents:

(i) Sealing of EVMs and VVPATs: Ballot Unit(s), Control Unit and VVPAT are kept and sealed in the respective carrying cases, as per existing instructions. Polling Agents are allowed to sign and affix seal on them.

(ii) Sealing of Election Papers: Polling Agents are also allowed to affix their Seals, in addition to the seal of the Presiding Officer, thereon the envelopes and packets containing the following documents:

a) The marked copy of the electoral roll;

b) Register of Voters;

c) Voters' slips;

d) The tendered ballot papers and the list of tendered voters in Form 17B;

e) The unused tendered ballot papers;

f) The list of challenged votes;

g) The unused and damaged paper seals, if any;

h) Appointment letters of Polling Agents; and

i) Any other papers that the Returning Officer has directed to be kept in a sealed packet.

18. Vehicle carrying EVMs and VVPATs:

Once, poll is over, Candidates/Polling Agents are allowed to follow the vehicles carrying EVM/VVPAT and Election Papers from Polling Station to Receipt Centre.

19. Liability of Polling Agents for misbehaving/doing wrong or violation of Rules/Section of the Representation of the People Act 1951:

Polling Agents should not misbehave with polling staff and voters and must not do any wrong acts which violates Rules / Sections of the Representation of the People Act 1951 or other Acts. If they are found doing such acts, then they will be liable for punishment of imprisonment or fine or both for the following acts: -

(i) Obstructing a public servant in discharging his official duties for which punishment of imprisonment for 3 months or fine or both under Section 186 of Indian Penal Code (IPC).

(ii) Threatening a public servant – Punishment of imprisonment for 2 years or fine or both under Section 189 of Indian Penal Code (IPC).

(iii) Assaulting a public servant – Punishment of imprisonment for 2 years or fine or both under Section 353 of Indian Penal Code (IPC).

(iv) Misbehavior/ disorderly conduct in and near Polling Station- Punishment of imprisonment up to three months or fine or both under Section 131 and 132 of Representation of People Act 1951.

(v) Carry Arms at and near a Polling Station - Punishment of imprisonment of up to two years or fine or both under Section 134B of Representation of People Act 1951.

(vi) Bribery/undue influence – Punishment of imprisonment which may extend to six months or fine or both under Section 129 of the Representation of People Act 1951.

(vii) Violation of secrecy of voting – Punishment of imprisonment which may extend to three months or fine or both under Section 128 of Representation of People Act 1951.

(viii) If Polling Agent indulge in canvassing within the polling station or 100 meters radius, his/her act might amount to an electoral offence of canvassing or soliciting votes of electors or exhibiting any notice or sign (other than the official notice) relating to the election. The above offence is cognizable and punishable under Section 130 of Representation of the People Act 1951 with fine which may extend to Rupees 250.

20. Adjournment/Stoppage of Poll:

Under Section 57(1) of the Representation of People Act 1951, the Presiding Officer of a polling station is empowered to adjourn the poll on account of-

(i) A natural calamity like flood, heavy snowfall, a severe storm and the like, or

(ii) Non – receipt or loss or damage to essential polling materials like voting machine, authentic copy of electoral roll and the like, or

(iii) Disturbance of peace at the polling station making it impossible to conduct the poll, or

(iv) Non – arrival of the polling party at the polling station due to obstruction on the way or any other serious difficulty, or

(v) Any other sufficient cause

The discretion given to the Presiding Officer to adjourn the poll should be exercised most sparingly and only in cases when it has become impossible to conduct the poll. In case of any adjournment of poll, the Presiding Officer must immediately report the full facts to the Returning Officer. Whenever a poll is adjourned, the Presiding Officer will announce formally to all, who are present at the polling station, that the poll will be taken on a day to be intimated subsequently by the Election Commission of India. Both the Units of the EVM and VVPAT and all Election Papers should be sealed and secured in the presence of Polling Agents, as if the poll has come to a close in the normal way.

The Handbook of the Polling Agent (latest edition) and the Presiding Officer Handbook (latest edition) shall be referred for detailed instructions and clarifications. The above instructions shall be brought to the notice of all concerned for strict compliance.

Yours faithfully,

(SANJEEV KUMAR PRASAD)
SECRETARY

Annexure-I

FORMAT FOR SPECIMEN SIGNATURES OF CANDIDATES AND THEIR ELECTION AGENTS

*General/Biennial/Bye-election……..…… (Month/Year)

No. & Name of *Assembly Constituency……..……

Lok Sabha Constituency……

Leg. Council……..……

(*Delete whatever is not applicable)

The specimen signatures of Contesting Candidates and their Election Agents are given below for the purpose of verification of their signatures by the Presiding Officer in the letter of appointment of Polling Agents at the time of poll: -

Sr. No.	NAME OF CONTESTING CANDIDATE	SIGNATURE OF CONTESTING CANDIDATE	NAME OF ELECTION AGENT, IF ANY	SPECIMEN SIGNATURE OF ELECTION AGENT
1				
2				
3				
-				

Place: .....

Date :.....

Signature

(Seal)

Returning Officer

Annexure-II

Specimen of Entry Pass

(To be issued by Presiding Officer on poll day)

Sl. No.

ENTRY PASS

AC No. & Name:

Polling Station No. & Name:

Name of Candidate:

Name of Polling Agent:

Name of Relief Agents, if any:

Signature of Presiding Officer

Annexure-III

Account of Entry Passes issued to Polling Agents

1. Number and Name of Assembly Constituency
2. Number and Name of Polling Station
3. Total Number of contesting candidates
4. Number of entry passes received with poll material
5. Details of entry passes issued to Poling Agents

Name of candidate	Whether entry passes issued	Signature of the Polling Agent/relief Polling Agent

6. Unused Entry Passes

Signature and seal of
Presiding Officer

Annexure-IV

Polling Agents/Relief Polling Agents Movement Sheet

No	No. and Name of Parliamentary Constituency/ Assembly Constituency	Name of Candidate	Name of Political Party	Name of Polling Agents/ Relief Polling Agents	Time of Entry	Signature	Time of Exit	Signature

Annexure-V

FORM OF DECLARATION BY ELECTOR WHOSE NAME IS IN ABSENTEE / SHIFTED / DEAD (ASD) LIST

I hereby solemnly declare and affirm that I am the same person whose name appears at Serial No …….. of Part No …….. Of the existing electoral roll of the …….. Constituency which was prepared / revised with respect of first date of **January, April, July, October,** 20.… as qualifying date. I am aware that impersonation at elections is an electoral offence under the section 171D of the Indian Penal Code.

……

Signature/Thumb impression of the Elector

Name ……

Certified that the above declaration was made and subscribed by the elector above named before me.

……..

Signature of the Presiding Officer

……..

Number and name of polling station

Date ……

Annexure-VI

FORM OF DECLARATION BY ELECTOR

I hereby solemnly declare and affirm that my age was more than 18 years on the first January/April/July/ October.....(year) I am aware of the Penal Provisions of Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 for making any false Declaration in connection with the inclusion of any name in the electoral roll or the preparation, revision or correction of the electoral roll.

Signature/Thumb impression of the elector

Father's/Mother's/Husband's Name.....

Part Number of Electoral Roll …….

Serial Number of Elector.....

Date: .....

Certified that the above declaration was made and subscribed by the elector above named before me.

.....

Signature of Presiding Officer

Number and name of Polling Station….....

Date: .....

Annexure-VII

DECLARATION BY THE COMPANION OF BLIND OR INFIRM ELECTOR

..... Assembly Constituency (comprised within..... Parliamentary Constituency)

Sr. No. and Name of Polling Station.....

I, ... son of .....

aged.....resident of*..... .....

.....

hereby declare that -

(a) I have not acted as companion of any other elector at any polling station today, the ..... and

(b) I will keep secret the vote recorded by me on behalf of.....

Signature of companion

Date ……

* Full Address to be given

+ Name, Part No. and Serial Number of Elector.

( ) To be filled in the case of election to the House of the People or simultaneous elections.

INSTRUCTION NO. 11

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, NEW DELHI-110001

No. ECI/GE98/437MCS/98 **Dated: 16 January, 1998**

Subject: Scheme for Use of Govt. owned Electronic Media by Political Parties during Elections

ORDER

1. The question of State funding of election expenditure by political parties has been engaging the attention of the Election Commission of India, Parliament and the Central Government for some time. However, no decision could be arrived at in the matter, as it has been linked with the bigger question of overall Electoral Reforms.

2. The Commission has bestowed considerable thought on this issue. One of the concrete proposals initiated by the Commission has been the use of Govt. owned electronic media by the recognised National and State political parties, on a much extended scale, during elections, in lieu of the limited facility that is presently available to them of making one telecast and two broadcasts of 15 minutes duration each over Doordarshan and All India Radio at the time of general elections to the House of the People and State Legislative Assemblies. The reach of the vast network of Doordarshan and All India Radio is now widespread, covering almost every nook and corner of the country, and their impact substantive. Use of such electronic media by political parties would provide them with an opportunity to give firsthand information to voters about their policies, programmes, manifestos and views on major issues. For electors also, it would be an important source of information for understanding major policy issues as projected by different parties.

3. The provision of above facility to political parties would considerably cut down their expenses on election campaigns and general party propaganda and, as such, would amount to indirect State funding. One of the most important features of the above facility would be that, unlike money transactions, it would not involve any maintenance of detailed accounts and rendition of such accounts to any authority for scrutiny and audit. Further, unlike cash subsidy, it cannot be misused.

4. The above scheme was discussed by the Commission with the recognised National and State parties at the meetings held at New Delhi, on 7th May 1997and, again, on the 22nd and 23rd December 1997. They all whole- heartedly welcomed the scheme.

5. The Commission has further interacted with the Prasar Bharati Corporation, which now manages the Doordarshan and All India Radio. That Corporation has also welcomed the Scheme and agreed to provide suitable assistance, and support, to implement the Scheme and make it operational for the ensuing general elections to the House of the People (for constituting the 12th Lok Sabha) and certain State Legislative Assemblies.

6. Accordingly, the Commission, after consultation with the Prasar Bharati Corporation, and in exercise of its plenary powers of superintendence, direction and control, inter alia, of elections to Parliament and State Legislatures vested in it by Article 324 of the Constitution of India, hereby directs, as follows:

Parties eligible for Telecast/Broadcast facility:

(i) The above facility of use of Doordarshan (DD) and All India Radio (AIR) shall be available, in connection with the forthcoming general elections to the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies of the States of Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura, only to those seven (7) National parties and thirty four (34) States parties, which are at present **recognized** as such National or State parties, under the provisions of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, and whose names are shown in the list annexed hereto as **Annexure-I**. This facility will not be available to registered-unrecognized political parties or any independent candidates. The Supreme Court has held in the case of Ramakant Pandey vs. Union of India (AIR 1993 SC 1766) that the recognised National and State parties stand on a different footing from the unrecognised political parties and any discrimination between these two categories of political parties would be a reasonable and valid classification. At present also, the above mentioned limited facility of telecasts/broadcasts is available only to the recognised National and State parties. The High Courts of Allahabad, Madras and Karnataka have also upheld the above classification in W.P.No.5790 of 1984 (Hari Shankar Jain vs. Chief Election Commissioner and others), W.Ps. Nos.12378 of 1984 and 14507 of 1989 (P.T.Srinivasan vs. Union of India and others and S. Shanmugam vs. Chief Electoral Officer, Tamil Nadu and others) and W.P. No.19367 of 1984 (Raghunathmal vs. Election Commission of India and others) respectively. The Madras High Court has, in the above-mentioned cases, specifically upheld the grant of above facility of telecasts/broadcasts only to the recognised political parties.

Total time Allotted for Telecasts/Broadcasts:

(ii) The Prasar Bharti Corporation shall set apart on Doordarshan

(a) a total of not less than 10 hours of telecasting time on the National channel of the Doordarshan, for telecasts by the National parties;

(b) a total of not less than 15 hours of telecasting time on the Regional Doordarshan Kendras, for telecasts by the National parties;

(c) a total of not less than 30 hours of telecasting time on the Regional Doordarshan Kendras, for telecasts by the State parties; and

(d) a total of 6 hours of telecasting time through the Regional Satellite Services channel available to viewers across the whole country.

AND On All India Radio

(e) a total of not less than 10 hours of broadcasting time on the National hookup of the All India Radio, for broadcasts by the National parties;

(f) a total of not less than 15 hours of broadcasting time on the Regional AIR Stations, for broadcasts by the National parties;

(g) a total of not less than 30 hours of broadcasting time on the Regional AIR Stations, for broadcasts by the State parties; and

(h) a total of 6 hours broadcasting time on the National hook up for broadcasts by the State Parties.

Allocation of Time to each Party:

(iii) Each National and State party shall be allotted time for telecasts over Doordarshan (DD) and broadcasts on All India Radio (AIR), according to the following parameters:-

For National Parties:

(a) of the total ten hours telecasting/broadcasting time reserved over the National channel/hookup of DD/ AIR for the National parties, 45 (forty five) minutes shall be allotted to each of the 7 National parties, i.e., a total of five hours and fifteen minutes (5-1/4 hours), each on the DD & AIR separately;

(b) the remaining four hours and forty five minutes (4-3/4 hours) telecasting/broadcasting time shall be further divided among the seven National parties, according to the percentage of votes polled by each such party, at the last general election to the House of the People held in 1996;

(c) in addition, each National party shall be allotted one and a half times of the total time allotted to it under sub-paras (a) and (b) above, for telecasts/broadcasts on the Regional Doordarshan Kendras/Regional AIR Stations;

(d) of the total time so allotted to each National party under sub-para (c), each such party shall have the option to utilise the time so allotted on any of the Regional Doordarshan Kendra/State capital AIR Station: provided that not more than one-tenth (1/10th) of such time shall be utilised by it at any one Regional Doordarshan Kendras/AIR Stations;

For State Parties:

(e) of the total time of thirty (30) hours reserved for telecasting/ broadcasting by the State parties on the Regional DD Kendras/ Regional AIR Stations, each of the 34 State parties shall be allotted forty five (45) minutes, i.e., a total of twenty five hours and thirty minutes (25-1/2 hours), each on DD and AIR separately;

(f) the remaining four hours and thirty minutes (4-1/2 hours) telecasting/ broadcasting time for parties shall be further divided among the said 34 State parties, according to the percentage of votes polled by each such party in the State (s) in which it is recognized, at the last general election to the House of the People held in 1996, and the last general election to the Legislative Assembly of the State concerned, taken together;

(g) in addition, each State party shall be allotted 10 minutes telecasting/ broadcasting time on Regional Satellite Services channel of DD available to viewers across the whole country and the National hook up of AIR

Time vouchers for Parties

(iv) Each party shall be given time vouchers of different denominations of, 5 minutes and 10 minutes, equal to the total time allotted to it for telecasts on Doordarshan and broadcasts on AIR. That party shall have the discretion to choose any representatives and allow them to use those time vouchers, provided that no such individual representative shall be allowed to use more than 20 minutes of the total time allotted to that party, either on Doordarshan or on AIR.

Dates of Telecasts/Broadcasts

(v) The above telecasts/broadcasts shall span between the last date of nominations for the first phase and

two days prior to the last of the dates of poll anywhere in India in case of Parliamentary elections, and the relevant State or States where elections for the respective State Assemblies are also being held simultaneously. The Prasar Bharati Corporation, in consultation with the Commission, will decide and announce the days of the week and the time slots during which these telecasts/broadcasts will be made.

(vi) The actual date and time during which the above telecasts/broadcasts will be made by the authorised representatives of any party shall be predetermined, by lot, by the Prasar Bharati Corporation, in consultation with the Commission.

(vii) While deciding about such Dates and time, it shall be ensured that fairness and equity is maintained, as far as possible and having due regards to the technical constraints in regard to the occasion and time for the telecasts/ broadcasts by such parties.

Guidelines for observance in Telecasts/Broadcasts

(viii) The telecasts/broadcasts on Doordarshan/AIR will not permit:

(a) criticism of other countries;

(b) attack on religions or communities;

(c) anything obscene or defamatory;

(d) incitement to violence;

(e) anything amounting to contempt of court;

(f) aspersions against the integrity of the President and Judiciary;

(g) anything affecting the unity, sovereignty and integrity of the Nation; and

(i) any criticism by name of any person.

Submission of Transcripts in advance

(ix) The parties or their representatives shall have to submit, in advance, within the time frame as indicated by the Prasar Bharati Corporation on account of technical constraints, the transcripts of their telecasts/ broadcasts to the authorities specified in this behalf by the Prasar Bharati Coporation. It shall be the responsibility of the parties to have their transcripts, after approval, recorded at their cost in Private Studios; meeting required technical standards of the Prasar Bharati Corporation, provided that the symbol of the party with a white background can be shown in any video recording.

Panel Discussions and Debate

(x) In addition to the above mentioned Party telecasts/broadcasts, the Prasar Bharati Corporation may organise a maximum of two national panel discussions/debates on the national channels of Door Darshan and All India Radio. Each nationally recognised Party can nominate one representative to such programmes.

The Election Commission of India will approve the names of moderators for such panel discussions and debates in consultation with the Prasar Bharati Corporation.

(xi) In the States of Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura, where Assembly elections

are also being held simultaneously, similar debates and panel discussions may be arranged from the Regional Kendras of Door Darshan and All India Radio for elections to the concerned State Assemblies. In these programmes, the concerned State recognised parties will be permitted to participate.

Powers of the Election Commission to remove Difficulties

7. Notwithstanding anything contained in para 6, the Election Commission may issue such further directions and instructions –

   (a) for the clarification of any of the provisions of this Order, or

   (b) for the removal of any doubt which may arise in relation to the implementation of any such provision; or

   (c) in relation to any matter with respect to the allotment of time to, or utilisation of time by, any recognised National or State party, for which this Order makes no provision or makes insufficient provision, and such provision is, in the opinion of the Commission, necessary for the smooth and orderly implementation of the scheme covered by this Order.

8. The above guidelines shall also apply mutatis mutandis at all future elections to Parliament and State Legislatures.

By Order,

(Subas Pani)
Deputy Election Commissioner

INSTRUCTION No. 12

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

Election Commission of India

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 437/TA-LA/1/2023/Communication **Dated: 18th July, 2023**

Sub: - Scheme for use of Govt. owned Electronic Media by Political Parties during elections - Modification of Scheme – Para-6 sub clause-(iv) – Provision to provide time vouchers through IT platform – regarding.

ORDER

Whereas, the Election Commission of India, after consultation with recognized National and State Parties and in exercise of power vested in it by Article 324, notified a scheme for use of Govt. owned electronic media by political Parties during elections vide order dated 16 January, 1998 (hereinafter 'the scheme') and the scheme has statutory basis under Section 39A of the R.P. Act, 1951;

2. Whereas, para-6 (iv) of the Scheme provided as follows:-

"Time Vouchers for Parties

(iv) Each party shall be given time Vouchers of different denominations of, 5 minutes and 10 minutes, equal to the total time allotted to it for telecasts on Doordarshan and broadcasts on AIR. That party shall have the discretion to choose any representatives and allow them to use those time vouchers provided that no such individual representative shall be allowed to use more than 20 minutes of the total time allotted to that party, either on Doordarshan or on AIR."

3. Whereas, the Commission has been providing IT based options for interface with political parties as well as facilitation of other transactions/submission of documents/disclosure etc. consistent with the provisions of The Information Technology Act, 2000;

4. Now, accordingly, the Commission in exercise of powers at paragraph 7 of the scheme, has decided as below:-

i) Sub-paragraph (iv) of Para 6 of the scheme is amended by insertion of the following Proviso:

"Provided that the Election Commission shall process and distribute the said Time vouchers to entitled political parties using Information Technology platform";

ii) The above-mentioned amendment to the scheme comes into effect immediately from the date of this order.

iii) The Commission will separately notify a standard operating procedure (SOP) for facilitating this operation as well as the effective date from which this transition to the IT platform based processing and issue of time vouchers to the entitled political parties shall be completed.

By order

Anuj Chandak

Joint Director

INSTRUCTION No. 13

By E-mail/By Post

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India
निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 491/SM-SOP/2023/Communication **Dated: 12th June, 2023**

To,

Chief Electoral Officers of all the States/UTs

Sub: Setting up of a Permanent Media Cell and a Social media Cell- reg.

Sir,

You are requested to refer DO letter/e-mail no. 491/Media-cell/2021/Communication/ dated 23.06.2021 (copy enclosed), regarding setting up of a Permanent Media Cell in the Office of CEO. Further attention is invited to Commission's letter dated 6th Sept, 2016 (copy enclosed), whereby considering the relevance of social media, all CEOs were directed to build capacities to use social media and to depute proficient team for this purpose and to start their official social media accounts for sharing information relating to voter education, voter registration, MCC, pre-certification and other related issues.

2. In view of the above, CEOs of all States/UTs shall ensure that a Permanent Media Cell and social media Cell is set up and functioning with appointment of a nodal officer at the level of Additional/Joint CEO.

The following shall be the roles and responsibilities:

A. <u>Roles & Responsibilities of Media Cell</u>

- Appointment of a Media Nodal Officer of the level of Additional/Joint CEO
- Sustained year-round communication to be maintained with media
- Pushing positive stories including SVEEP initiatives in media. Regular interaction with local/ vernacular media to highlight Voter awareness activities, best practices and sharing stories on unique initiatives taken for election management in the state/district.
- Organizing Press Conferences/media briefings for important events like SSR, NVD, Commission visits, etc.
- Ensuring appropriate display of all Press Notes, State Fact Sheet, success stories, Photo/Video Gallery, link to ECI website & Commission's profile on CEO website
- Establish a distribution/dissemination channel (like Whats app group) for instantaneous reach till DEO/BLO level of any important decision/matter.
- Monitoring of media for any fake news items. In case of any fake news and disinformation campaign, media to be informed of factually correct details on real time basis to minimize spread of misinformation.
- Daily media coverage covering critical matters along with analysis is to be shared during the election period with the Commission. Coverage feedback to be analysed for course correction if any required. Instructions are issued separately to poll going states.
- Organize workshops with the local media houses to apprise them about the ECI instructions related to pre-certification of political advertisements on electronic media and media related provisions of

the RP Act - Section 126(1)(b) & Section 126A of the RP Act 1951 (silence period, opinion poll & Exit poll guidelines) and ECI Paid News Guidelines.

B. <u>Roles & Responsibilities of Social media Cell</u>

- Appointment of a Social Media Nodal Officer at the level of Additional/Joint CEO
- Minimize the Spread of Fake News and Disinformation campaigns. Monitoring of social media for fake News and subsequent Fact Check /response on social media handles.
- Ensuring regular outreach through social media platforms of important decisions, SVEEP Activities & campaigns, information dissemination to media persons, information and updates on special events and activities like National Voters Day, Special Summary Revision, Conferences, workshops, etc.
- Voter awareness campaigns on social media platforms throughout the year focusing on registration and election related literacy.
- Small videos/Interaction with State and District Icons to motivate voters for registration and also cast their vote on the poll day.
- Dissemination of necessary information relating to electoral process at the field level
- Engagement through Crowd sourcing of content: Encouraging participation through various online contests
- Ensuring social media updates on pre-poll day and poll day as per SOP (copy enclosed)
- Regular resharing of content posted on ECI social media platforms from CEO platforms.
- Content to be shared in respective state/local language
- Trendy formats like Instagram reels, YouTube In shorts for content development to be used
- Collaborate with social media teams of Press Information Bureau, Public Broadcaster AIR and Doordarshan, State DIPR in the State/region for amplification of the social media content.

3. In view of the forthcoming Lok Sabha Elections 2024, all CEOs shall take necessary steps to ensure manpower and resources for functional Media and Social Media Cell to perform above roles and responsibilities.

4. Similarly District Election Officers, should also initiate similar move for dissemination of necessary information related to electoral process and countering fake news, sharing of best practices and success stories in election management, etc. Activities like capturing of campaign & SVEEP activities such as videos, audio and photographs should be encouraged.

5. Further, the updated details (as under) of Media & Social Media Nodal Officer appointed by concerned CEO Office may also be provided to the Commission.

1. Name and Designation

2. Mobile Number

3. E-mail

Enclosures (as above)

Yours faithfully,

(RAJESH KUMAR SINGH)

UNDER SECRETARY

011-23052131

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

491/SM/ 2015 /Communication **Dated: 6th September, 2016**

To

CEOs of All States & UTs

Subject:- Use of Social Media- reg.

Sir/Madam,

1. Of late, Social Media has occupied a very important place in the world of communication. There has been increasing demand for the use of social media for a better outreach and communication with the voters and dissemination of election related information to them. In the recent elections, many States used social media in varying degree as a tool and platform for the communication with electors, especially with youth and other stakeholders.

2. Considering the relevance of social media for dissemination of information and communication with voters and other stakeholders, the Commission has desired to build capacities to use social media at State/ UT or district level. All the Chief Electoral Officers and District Election Officers are expected to start their official accounts on Facebook, Twitter, or Youtube channel. CEO's social media platform should mainly propagate information relating to voter education, voter registration, MCC, pre-certification and other connected issues. They should also crowd source SVEEP creatives from the voters especially from students or youth. CEOs should also setup a Social Media Cell in their offices to make meaningful use of social media and also to handle MCMC, code of conduct, pre-certification, suggestions of various stakeholders. CEOs may make use of expert agency and necessary staff in order to professionally handle the Social Media.

3. Similarly, at the district level District Election Officers should also initiate the similar move as directed for the CEOs Office for dissemination of necessary information relating to electoral process. At the field level, the activities like capturing of other campaign activities such as video, audio and photographs should be encouraged for the social media. Complaints received on the social media platform should be promptly addressed to.

4. It is also directed that all the vital information relating to electoral roll revision process such as NERP should be disseminated to the voters and stakeholders in a more innovative and interesting way. Collaboration or partnership with Social Media pages and links of Civil Societies or Educational Institutions will help in developing the synergy.

5. The Social Media Cell proposed to be setup at ECI level will regularly monitor the performance of States/ UTs & the districts and will also be guiding them for greater and effective use of Social Media platforms and will train the State level master trainers from time to time.

6. CEOs shall take necessary steps as directed and shall issue necessary instructions to all the DEOs in this regard.

7. CEOs may also consult other CEOs of recently poll-gone states on their experience on use of Social Media.

Yours faithfully,

(Dhirendra Ojha)
Director

Standard Operating Procedure for Social media posts

Pre-poll and poll day:

The information dissemination needs to happen throughout the pre-poll and poll day to build the positive narrative about the election activities.

Use of social media:

DEOs and CEOs need to ensure regular updates on social media by putting out information/photos/short videos related to preparation for the poll day. Use of twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp and other social media need to be ensured.

Pre-Poll day	Poll-day
Information, photos and short videos of following to be put out about the preparations: • Information regarding vastness of activity (like number of polling booths, electorates, ACs etc. should be put out from DEO and CEO handles mentioning district and state level data. • Dispatch of polling parties. • Dispatch of material to various locations including difficult terrain and geographically remote locations, unique polling stations set up, etc. • Meetings by DEOs/ CEOs if any • Other relevant information The efforts should be made to showcase the cultural diversity, uniqueness of the activity, different gender, linguistic, cultural groups, polling teams reaching the last mile to ensure participation, etc. The above activity should start at 8am in the morning.	Information, photos and short videos of following to be put out on various social media platforms of DEOs/ CEO: • As a standard protocol, photos/ information regarding peaceful voting in various polling booths. • Photos/Videos on PwD and elderly persons being assisted by ECI officials, participation of different categories of voters including Women, first time voters, centenarian voters, Third gender voters, etc. • Assured minimum facilities at PS, Facilities like pick and drop facility, wheel chairs at PS, etc. • Model polling stations, all women booths, PwD managed polling stations, Youth managed polling stations. • Information photos on arrangements for COVID Appropriate Behavior like maintaining social distancing, hand sanitizers at polling booths (arrangements as per instructions, if any). • Any other unique photos/ information/ videos etc. The above activity should start at 7am-7.30am in the morning.
The updates should be shared at regular intervals, every two hours, to the local/ regional media along with social media updates.	

Information dissemination:

- The social media posts from ECISVEEP and Spokespers on ECI should be retweeted by CEO handles immediately.
- All the social media information should be tagged, compulsorily to ECISVEEP and Spokespers on ECI social media handles. Select tweets by CEOs would be retweeted by @SpokespersonECI and @ECISVEEP.
- CEO social media handles to ensure select retweeting/ re-publishing of DEO social media activities.

- DEOs/CEOs should ensure that all important regional handles of public broadcaster (DD and AIR), PIB and state information departments should be tagged, for its further dissemination.
- CEOs should ensure that the timely dissemination of information to the regional media - print & electronic, including public broadcaster.
- CEOs should take assistance from regional PIB and state Information department, for reaching out to media at large.
- Tentative Hashtags for updates, which could be used:

#AssemblyElections(year)

State Specific- #(State)Election(year): for eg: #KarnatakaElections2023 (Sample)

For bye-elections- **#ByeElections(year)**

For Parliamentary Elections: **#Loksabah2024**

Other standard hashtags that can be used:

#ECI #NoVoterTobeleftBehind #iVote4Sure #GoVote

INSTRUCTION No. 14

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 491/SM/2013/Communication **Dated: 25th October, 2013**

To,

1. Chief Electoral Officers of all States and Union Territories

2. Presidents/General Secretaries of All National/State recognized Political Parties.

Subject: Instructions of the Commission with respect to use of Social Media in Election Campaigning.

Sir,

The Commission's attention was drawn to use of social media for election campaigning and also certain violations of the Electoral Law in the social media, which need to be regulated in the interest of transparency and level playing field in the elections.

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. It differentiates from traditional/industrial media in many aspects such as quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence. The prevalence of Web and social media has increased over the years and there have been demands from the political and social groups to regulate the social media during elections as other media is regulated.

There are broadly five different types of social media:

a) collaborative projects (for example, Wikipedia)

b) blogs and micro blogs (for example, Twitter)

c) content communities (for example, YouTube)

d) social networking sites (for example, Facebook)

e) virtual game-worlds (e.g., Apps)

Legal provisions relating to election campaigning apply to social media in the same manner in which they apply to any other form of election campaigning using any other media. Since social media is a relatively new form of media, it appears necessary to clarify to all concerned by the following instructions:-

B. Information to be given by candidates about their social media accounts.

Candidates are required to file affidavits in Form-26 at the time of filing of nominations. Detailed instructions and the format in which the affidavits have to be filled were issued vide the Commission's letter No. 3/4/2012/ SDR dated 24, August, 2012. Para 3 of this Form requires that email ID of the candidate, if any, should be communicated to the Commission in this Form. The Commission finds it necessary

that authentic social media accounts of candidates should also be informed to the Commission. This information should be furnished in the said Para 3 as follows:-

"My contact telephone no.(s) is/are… ,

my email ID (if any) is ,

and my social media accounts (if any) are… "

C. Pre-Certification of Political Advertisements

In pursuance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India's Order in SLP (Civil) N. 6679/2004, dated 13 April,2004, the Commission issued detailed instructions on this subject vide its order no. 509/75/2004/JS- 1/4572 dated 15.04.2004. In this order, it was stated that every registered/ national and State political party and every contesting candidate proposing to issue advertisements on television channels and/ or on cable network will have to apply to Election Commission of India/designated officer for pre-certification of all political advertisements on electronic media before the publication. The order was further modified and consolidated vide Commission's order dated 27.08.2012, wherein Media Certification and Monitoring Committees at district and State levels were given the responsibilities of pre-certification of such advertisement along with other functions viz acting against Paid News etc. Since social media websites are also electronic media by definition, therefore, these instructions of the Commission contained in its order No.509/75/2004/JS- 1/4572 dated 15.04.2004 shall also apply mutatis mutandis to websites including social media websites and shall fall under the purview of pre-certification.

You are, therefore, requested to ensure that no political advertisements are released to any internet based media/websites, including social media websites, by political parties/ candidates without pre-certification from competent authorities in the same format and following the same procedures as referred in the aforesaid orders.

D. Expenditure on campaigning through internet including social media websites.

According to Section 77, sub section (1), of Representation of the People Act, 1951, every candidate is required to keep a separate and correct account of all expenditure in connection with the election incurred or authorized by him or by his election agent between the date on which he has filed nomination and the date of declaration of the result thereof, both dates inclusive. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India had directed in Common Cause Vs. Union of India in 2005 that political parties should also submit a statement of expenditure of elections to the ECI and such statements are required to be submitted within 75 days of assembly elections and 90 days of Lok Sabha elections. It is obvious that expenditure on election campaign through any advertisement in social media is a part of all expenditure in connection with the elections.

For the sake of removing any ambiguity, it is hereby directed that candidates and political parties shall include all expenditure on campaigning, including expenditure on advertisements on social media, both for maintaining a correct account of expenditure and for submitting the statement of expenditure. This, among other things, shall include payments made to internet companies and websites for carrying advertisements and also campaign related operational expenditure on making of creative development

of content, operational expenditure on salaries and wages paid to the team of workers employed by such candidates and political parties to maintain their social media accounts, etc.

E. Application of Model Code of Conduct to content on internet including social media.

The Commission has a model code of conduct in place during the elections in respect of political parties and candidates which remains in force from the date the elections are announced by the Commission till the completion of elections. It is clarified that the provisions of model code of conduct and related instructions of the Commission issued from time to time shall also apply to the content being posted on the internet, including social media websites, by candidates and political parties.

F. As far as the content posted by persons other than candidates and political parties is concerned, the Commission is considering the matter in consultation with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology on practical ways to deal with the issue, in so far as they relate to, or can be reasonably connected with, the election campaigning of political parties and candidates.

These instructions may please be brought to the notice of all concerned including candidates, political parties, media and election observers for immediate necessary action.

Yours faithfully,

(Rahul Sharma)
(Under Secretary)
Tel. 011-23052070
Email: rahulsharma.eci@gmail.com

INSTRUCTION No. 15

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 491/SM/Comm./2013 **Dated: 16th April, 2014**

To

Chief Electoral Officers, All State/UTs

Subject: Clarification regarding social networking sites and E-Papers regarding.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to clarify the following for information and compliance by all concerned.

i. Any political content in the form of messages/comments/photos/videos being posted/uploaded on the 'blogs/self accounts'on websites/social media websites will not be treated as political advertisement and therefore would not require pre-certification. Even if the same is posted/uploaded by political parties/candidates, it would not fall within the meaning political advertisement and would not be subject to directions/guidelines issued by the Commission.

ii. As per provisions contained in Commission's letter no. 491/Paid News/2014 dated 26.02.2014 political advertisements issued in e-papers of any newspapers shall invariably require pre-certification by the concerned Committee.

Yours faithfully,

(Rahul Sharma)
Under Secretary

INSTRUCTION No. 16

Election Commission's order 491/96/MCS dated 27.03.1996 addressed to Chief Secretary/ CEOs of all States/UTs, Principal Information Officer, M/o I&B. New Delhi, The Secretary General, Lok Sabha, New Delhi, The Secretary General Rajya Sabha, New Delhi. The Secretary to the Govt. of India, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, New Delhi, The Secretary to the Govt. of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, The Secretary to the Govt. of India, Ministry of Law, Justice & Company Affairs, Legislative Department, New Delhi, and Secretaries, Information & Public Relations of all State/Union Territory Governments and Directors of Information & Public Relations all State/Union Territory Governments.

ORDER

Subject: Facilities to be provided to media persons for coverage of process of election

In partial modification of commission's order of even no., dated 14.12.94 the following order is issued.

I. Elections are an important event of mass participation in public affairs and the Election Commission attaches the greatest importance to the Conduct of elections with as much transparency as practicable. The following guidelines for media coverage of elections have been framed to make this possible and to provide every reasonable facility to the media to provide adequate and effective coverage of the election process however without impinging adversely on the rules for the elections and the rights of the electorate.

Issue of Authority Letters

1. Rule 32 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, which regulates the entry into polling stations is reproduced below for facility of ready reference:-

   "32. Admission to polling stations - The Presiding Officer shall regulate the number of electors, to be admitted at any one time inside the polling station and shall exclude there from all persons other than:

   (a) Polling officers;

   (b) Public Servants on duty in connection with election; (c) Persons authorized by the Election Commission;

   (d) Candidates, their election agents and subject to the provisions of rule 13, one polling agent of each candidate;

   (e) A child in arms accompanying an elector.

   (f) A persons accompanying a blind or infirm elector who cannot move without help; and

   (g) Such other persons as the Returning Officer or the Presiding Officer may employ under Sub-rule (2) of Rule 34 of Sub-Rule 35."

2. Entry to any place fixed for counting of votes is governed by the provisions of rule 53(1) of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, which is reproduced below:

   "53. Admission to the place fixed for counting - The Returning Officer shall exclude from the place fixed for counting of votes all persons except:-

(a) Such persons (to be known as counting Supervisors and counting assistants) as he may appoint to assist him in the counting;

(b) persons authorized by the Election Commission;

(c) Public servants on duty in connection with the election; and

(d) candidates, their election agents and counting agents.

3. Above rules apply to elections to the

(1) Council of State,

(2) House of the People,

(3) State Legislative Councils and

(4) State Legislative Assemblies.

4. In the case of Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections, the corresponding rules are rule 13 and rule 28 of the "Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Rules, 1974" which are reproduced below:-

"13. Admission to place of polling - The Presiding Officer shall exclude, from the place of polling all persons except:

(a) the polling officers and other public servants on duty;

(b) the candidates, and one representative authorised in writing by each candidate;

(c) the electors;

(d) persons authorised by the Election Commission;

(e) such other persons as the Presiding Officer may from time to time admit for the purpose of assisting him in taking the poll."

"28. Admission to the place fixed for counting.

The Returning Officer shall exclude from the place fixed for counting of notes every single persons except.

(a) such persons as he may appoint to assist him in the counting;

(b) the candidates and one representative at a time authorised in writing by each candidate;

(c) public servants on duty in connection with the election; and

(d) persons authorised by the Election Commission."

5. Subject to the powers of the authorities competent to impose any restriction in pursuit of the maintenance of law and order, the permission of the Election Commission is not needed by any person, including media persons, for visiting and moving around in any constituency where election is being held and every person is free to observe the elections. Entry into the polling stations and counting centres is however fully regulated by the statutory provisions mentioned above.

6. No one can enter into any polling station or a counting centre as a matter of right except to the extent mentioned in the above quoted rules.

7. In addition to the persons directly connected with poll and counting, such persons as are specifically authorised by the Election Commission can alone enter the polling stations and counting centres. The exclusive power of the Election Commission to issue entry passes to persons including media persons, also includes the power to refuse an entry pass to any person if in the Commission's opinion, there are sufficient reasons to do so.

8. The subject of laying down standard guidelines for the facilities to be made available to media persons interested in covering the process of an election conducted under superintendence, direction and control of the Commission, has been engaging the attention of the Commission. The Commission has reviewed past experience in this regard and the requirement to address the concerns of the media for being able to cover the election process.

9. After a careful consideration of all relevant factors and in suppression of all earlier instructions in this regard, the following guidelines are laid down to be strictly and uniformly observed hereafter at all elections to the council of State, House of the People, State Legislative Assemblies and State Legislative Councils.

10. As soon as practicable, after the announcement of general elections/bye- elections/ biennial elections, the Commission will issue a letter or message to the Sponsoring Authorities which will include (1) Principal Information Officer for media persons accredited by PIB at national level and (2) the Director Information and Public relations (or equivalent officer) of the respective states including the National Capital Territory of Delhi and to the Chief Electoral Officers of the State/Union Territories concerned for obtaining and forwarding, with specific recommendations, requests received from media persons for issue of Authority Letters for entry into polling stations and counting centres within a specified time limit.

    The sponsoring authorities will sponsor only names of those media persons, about whose identity as a genuine media person they are satisfied. The total number of media persons recommended for issue of authority letters will be within reasonable numbers.

    10.1 The Commission will prescribe in the case of each election a deadline for the receipt in the Commission's office of the duly sponsored requests for authority letters from the sponsoring authorities/CEOs which will be fixed after taking into account the date of poll/counting with a view to timely decision on such requests to reach the PIO and CEOs for preparation and dispatch of authority letters to the media persons. The deadline to receive the dully sponsored requests shall not be later than 15 days prior to the date of poll.

    10.2 It will be for the sponsoring authorities/CEOs to inform all media persons about the deadline fixed by the Commission in each case and to ensure that their recommendations reach the Commission within the deadline. Any request received after the deadline will be considered only in the exceptional cases of acts of God, death or illness etc. on the recommendation of the sponsoring authority concerned who should be personally satisfied about the genuineness and difficulty and set out to the Commission before making such recommendations. Such recommendations should be given only in exceptional cases.

10.3 In respect of media persons in Delhi, for those accredited to the PIB, written requests for authority letters should be sponsored by the Principal Information Officer and a consolidated list sent by the Principal Information Officer to the Commission directly and within the stipulated time limit referred to in para 10.2. For other media persons at Delhi accredited by the State Doctorate of Information & Public Relations but not accredited by PIB, similar recommendations will be made by the said Director to the Commission within the stipulated date, in consultation with CEO Delhi.

10.4 In the case of media persons outside Delhi, their requests should be duly scrutinized and sponsored by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations or equivalent (by whatever name known in a State/Union Territory) and should be forwarded to the Chief Electoral Officer who after such consultation with the State Directors, I&PR concerned as may be needed forward consolidated list to the Election Commission within the stipulated time referred to in Para 10.2.

10.5 In addition to accredited correspondents other genuine media persons can also be sponsored for issue of authority letters. It is up to the PIO and concerned state departments of I&PR to scrutinize and sponsor names of such media persons and to lay down appropriate policies including providing temporary or casual accreditation, even for the limited period of the covering the election process. Election Commission will, however consider only such cases as are duly recommended by the concerned sponsoring authority.

10.6 No piece-meal requests from the sponsoring authorities/Chief Electoral Officers will be entertained.

10.7 Each applicants should give full particulars including his name, designation, news agency/ newspapers/periodical/electronic media channel which the applicant represents and the name(s) of the State/ constituency(ies) he wants to cover. There will be no restriction on the number of constituencies which an applicant may like to cover. For electronic media team with more than one person each individual member will need a separate authority letter.

10.8 Under no circumstances will any omnibus authority letter be issued by the Commission. The sponsoring authority and the Chief Electoral Officers/ State Information Departments should meticulously screen all the requests received and their recommendations should be within reasonable numbers keeping in mind all relevant factors.

10.9 The Commission will normally not entertain any requests directly from any person agency for media/news coverage.

11. It is for the sponsoring authority/Chief Electoral Officers through the State Information Departments, to give wide publicity in the procedure to be followed for obtaining authority letters and ensuring that the recommendations are sent to the Commission well in time.

12. Machine numbered/security printed authority letters as per requirement of each State and Union Territory will be sent to the Chief Electoral Officer concerned in advance, after noting down the serial numbers thereof in a register. Press Information Officer and Chief Electoral Officer of concerned State in consultation with State Directorate of Information and Public Relations will sponsor names of media persons for issue of authority letters to the Commission within the deadline prescribed. Specific written approval of the Election Commission to the list of persons to whom the authority letters are to be issued shall be intimated to the Chief Electoral Officer of the State/ Union Territory concerned with the direction that he should fill up particulars in the authority letter. The Chief Electoral Officer will be authorised to

sign the authority letters on behalf of the Commission. They will sign each such authority letters in their own hand (no facsimile or rubber stamps shall be used) as per the approved list and hand over the same to the person concerned. They shall also maintain a list in a register in which they should note down the particular of the person and the serial numbers of the authority letter issued. The names on the approved list are not, repeat not, locally transferable to another person.

12.1 The Returning Officer, the Presiding Officers and any other election related officials have absolute right and responsibility to keep persons without such authority letters away from the place of polling/counting.

13. Authority letters issued will be subject to the conditions imposed by the Commission as are mentioned on the authority letters. Any violation of such condition will automatically invalidate the authority letter.

14. As for coverage of actual polling inside the polling stations media persons with authority letters can be allowed enter inside the polling station by the Presiding Officers after verification of such authority letters. However, they will be allowed inside in very small numbers in batches and the actual numbers will be determined taking into account the size of the room and the space available, the number of electors waiting to cast their votes and other relevant factors. The Presiding Officer will have full discretion regarding the entry of the media persons inside the polling booth taking into account the situation obtaining at the relevant time and all other relevant factors as he alone will be to do so on the spot. While allowing such media persons inside the polling station the Presiding Officer may also further regulate the actual coverage by indicating a definite position beyond which they should not proceed. It is expected that in polling stations which are likely to attract large media attention, appropriate additional arrangements for security and law and order arrangements would be made by the concerned State/Union Territory Government. Entry inside the polling station and coverage of the events even in small numbers in batches would be regulated in such a manner that under no circumstances is the secrecy of the ballot of any voter violated even by accident. The Presiding Officer will also be free to use regulatory measures as he may feel necessary in this regard taking into account the situation at hand. It is expected that all media persons will extend necessary co-operation in this regard and under no circumstances, the process of polling will be allowed to be disturbed because of the large number of media persons present at a given time in a single booth. This will be ensured by each Presiding Officer in a suitable manner. In short, for coverage of actual polling inside the polling station, the entry of media person inside the polling booth in manageable groups will be permitted by the Presiding Officer on the basis of authority letters issued by the Election Commission, subject to restriction that media persons will not be allowed to go near voting compartments to take photographs/ films so that the secrecy of the vote is not violated.

15. In relation to elections to the office of PRESIDENT or VICE-PRESIDENT of INDIA, requests for entry into the place of polling/counting in NEW DELHI will be sponsored by the Returning Officer for the election and no one else.

16. For entry into other places of polling at the State headquarters for Presidential Election, the requests will be forwarded to the Commission by the Assistant Returning Officers appointed for the purpose in the State concerned and no one else.

17. The instructions given in paragraph 10 above will be applicable mutatis mutandis to the Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers in the states concerned in the matter of sponsoring requests of entry passes for Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections.

18. Representatives of the government owned media like Akashvani and Doordarshan and the officials of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Press Information Bureau, Public Relations Departments, Directorates of Information, field publicity units etc., either of the central or any state governments are not entitled to any special facilities or preferential treatment whatsoever in the matter of entry into a place of polling or a place for counting. They are totally on par with other media persons and can be allowed entry only if they are in possession of a valid authority letter issued by the Commission. The same restrictions will apply to all foreign media/ journalists also. No one can be given any special facilities of access etc. Any Chief Electoral Officer, or anyone else who gives or permits extra facilities in violation of the directions of the Commission to central government or state government media or to foreign press and media or members of any state department connected with information and publicity by whatever name known, will do so at his own risk and will face the consequences thereof.

19. Whenever any poll or counting takes place in the premises of Parliament or of a state Legislature, such a place of poll or counting is fully under the control of the Election Commission. Entry into any such place of poll or counting of any media person shall be allowed only on the basis of valid entry passes issued by the Commission alone and not by any other authority. Entry passes issued by any other authority to any media persons for covering Parliamentary/Assembly proceedings do not entitle them to enter the place of poll/place of counting during an election. In this connection, attention is drawn to the decision of the Supreme Court in Pashupati Nath Sukul Vs. Nemchandra Jain and others (74ELR-83) wherein the Supreme Court clearly held that all the steps taken in the course of an election to the Council Of States in which elected members of state legislative assembly participate fall outside the proceedings that take place at the meeting of the house. The same is true in the case of Presidential/ Vice-Presidential elections in which the members of Parliament and state legislative Assemblies participate.

20. These will be brought to the notice of all the concerned. Any violation will attract severe disciplinary action.

21. The Returning Officer will at the time of counting announce the round- wise results through the public address system with sound boxes fixed outside the counting hall and also do so after completion of each round of counting. Limited coverage of short duration by manageable audio visual groups can be allowed and the groups, may be conducted by the official designated for this purpose by the officers in charge of counting. In so far as the trend of counting is concerned, existing instructions will continue. In so far as the transmission of the messages detailed result messages from the Returning Officers after the declaration of the result of in a prescribed format may be reiterated and a copy of the message may be endorsed to All India Radio/Press Information Bureau/Doordarshan.

22. The holders of the authority letters, while covering the counting process, can and should be allowed to come out of the counting hall(s) if they so desire, during the counting. They should also be allowed to re-enter on the basis of the very same authority letters. All entry at all times however, is subject to the over-all requirement of maintenance of law and order, proper decorum and the conduct of peaceful counting.

23. Likewise, in the case of such holders of authority letters for their entry into the polling stations on the date(s) of poll, entry and re-entry into the polling stations during the process of poll, on the basis of such authority letters shall be allowed as in the case of entry in connection with the counting process. This will

again be subject to the over-all requirements of maintenance of law and order and proper decorum in the conduct of peaceful polling.

24. The media centres should have required infrastructural facilities like telephones with ISD/ STD, Fax machines, necessary furniture, Teleprinters, etc. These may be provided by the concerned State/Union Territory Governments who shall be free to decide the charges, if any, are to be levied for various facilities.

25. No special arrangements can be made to answer queries telephonically.

26. The arrangements indicated in the preceding paragraphs will also be applicable mutatis mutandis to representatives of private electronic media. They will also be required to obtain authority letters and their cases will be sponsored by the sponsoring authority namely the PIO or the State Director Information and Publicity concerned as the cases may be.

27. In exceptional case, the Principal Information Officer may recommend the cases of senior correspondents of print and electronic medias of national and international standing to cover more than one state.

Media Centres

28. Media centres will be set up in the office Campus of the Chief Electoral Officer, and the District Election Officers, especially for the purpose of disseminating election related information. Officers of the level of District Information Officer will be put incharge of Media centres and their contact address & telephone numbers will be circulated in advance. These centres will commence functioning from the date of notification of election and will remain open during office hours up to the end of the period of electioneering and thereafter round the clock up to the end of the process of election. The media should have reasonable communication facilities like telephones, ISD\STD etc. fax machines, necessary furniture, teleprinters, etc. Subject to availability and on payment of full charges these facilities can also be provided by the District Election Officer. Each State/Union Territory Government shall be free to decide the charges to be levied for various facilities.

29. Copies of statistical reports and documents of previous elections will be made available in these media centres for the purpose of reference to the extent feasible.

30. One such media centre will be set up in the premises of the Election Commission also during every election.

31. An officer not below the rank of roughly a Deputy Collector/District Information Officer duly assisted by staff will be specifically made responsible for management of the media centre at the District.

32. The Chief Electoral Officers and the District Election Officers concerned shall issue daily press notes containing comprehensive statistical and all other information as pertains to their jurisdiction and whose publication in their view is not prejudicial to the conduct of peaceful free and fair elections or is not otherwise specifically prohibited for publication, commencing with the announcement of election up to the completion of the process of election.

33. District Magistrates and District Superintendents of Police shall jointly hold press briefings at least five times during the process of election in the districts in which an election is held. Comprehensive press

handouts shall be distributed among the media persons at these briefings. Subject to the requirements of law and order, confidentiality, and peaceful free and fair poll, the subjects to be compulsorily included in the press handouts and in the briefings at these press meets, and their timings shall be as follows:

No.	Timing	Subject
1.	Date of Notification	i) Map of the constituency showing locations of polling stations, and routes ii) List of recognized political parties, their office Telephone numbers. iii) Number of electors, number of women electors and like such statistical information, iv) Names, addresses and telephone numbers of statutory officers, v) Gist of important instructions issue by the Election Commission, vi) The programme of election, vii) Preparedness to hold peaceful free and fair poll, viii) Model Code of Conduct and preparedness to ensure its observance.
2.	Last day of withdrawal	i) Final list of contesting candidates, addresses as Per electoral roll and the symbols allotted to them, ii) in preparedness to hold peaceful, free and fair poll
3.	End of Electioneering	i) Incidents of violation of Model Code of Conduct during the period of elections and action taken thereon, ii) Incidents of electoral offences during the period of elections and action taken thereon, iii) Action taken against errant officials, iv) Preparedness to hold peaceful free and fair poll.
4.	End of polling	i) Incidents of electoral offences and malpractice and action taken on them on the day of poll, ii) Preparedness to hold re-poll if any. iii) Preparedness to hold peaceful free and fair counting.
5.	End of Election process	i) All Publishable statistical information about the elections

INSTRUCTION No. 17

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 491/2004/MCP-Vol.II **Dated 27th April, 2004**

To,

The Chief Electoral Officers of all States and Union Territories

Subject:- Facilities to be provided to media persons for coverage of process of elections regarding.

Refer

1. Order no. 491.94 dated 14th December, 1994
2. Order no. 491/96/MCS dated 27th March, 1996
1. Letter no. 491/97/MCS-Vol.II dated 25th March, 1997
2. Letter no. 491/CNTG/MCS/99 dated 20th September, 1999
3. Letter no. 491/CNTG/MCS/99 dated 21st September, 1999

Sir,

I am directed to state that in the matter of providing facilities for media at the time of polling and counting of votes, the Election Commission of India attaches great importance to the conduct of Election with as much transparency as practicable. At the same time it recognizes the fact that the election laws and the procedure governing the election process should not be impinged and that the actual polling and counting process should not be hindered in any way. Therefore after detailed observation of the process of polling and counting in various States and taking into consideration the suggestions received from a few quarters, the instructions for providing facilities to the media persons at the time of counting of votes have been made more comprehensive. The revised and updated instructions for facilities to be provided to media during the process of polling and counting votes at the elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, will now be as under:-

For Polling

2. (I) Legal Provisions

Rule 32 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, which regulates the entry into polling stations is reproduced below for facility of ready reference:

"32. Admission to polling stations – The Presiding Officer shall regulate the number of electors, to be admitted at any one time inside the polling station and shall exclude therefrom all persons other than: -

(a) Polling Officers;

(b) Public Servants on duty in connection with election;

(c) Persons authorised by the Election Commission;

(d) Candidates, their election agents and subject to the provisions or rule 13, one polling agent of each candidate;

(e) A child in arms accompanying an elector;

(f) A person accompanying a blind or infirm elector who cannot move without help; and

(g) Such other persons as the Returning Officer or the Presiding Officer may employ under sub-rule(2) of rule 34 or sub-rule (1) of rule 35."

For Counting

(II) Legal Provisions

(i) Entry to any place fixed for counting of votes is governed by the provisions of Rule 53 (1) of the Conduct of Election Rule 1961, which is quoted below:

"Rule 53. Admission to the place fixed for counting- (1) the Returning Officer shall exclude from the place fixed for counting of votes all persons except

(a) { such persons (to be known as counting supervisors and counting assistants)} as he may appoint to assist him in the counting;

(b) persons authorized by the Election Commission;

(c) public servants on duty in connection with the election; and

(d) candidates, their election agents and counting agents".

(ii) Subject to the powers of the authorities competent to impose any restriction in pursuit of the maintenance of law and order, the permission of the Election Commission is not needed by any person, including media persons, for visiting and moving around in any constituency where election is being held and every person is free to observe the elections. Entry into the polling stations and counting centres is however fully regulated by the statutory provisions.

(III) Entry procedure

(i) No one can enter into any polling station and counting centre as a matter of right. In addition to the persons directly connected with the polling and counting, such persons as are specifically authorized by the Election Commission can alone enter the polling station and counting centres. The exclusive power of the Election Commission of India to issue entry passes to persons including Media Persons, also includes the power to refuse an entry pass to any person if in the Commission's opinion, there are sufficient reasons to do so.

(ii) Representative of the Government owned media like AIR and Doordarshan, and officials of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, PIB, Public Relations Department, Director of Information, field publicity units etc. either of the Central or of any State Government are not entitled to any special facilities or preferential treatment whatsoever in the matter of entry into a place of polling and counting. They are totally at par with other media persons and can be allowed entry only if they are in possession of valid authority letters issued by the Commission. The same restrictions as applicable to other media persons with authority letter will be applicable to them also. The same restrictions will apply to foreign media/ journalists etc.

(iii) Passes for Counting

(a) For electronic media teams not more than two passes should be given for one counting centre and it is emphasized that each individual member will need a separate authority letter.

(b) For print media only one pass per news agency/newspaper should be given.

(iv) The Returning Officer and other election related officers have absolute right and responsibility to keep persons without such authority letters away from the place of polling and counting.

(v) Authority letters issued will be subject to the conditions imposed by the Commission as are mentioned in the authority letters, like media persons not being allowed to go near voting compartment, photographers not to take photographs/films which may violate secrecy, etc. Any violation of such conditions will automatically invalidate the Authority letter and will also invite penal action.

(vi) The premises where the counting takes place, is fully under the control of the Election Commission of India. Entry into any such place of counting of any media person shall be allowed only on the basis of valid entry pass issued by the Commission alone and not by any other authority. Entry passes issued by any other authority to any media persons for covering Parliamentary/ Assembly proceedings etc. do not entitle them to enter the places of counting during elections.

(IV) Media Room inside the counting centre

(i) It may be clearly stated that Media persons with valid passes issued by the Election Commission of India, inside the counting premises will be allowed to sit in a separate room known as the media room, and not in the actual counting hall itself. This room/ hall will be near the counting hall.

(ii) Entry of Media persons into the counting hall will be regulated. They will be taken inside the counting hall in small batches at regular intervals by an official/officials designated for this purpose by the officers in charge of counting, in advance. There should be sufficient number of officials in the media room, throughout the process of counting.

(iii) The media rooms in the counting centres should have the required personnel and infrastructural facilities like telephone with ISD/ STD, Fax Machines, necessary furniture and other basic facilities like drinking water etc. These may be provided by the concerned Government who shall be free to decide the charge if any, to be levied for various facilities. No special arrangements need be made to answer queries telephonically.

(iv) For this purpose it is necessary for each RO to interact with the Divisional Managers of the Department of Telecommunications in advance and arrange for such PCO/STD booths to be set up at the counting centres. This can be in the media room itself or in a separate room adjoining the media room. Alternatively this can be set up in a veranda or in the open space close to the counting hall in any temporary structure. The availability of such facilities should be known to the media persons in advance.

(V) Media centre at District Level and State Level

(i) A media centre set up in the state Headquarters and District Headquarters (by the CEO and DEO respectively) specially for the purpose of disseminating election related information, will function

during the process of counting also. Officers of the level of Dist. Information Officer will be put in charge of the media centre at the District level and their contact address and telephone numbers will be circulated in advance. These centres will function round the clock during the entire process of counting. These media centres will have reasonable communication facilities like telephone ISD, STD etc, fax machines, necessary furniture etc. Keeping in view the presence of large number of wire news agencies/media persons from print and electronic media based at the State Headquarters, the provision of sufficient number of telephone lines with STD/ISD facilities and separate fax machines be made in the media centre.

(ii) Each state/UT shall be free to decide the charges to be levied for various facilities.

(iii) Copies of Statistical Reports and documents of previous elections, background material etc. will be made available to these media centre for the purpose of reference to the extent feasible.

(iv) The round wise result etc. announced by the R.O. at the counting centre will be available simultaneously, or as soon as possible thereafter at the Distt. Level and State level media centres also for the benefit of Media persons without Authority letters.

(VI) Procedure for coverage inside the counting hall

(i) As for the coverage of the actual counting inside the counting hall, media persons with authority letters can be allowed to enter the counting hall by the Returning Officer after verification of their authority letters. However they will be allowed inside the counting hall in very small numbers and in batches and the actual numbers will be determined taking into account the size of the counting hall, the space available and other relevant factors. The Returning officer and other election related officers will have full discretion regarding the entry of the media persons inside the counting hall, taking into account the situation obtaining at the relevant time and all other relevant factors as he alone will be able to do so on the spot. While allowing such media persons inside the counting hall the R.O. may also further regulate the actual coverage by indicating a definite position (by means of a line or string) beyond which they should not proceed.

(ii) It is repeated that media persons will be escorted in small batches inside the counting hall by officials designated for the purpose by the officers in charge of counting in advance; and these officials who escort the media persons will remain with the media persons throughout their stay in the counting hall and will escort them out after their coverage to the media room. It is therefore important that adequate numbers of officials are available for this purpose.

(iii) It may also be noted that no static (fixed) camera- still or video of the media is allowed inside any counting hall. No. Camera stand should therefore be allowed to be taken inside counting halls. Further, while taking audio visual coverage of the counting process with camera carried in hand or on shoulders, under no circumstances, the actual votes recorded on individual ballot papers, or the actual votes polled in each EVM, is to be photographed or covered by audio visual coverage, even by accident.

(iv) It is expected that in counting centres, which are likely to attract large media attention, appropriate additional arrangements for security and law and order would have been made (by the concerned authorities). Under no circumstances, in whatever manner would the actual counting process be disrupted or hindered by the presence of Media persons inside the counting centre.

(v) The Returning Officer will also be free to use regulatory measures, as he may feel necessary in this regard, taking into account the situation at hand. It is expected that all media persons will extend necessary co-operation in this regard. This will be ensured by each Returning Officer in a suitable manner.

(vi) The holders of the authority letters while covering the counting process can and should be allowed to come out of the counting hall(s) if they so desire, during the counting. They should be allowed to re-enter on the basis of the very same authority letter. All entry at all times however is subject to the overall requirement of maintenance of law and order, proper decorum and conduct of peaceful counting. Substitution of media personnel should be allowed only when the substitute also carries a valid authority letter in his/her name.

(vii) No one can be given any special facilities of access etc. Any CEO or anyone else who gives or permits extra facilities in violation of the directions of the Commission to Central Govt. or State Govt. media or to foreign press and media or members of any state Department connected with information and publicity, by whatever name known, will do so at his own risk and will face the consequences thereof.

(VII) Announcement of round wise results

(i) The Returning Officer will at the time of counting announce the round wise results through the public address system with sound boxes fixed outside the counting hall, and also do so after completion of each round of counting. These announcements are expected to provide the counting trends and results information in an organised and systematic manner in good time. This information should simultaneously or as soon as possible, be available in the District level media centre and state level media centre also for the benefit of the media persons who are not present inside the counting centre.

(ii) In cases where the R.O. has made arrangements for display of the latest trends and result sheets on blackboard/whiteboard etc. for information of the media, this will be in addition to the system of announcement through public address system.

(VIII) Facilities inside counting hall for exclusive official use

A separate centre for communication facilities, telephone, fax, etc; will be set up by the R.O. at each counting for exclusive official use. It has to be noted that these internal communications facilities alongwith computer and communication set up, are for the exclusive use of Commission's officers like RO/ ARO/DEO and its observers and are not available for use by any outside agency or person. The Returning Officer in charge at the counting centre has no discretion in allowing this to be used by any unauthorised person. These are not, repeat not available for the representatives of the media.

(IX) Observers to be aware of all arrangements

The entire arrangements put in place should be explained to the observers when they arrive for the observation of the counting process.

(X) Adequate publicity

1. Adequate publicity regarding the facilities for media should be made in advance so that there is absolute clarity in the matter and all concerned are aware.

2. The DEOs/ Returning Officers are accordingly required to review these arrangements in advance and work out the complete details and allocate necessary resources in terms of personnel and facilities. They should personally supervise these arrangements in counting centre where they are present and identify a senior officer of the District to do so in the other counting centre in their charge.

Yours faithfully,

(S. K. KAURA)
SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION No. 18

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110001

No. 491/MM/2015/Communication **Dated: 6th January, 2016**

To,

The Chief Electoral Officer of all States/UTs (As per list attached)

Sub: - Media Monitoring in General/Bye-Election/Biennial Elections – Furnishing Action Taken report on Media Report.

Sir/Madam,

As you aware the in all General Elections (Starting from year 2012), a Media Control Room is set up to monitor election management related news on national news channels (English & Hindi). It is also informed that the Commission has taken new a initiative regarding Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) during the recently held, General Election to Bihar Legislative Assembly 2015, is as under:-

i. For the prompt action. EMMC may forward the Media Report of any important events/MCC violation/ search and seizure across that state of CEO as well as ECI, to avoid delay.

ii. And, on the completion of each phase of poll, an analysis on Media Monitoring, based on EMMC report and action taken at ECI/CEO level may be submitted to the Commission for perusal & information.

2. Beside the above, after the election is over, a consolidated analytical report may be submitted to the Commission on a dynamic/comparative chart format. A flow chart on above action is as under:-

Role of EMMC: *The Commission has entrusted the Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) with the task of media monitoring of all election management related news (important events/MCC violation/search and seizure etc.) The monitoring is to be done on the day of polling and a day prior to that. Submission of reports to the Commission on each phase of elections is to be done on two hourly basis. EMMC will send also the reports to CEO office simultaneously*.

Role of CEO: *CEO office will ascertain status on the items on the report and file ATR/Status report within two hours/before the generation of next report to the Commission.*

Submitting to the Commission: *The ATR report received from CEO office will be presented/sent to the Commission for perusal.*

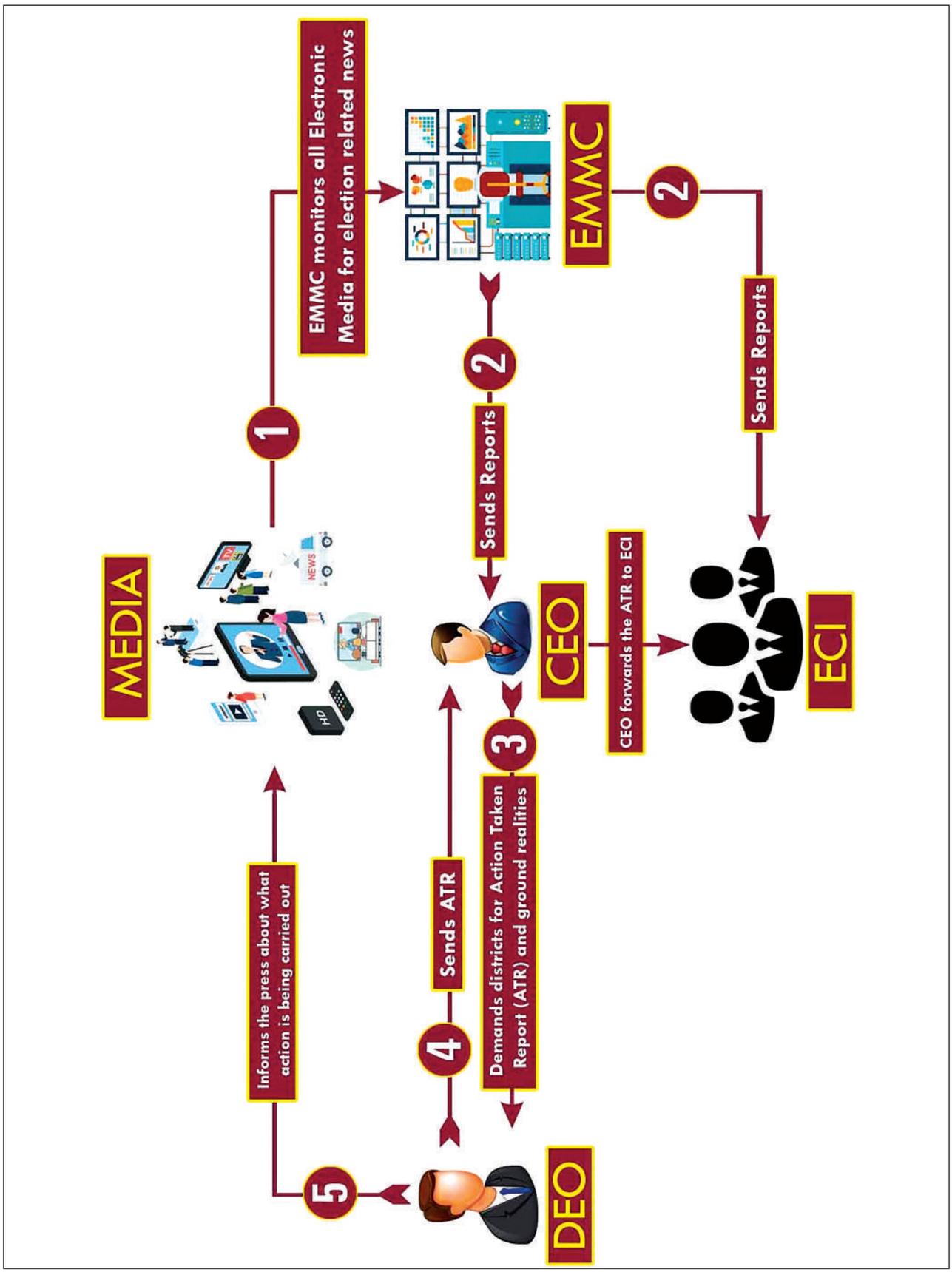
Analysis of Media Monitoring: *Analysis of Media Monitoring to be done by ECI after each phase of poll. In this analysis, and final analysis will be done after the elections are over.*

Post Elections, *a consolidated analytical report to be submitted to the Commission in a comparative chart format.*

3. You are, therefore, requested to furnish report on Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) from future election, according to flow chart.

Yours faithfully,

(S.K. Das)
Under Secretary
011-23052082
E mail: sumands34@gmail.com


MEDIA
1
EMMC monitors all Electronic Media for election related news
EMMC
2
Sends Reports
2
Sends Reports
CEO
CEO forwards the ATR to ECI
ECI
3
Demands districts for Action Taken Report (ATR) and ground realities
4
Sends ATR
5
Informs the press about what action is being carried out
DEO

INSTRUCTION No. 19

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashok Road, New Delhi – 110001

No. 491/Media Policy/2013 **Dated: 10 October, 2013**

To,

Chief Electoral Officers of all States and UTs

Subject –Presence of media in the office of R.O. during filling of nominations – regarding

Sir/Madam,

In view of the queries received regarding presence of media persons in the office of Returning Officer during the process of filling of nomination by candidate, I am directed to clarify that the media is not debarred access at the time and place of filling of nomination by the candidate. However, the number and manner of their facilitation/ access are to be decided by Returning Officer concerned depending on the local situation and circumstances.

Yours faithfully

(Rahul Sharma)
Under Secretary

INSTRUCTION No. 20

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 491/MCMC/5/2023/Communication **Dated: 24th August, 2023**

To

The Chief Electoral Officer,

All States & Union Territories.

Subject: - Media Certification and Monitoring Committees (MCMC), Pre- certification of advertisements and Paid News - Consolidated instructions-reg.

Sir/Madam,

Your attention is invited to Hon'ble Supreme Court order dated April 13, 2004 (copy enclosed) which highlighted that - Every registered National and State political party/unregistered political parties/contesting candidate or other person, proposing to issue advertisements on television channel and/or cable network will have to apply to the Election Commission/ Designated Officer (as Designated by Election Commission), prior to the commencement of telecast of advertisement. These directions are always applicable in the whole territory of India and not only during the period commencing from the date of announcement of the election and till the completion of election process. This means the pre-certification of political advertisement is a year around activity.

In compliance with Hon'ble Supreme Court directions, the Commission has subsequently issued various guidelines regarding the Constitution of Media Certification & Monitoring Committee at District and State Level and related matters including ambit of Committees, Timelines, Application procedures, action to be taken against violations, etc.

It is hereby informed that the previous instructions related to composition & role of Media Certification and Monitoring Committee, Pre-certification of political advertisements and Paid News have been compiled and consolidated for better & comprehensive understanding. Commission's instructions compiled in this order are mentioned at Annexure- E. Complete instruction set is divided into 3 Sections namely:-

i) Part A- Compiled guidelines on composition and role of Media Certification and Monitoring Committees (MCMC)

ii) Part B- Compiled Guidelines in respect of pre-certification of political advertisements.

iii) Part C- Compiled Guidelines in respect of Paid News and its reporting mechanism.

Part A

Extant Composition and Role of the MCMC is as follows:

1. District Level Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC)

1.1 The District level MCMC shall be formed in each district with the following members:

a) District Election Officer/Returning Officer of Parliamentary Constituency

b) ARO (not below SDM)

c) An intermediary expert/ Social media expert (to be chosen by the RO subject to the eligibility criteria)

d) Central Govt. I & B Ministry official (if any in the district)

e) Independent Citizen/ Journalist as may be recommended by PCI

f) DPRO/ District Information Officer/ equivalent- Member Secretary

1.1.1 **For certification of advertisement,** Returning Officer of the Parliamentary Constituency, an ARO (not below SDM) and an Intermediary Expert/ Social Media Expert shall be the members of the MCMC.

1.1.2 If Central Govt. I &B Ministry Official is not posted in the district, District Election Officer can appoint preferably a Central Govt. Officer, or a senior State Govt. Officer posted in the district.

1.1.3 Returning Officer of Parliamentary Constituency may co-opt as many members to assist him in certification of political advertisements as the number of districts falling in that Parliamentary Constituency to have wider opinion and equal representation from all the districts in the matter of certification.

1.1.4 If PCI does not provide names to be included in the MCMC, DEO may himself appoint either an independent senior citizen or journalist, who is willing and as who, in the opinion of the DEO, is eligible in terms of background and record of neutrality.

1.1.5 The Member Secretary (DPRO/DIO or equivalent) should be from the State Civil Services.

1.2 The District level Committee shall have three distinct sets of functions:

(i) Certification of political advertisements in electronic media **round the year** for which **three specific members** of MCMC i.e. RO, ARO and Social media expert shall have to consider and decide on such advertisements for certification. **This committee considers application for certification of an advertisement proposed to be issued on electronic media by an individual or candidate contesting election from the Constituency falling within the jurisdiction of the Committee**.

(ii) Examining complaints/issues of Paid News by **all members** of the district MCMC through a monitoring arrangement.

(iii) The MCMC shall, besides discharging the functions of Certification of Advertisement and checking of Paid News, would also assist in **enforcement of media related regulations under the RP Act.** Thus, MCMC shall scan all media (e.g. newspapers, print media, electronic media, cable network,

internet, mobile network, social media, etc) for:

a. Monitoring of political advertisements in electronic media (for checking if the telecast/broadcast has been done only after certification by the Committee).

b. Suspected cases of paid news (Paid News cases are to be taken into account from the date of filing of nomination by the candidate.) It shall also actively consider paid news cases referred to it by the Expenditure Observers. It shall intimate the Returning Officer for issue of notices to candidates for inclusion of actual expenditure on the published matter or notional expenditure based on DIPR rates in their election expenses account (in absence of DIPR rates, DAVP rates may be used), either based on or irrespective of whether the candidate actually has paid or not paid any amount to the channel/newspaper. A copy of the notice shall also be marked to Expenditure Observer)

c. Monitoring political advertisements in other media, in relation to candidates, either overt or covert, from Expenditure monitoring angle (this will also include publicity or advertising or appeal by, or on behalf of candidate, or by Star Campaigner(s) or others, to impact candidate's electoral prospects)

d. Advertisements in print media (MCMC shall check if the advertisement is with the consent or knowledge of candidate: in which case it will be accounted for in the election expenses of the candidate(s); however, if the advertisement is not with the authority from the candidate, then action may be taken for prosecution of the publisher for violation of Section 171H of IPC).

e. Checking if the name and address of the publisher and printer is carried on any election pamphlet, poster, hand bill and other document as required under Section 127A of R.P.A 1951 (If any printed material does not bear on its face the names and addresses of the printer or the publisher, MCMC shall bring it to the notice of the RO for further necessary action; For the purpose of section 127A of RPA 1951, 'Paid News' would also fall in the category of 'other document').

1.3. It shall submit a daily report to the Accounting team with a copy to RO and Expenditure Observer in respect of each candidate in the prescribed format (as per annexure 12 of the prescribed Expenditure Guidelines) w.r.t. expenditure incurred by the candidate on election advertising or actual expenditure incurred for publishing the 'News' that is substantiated by necessary documents furnished by the candidate or notional expenditure as computed by the Committee in the assessed cases of Paid News.

1.4. The MCMC shall create a suitable mechanism for monitoring media and shall be equipped with adequate manpower and infrastructure for the same.

2. Additional/ Joint CEO's Committee on Certification (State Level Certification Committee) : The Committee shall comprise of following officers: -

a) The Additional/Joint Chief Electoral Officer - Chairperson.

b) Returning Officer of any Parliamentary constituency located in the capital of the State.

c) One expert being an officer not below the rank of Class- I officer to be requisitioned from the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

d) An intermediary expert/ social media expert (to be chosen by the CEO subject to the eligibility criteria)

2.1 This committee considers applications for pre-certification from all registered political parties having their headquarters in that State/Union Territory, all organizations or groups of persons or associations having their registered offices in that State/Union Territory.

3. State Level Media certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC)

3.1 The State level MCMC shall comprise of the following officers:

a) The Chief Electoral Officer, Chairman

b) ADG/ Director level officer from PIB/BOC present in the state-Nodal officer for MCMC to be nominated by DG (Zone), I & B Ministry, Govt. of India or One expert to be co-opted by the Committee.

c) Any Observer appointed by the Election Commission of India

d) Officer of Indian Information Service (IIS), (at the level of US/DS) posted in the State/UT, representing a media Department of Government of India.

e) Independent citizen or journalist as nominated by PCI (if any)

f) Addl./ Jt. CEO in charge of Media (Member Secretary)

g) An intermediary expert/ social media expert (to be chosen by the CEO subject to the eligibility criteria)

3.1.1 If PCI is not providing names to be included in the Committee, the CEO may himself appoint either an independent senior citizen or journalist, who is willing and who, in the opinion of the CEO, is eligible in terms of background and record of neutrality.

3.1.2 In respect of an observer appointed by the Commission in State level MCMC, the General Observer deputed during election in the State Headquarter may be co-opted by the Committee. In case of bye-elections or in case no observer is available at the State capital, the CEO may obtain the services of an observer available in any of the nearby districts.

3.2 The State level MCMC shall perform two sets of functions:

i. Decision on the appeal of any political party or candidate or any other person in regard to grant or refuse Certification of advertisement. Such appeals will lie only with and will be disposed of by the State Level Committee headed by CEO and no reference in this regard needs to be made to the Commission.

ii. Examining all cases of Paid News on appeal against the decision of District MCMC or cases that they may take up suo-motu, in which case it shall direct the concerned ROs to issue notices to the candidates.

3.2.1 The appeal on certification of advertisements needs to be handled by members at (a), (b), (c) & (g), while the complete State MCMC shall deal with Paid News cases. During the non-election period, the Committee shall continue its functions with members at (a), (b) & (g).

3.2.2 It is clarified that as regards the certification, the appeal both from District and Addl./Jt. CEO Committee will lie only with and will be disposed of by the State Level MCMC headed by CEO as per Commission's order dated 15th April 2004 and no reference in this regard needs to be made to the Commission.

4. Appeal against decision of State level MCMC on Paid News

4.1 Any appeal against the decision of the State level MCMC in matters of Paid News will be made to the Election Commission of India. Wherever complaints on Paid News cases are made to the Commission directly, the Commission shall forward cases to the State level MCMC for initial consideration.

5. Criteria for Social Media Expert (for District/State MCMC):

5.1 It is also to state that intermediary expert/ social media expert to be included in the MCMCs should preferably be a government officer subject to following eligibility criteria:

A. If he/she is a government officer, he/she could/should be-

i. Not below the rank of SDM

ii. Has at least five-year experience of working in the IT department/cell/social media cell of the government.

B. If he/she is not a government officer (means private individual) he/she should-

i. Have a master's degree in the field of IT.

ii. Have at least 10 years' experience of working in the IT department/ cell/social media cell of the government at central or state level with a good understanding of social media platforms and how they work.

iii. Also eligible in terms of background and neutrality.

5.1.1 **Role of Social Media Expert:** With respect to the profile of work which the intermediary expert/ social media expert will be handling, it is to state that he/she shall:

i. Assist the MCMC in the matter of certification of political advertisements proposed to be published on social media platforms

ii. Assist MCMC in scanning social media platform for suspected cases of Paid news

iii. Assist MCMC in submitting a daily report to Accounting team with copy to RO and Expenditure Observer w.r.t to expenditure incurred by the candidate on election advertisement on social media platforms

iv. Assist the MCMC in the matters of queries/ complaints related to advertisement on social media platforms

v. Look after the overall coordination between MCMC and the intermediaries/ social media platforms.

vi. Make sure that the Election Laws are strictly adhered to with matters related to advertisement on social media platforms

vii. Assist MCMC in handling the violation cases on Social media

viii. Being part of State level MCMC, he/she will assist in deciding appeal from District and Addl./ Joint CEO Committee on certification of advertisement on social media and examining all cases of Paid News on appeal against the decision of the District MCMC or cases that they may take up suo-motu.

Part- B

1. Pre-certification of Political Advertisements

Pre-certification means prior clearance, in advance of usage of political advertisements by the Committee before being telecast/broadcast on TV and Cable network/Cable Channels, advertisements to be displayed year round in Cinema Halls, Radio including private FM channels, audio-visual displays in public places, advertisements in e-newspapers, use of bulk SMS/recorded voice messages, advertisements on social media and internet websites by any registered political party or by any group of organization/ association or by any contesting candidate/individual as also for print media on pre poll and poll day

The Supreme Court vide its order dated 13th April 2004 authorized the Commission to constitute the Committees for the certification of political advertisements. In the above-mentioned order, the Supreme Court referred to the provisions of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and The Cable Television Network Rules 1994.

2. The provisions highlighted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court are as follows: -

2.1. Any cable operator is prohibited from transmitting or re-transmitting any advertisement which is not in conformity with the prescribed programme code and advertisement code and is likely to promote enmity on grounds of "religion, race, language, caste or community or any other ground whatsoever, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between religion, racial, linguistic or regional groups or castes or communities or which is likely to disturb public tranquility".

2.2. Any advertisement carried in the cable service shall be designed so as to conform to the laws of the country and should not offend morality, decency and religious susceptibilities of the subscribers.

2.3. No advertisement shall be permitted which deride any "race, caste, color, creed and nationality, is against any provision of the Constitution of India and tends to incite people to crime, cause disorder or violence or breach of law or glorifies violence or obscenity in any way".

2.4 The above provisions as mentioned by the Hon'ble Supreme Court shall be the **guiding principles for certification of advertisements**. Further provisions of Section 126 of the R. P. Act, 1951 shall also be considered. Additionally, the following may not be permitted while certifying political advertisements: -

a) criticism of other countries

b) attack on religions or communities

c) anything obscene or defamatory

d) incitement to violence.

e) anything amounting to contempt of court

f) aspersion against the integrity of the President and Judiciary

g) anything affecting the unity, sovereignty, and integrity of the Nation

h) any criticism by name of any person.

2.5 The **parameters mentioned in the Don'ts for political parties and candidates as part of Model Code of Conduct** shall also be kept in mind while certifying the political advertisements.

a) Use of temples/ mosques/churches/ gurudwara or **any place of worship** or religious text / symbols/ or slogan in posters, videos, graphics, music etc or electioneering

b) photographs of **defence personnel** and photographs of functions involving Defence personnel

c) **No aspect of private life**, not connected with the public activities of the leaders or workers of other parties shall be criticized.

d) No criticism of other parties or their workers on behalf of **unverified allegations** or on distortions.

2.6 Advertisements by Third Party other than contesting candidate/political party

1) The Hon'ble Supreme Court order does not prohibit ads by persons other than political party or candidate. However, the order does say that such persons cannot give ads for the benefit of any political party or candidate.

2) This also implies that advertisements against a political party or candidate cannot also be allowed, as that would benefit other parties/candidates.

3. Key points to be noted for pre-certification: -

3.1 Besides political advertisements to be telecast on TV and Cable network/Cable Channels, advertisements to be displayed in Cinema Halls, Radio including private FM channels, audio-visual displays in public places, advertisements in e-newspapers, use of bulk SMS/recorded voice messages have been added in the ambit of pre-certification of political advertisement/campaigning vide Commission's subsequent instructions.

3.2 Since social media and internet websites are also electronic media by definition, therefore, these instructions of the Commission for pre-certification shall also apply to websites including social media websites.

3.3 All political advertisements proposed to be issued on electronic media including Audio-visual displays at public place require pre-certification but is not applicable on the flex hoardings, Wallpapers, Pamphlets etc., though, such advertisements must adhere to provisions of Model Code of conduct and other election related laws/Guidelines.

3.4 Any political content in the form of messages/comments/photos/videos being posted/uploaded on the 'blogs/self-accounts' on websites/social media websites will not be treated as political advertisement and therefore would not require pre-certification. Even if the same is posted/uploaded by political parties/ candidates, it would not fall within the meaning political advertisement and would not be subject to directions/guidelines issued by the Commission.

3.5 These directions are always applicable in the whole territory of India and not restricted only during the period commencing from the date of announcement of the election and till the completion of election process. This means the pre-certification of advertisement is a year around activity and not only during election period. Therefore, political advertisements to be telecast on TV and Cable network/Cable Channels, advertisements to be displayed in Cinema Halls, audio-visual displays in public places, advertisements in e-newspapers, advertisements in social media and internet websites need to be certified by the committee concerned for the entire period and not just during elections.

3.6 Subsequent to the amendment of 'Code for Commercial Advertisement' on All India Radio in 2008, the Commission's instructions for pre-certifications shall also apply to any advertisements of political nature on Radio including private FM channels during the period Model Code of Conduct is in operation in connection with General Election to the House of People or to the Legislative Assembly of any State/UT.

3.7 Taking cognizance of the increasing use of bulk SMS & recorded voice messages in election campaigning, the Commission in 2015 also included the bulk SMSs/ voice messages on phone in election campaigning within the purview of pre-certification of election advertisements. Legal Provisions, as apply on other modes of electronic media, shall also be applicable on bulk SMSs/Voice messages.

3.8 The MCMC has the right to refuse to give certification of an advertisement, it does not find fit to be telecast/broadcast/etc. Appeal can be made against the decision of both District level MCMC and State level certification committee (Additional/Joint CEO level Committee) to State level MCMC headed by CEO of the State. Only, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India can entertain the appeal against the order of State level MCMC on pre-certification.

3.9 During elections, it should also be brought to the notice of all candidates/political parties seeking certification that their advertisements should also comply with the provisions of Model Code of Conduct.

4. MCMC Jurisdiction: Guidelines for submission of Applications for pre-certification by political parties with headquarters in Delhi and/or different States/UTs.

4.1 Committee constituted at Delhi under the chairmanship of Joint/Additional CEO will entertain the applications for certification of political advertisements by all registered political parties/groups/ organizations having their headquarters in NCT of Delhi. However, the application from the State Units of the above mentioned may be submitted to the Committees in the State concerned.

4.2 Committees constituted in other States/UTs will entertain the applications for certification of political advertisements by all registered political parties/ organizations / group / associations having their headquarters in that State/UT.

4.3 If the Central Office of any of the National Parties or the State Parties with headquarters in Delhi seeks certification of same advertisement in multiple languages (Hindi/English and in regional languages), the advertisement material in each of the languages along with certified transcripts should be submitted to the committee in the office of the CEO, Delhi. In addition, in such cases, the applicant should also submit a duly affidavit stating, as is done in the Courts, that the regional language version of the advertisement is a true translation of the advertisement in Hindi/English and the applicant will be responsible for any mistake therein.

4.4 If the Central Office of any of the National Parties or the State Parties with headquarters in Delhi wishes to seek certification of advertisement in any regional language (without there being any Hindi/English version of the advertisement), the application seeking certification will have to be submitted to the committee in the office of the CEO of the State concerned (i.e., the State to which the regional language pertains).

4.5 Any advertisement certified for telecast/broadcast by the committee in the office of the CEO, Delhi, on application from the Central Office of the National Parties and the State Parties with headquarters in Delhi, will be valid for telecast/broadcast throughout India in all States and UTs. No separate certification would be required in such cases from the committees in other States. However, the parties should submit

a copy of the certificate obtained from the committee in Delhi to the Chief Electoral Officer of the State in which such advertisements are proposed to be telecast/broadcast. The copy should be submitted with a declaration that the same is a true copy of the certificate issued from the committee in Delhi and this should be submitted to the CEO in the State concerned before the advertisement is telecast/broadcast.

4.6 In the cases where registered parties/group/organization/association, not having their Headquarter in NCT of Delhi but wish to telecast/broadcast their advertisement in Delhi, certification of the advertisement should be considered by the MCMC in the State, where the party is contesting election.

4.7 In the case of State Parties, applications from the units of the parties in States other than where they have their headquarters shall also be dealt by the Committees in the States concerned where the state units are submitting applications.

4.8 Chief Electoral Officer of States/ UTs may accept and pre-certify the advertisements from any political parties irrespective of location of their headquarter, provided they have the language competency to do so.

5. Application for certification of political advertisement: -

5.1 Every application, in the format prescribed at Annexure A,

- It shall be accompanied by two copies of the proposed advertisement in the electronic form along with a duly attested transcript thereof.
- The application shall contain following details:
  - Cost of production of advertisement
  - Approximate cost of proposed telecast/broadcast of such advertisement with breakup of number of insertions and rate proposed to be charged for each such insertion
  - A statement whether the advertisement is for the benefit of the prospects of the election of a candidate/party
  - If the advertisement is issued by any person other than a political party or a candidate, that person shall state on oath that it is not for the benefit of the political party or a candidate and that the said advertisement has not been sponsored or commissioned or paid for by any political party or a candidate.
  - A statement that all the payments shall be made by way of cheque or demand draft.

5.2 The political parties/candidates, if they desire so, may also follow the alternative procedure by first submitting the transcript of the proposed advertisement for certification and once the transcript is vetted/approved by the Committee the party/ candidate will submit the final product in electronic form, another time for final certification.

5.3 While taking a decision on the applications for certification of an advertisement, it will be open for the Committees to direct deletion/modification of any part of the advertisement. Every such order making comments and observations for deletion and modification shall be binding and be complied by the concerned political party or contesting candidate or any other person within 24 hours from the receipt of such communication. The advertisement so modified will be re-submitted for review and certification.

5.4 Where the Committee is satisfied that the advertisement meets the requirements of the law and in accordance with the directions of the Supreme Court dated 13.04.2004, it should issue a certificate to the

effect that the advertisement concerned is fit for telecast/broadcast. The format for the certificate is at **Annexure B**.

5.5 When the certificate for telecast/broadcast is issued by the committee, an authenticated copy of the transcript as approved by the committee should also be handed over to the applicant, and at the same time, the committee should retain a copy of the approved transcript and an electronic copy of the material certified for telecast/broadcast.

5.6 A proper record in a register should be maintained for all applications received for certification. Each application should be serially numbered, and the serial numbers should also be indicated on the two copies in electronic form and the receiving officer should affix his signature on the electronic copy. After issue of certificate, one electronic copy of certified advertisement, should be retained by the Committee/ Designated Officer.

5.7 The Committee while issuing certificate to the applicant may also include the following disclaimer – The responsibility for the factuality and correctness of claims and allegations made in the advertisement lies wholly with the Publisher /advertiser. The certification committee is in no way answerable or liable for any damage, loss, or injury, civil or criminal on account of such publication.

6. Timeline to submit application for certification: -

6.1 Registered National and State political parties and every contesting candidate must apply for precertification of political advertisements not later than three days prior to the date of the proposed commencement of the telecast of the advertisement.

6.2 In case of any other person or unregistered political parties, it should be not later than seven days prior to the date of the telecast.

7. Timeline for MCMC to deliver decision on the applications for precertification of political advertisements:

7.1 The State and District MCMC shall deliver the decision on the applications of pre- certification of political advertisements and inform the applicant within two days of the receipt of application.

7.2 However, in order to facilitate political parties and candidates and to make sure that the process of pre-certification of advertisements is expedited, the MCMCs shall make best efforts to dispose of all such applications within the same day.

8. Guidelines for dealing with candidates' advertisements on TV/Cable channels/newspapers owned by political parties

8.1 If the candidate or their sponsoring parties utilize TV/Cable Channel/Newspaper owned by them for promoting the electoral prospects of the candidate, the expenses for the same as per the standard rate card of the channel/newspaper have to be included by the candidate concerned in his Election Expenditure Statement (Schedule 4A), even if the actually do not pay any amount to channel/newspaper. **(Annexure-C)**.

8.2 The Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) to keep a close watch on the contents telecast on such channels to identify contents of the nature mentioned above, and after following all due procedures, the notional expenses as per standard rate cards of the channel shall be added in the

election expenditure account of the candidate appropriately, even if, they actually do not pay any amount to channel/newspaper. This will also include publicity by or on behalf of candidates by Star Campaigner (s) or others, to impact his electoral prospects.

9. Print Media

9.1 Certification of Political Advertisement for Print Media

9.1.1 Starting from the last phase of Bihar assembly elections in 2015, ECI, in exercise of its power under Article 324 of the constitution has issued directions to CEOs of States/UTs that no political advertisements would be published in print media on poll day and pre-poll day in all the phases without pre-certification of State/District MCMC. This has been done to avoid any offending or misleading political advertisements through Print Media in order to not vitiate the entire election process in the last stage of the elections.

9.1.2 Before every General/Assembly election, instruction in this regard is issued by the Commission.

9.2 Timeline for submission of ads for pre-certification in print media :-

9.2.1 The applicants for pre-certification of ads in print media shall have to apply to MCMC not later than 02(two) days prior to the proposed date of publication of advertisement on poll day and pre-poll day.

9.3 Publication of advertisements/election matter in print media during elections:-

9.3.1 In reference to Section 77(1) & 127A of the R.P. Act, 1951, the Commission has directed that in the case of any advertisements/election matter for or against any political party or candidate in the print media, during the election period, the name and the address of the publisher should be given along with the matter/advertisement. Further, attention of Section 171H of IPC is also invited which prohibits incurring of expenditure, on inter alia, advertisement, circular or publication, for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of a candidate, without authority from the candidate. For further clarification in this regard, attention may be invited to Section 77(1) & 127A of the R.P. Act, 1951.

10. The order to pre-certify political advertisements by the Hon'ble Supreme court dated 13.04.2004 was issued in exercise of the powers under Article 142 of the Constitution of India. If there is any violation of Hon'ble Supreme court order or any provisions of Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, an order will be issued to the violator to forthwith stop such violations and will also be open to direct seizure of the equipments. Every order shall be promptly complied with by the person(s) on whom such order is served.

Part- C

1. Paid News

1.1 Paid News disturbs the level playing field in elections and adversely affects free and fair polls by circumventing election expenditure laws and also causing undue influence on voters. The Commission has accepted the definition of Paid News given by Press Council of India which defines paid news as "Any news or Analysis appearing in any media (print and electronic) for a price in cash or kind as consideration".

1.2 The Commission has directed that maximum vigilance may be observed so that the incidence of 'Paid News' or surrogate advertisements in Print and Electronic media in the context of elections is arrested. The cases of 'Paid News' may generally manifest in the forms of news articles/reports published about a particular candidate or a party eulogizing them, or similar news articles/reports denigrating the opponents, both intended at unduly influencing the voters. The same or similar type of news articles/ reportings (with cosmetic modifications) appearing in more than one newspapers periodical would amount to further corroboration as circumstantial evidence that such news publication could result from collusion of the candidate/party with the publishers/editors/financers of the newspaper. Although, such cases have generally no transactional evidence of payment of consideration in cash or kind.

1.3 The practice of paid news has to be seen as an attempt to circumvent the provisions of Sections 77 and 123 (6) of the RP Act 1951 which prescribe accounting and ceiling of election expenses and make exceeding such prescribed limits a corrupt practice in elections.

2. PCI and NBDA Guidelines -

PCI guidelines about election news and advertising say that news should be clearly demarcated from advertisements by printing disclaimers and should be strictly enforced by all publications. As far as news is concerned, it must always carry a credit line and should be set in a typeface that would distinguish it from advertisements. Guidelines issued by **Press Council of India dated 30.07.2010, 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct- 2020' and "Guidelines for Election Broadcasts" issued by NBSA (now NBDA) dt 3rd March, 2014** may be referred while scanning paid news cases (copy enclosed). Illustrations of suspected paid news cases are at **Annexure-D**.

3. Time period for determining paid news cases:-

3.1 With reference to Section 77(1) of Representation of the People Act, 1951 it is clarified that paid news cases may be taken into account from the date of filing of nomination by the candidate.

4. Composition of District & State level MCMC is already mentioned in Part-A. Sequence of Paid News monitoring and reporting is mentioned here below:-

4.1 District MCMC-

4.1.1 Paid news cases are scanned initially at the district level. This Committee examines complaints/ issues of Paid News through a monitoring arrangement. It scans all media e.g. print media, electronic media, cable network, etc.

4.1.2 On reference from District MCMC, RO shall give notice to the candidates within 96 hrs of publication/ broadcast/ telecast/ receipt of complaint to explain/disclose the expenditure incurred for publishing the 'news' or similar matter, or state why expenditure should not be computed as per standard rate and added to the candidate's expenditure.

4.1.3 Notice is to be issued only in suspected cases of Paid News decided by this committee and not to all the reference cases received.

4.1.4 The Committee has to decide on the reply expeditiously and convey to the Candidate/Party its final decision. The reply of the show cause notice shall be addressed to R.O. and in case no reply is received by R.O. from the candidate within 48 hrs of serving of notice, the decision of MCMC will be final.

4.1.5 District level MCMC shall decide on the reply expeditiously and RO shall convey to the Candidate/ Party such final decision.

4.1.6 The candidate may appeal against the final decision of District level MCMC to State level MCMC within 48 hrs of receipt of the decision, with information to the District level MCMC.

4.2 State MCMC-

4.2.1 This Committee examines all cases of Paid News on appeal against the decision of District MCMC or cases they take up suo-motu, in which, the concerned ROs are directed to issue notices to the candidates. The State level MCMC have to dispose of the case within 96 hrs of receipt of appeal and convey the decision to the Candidate with a copy to District level MCMC.

4.2.2 The candidate may appeal against the decision of State level MCMC to ECI within 48 hrs of receiving of order from this Committee

4.2.3 The cases of suspected Paid News or advertisement or appeal shall have to be considered within strict timelines and the entire process shall ordinarily be completed within the Election period.

4.3 ECI level Committee-

4.3.1 A Committee is constituted at ECI level and has the following composition:-

(i) Additional Director General (News), News Services Division: AIR, New Delhi

(ii) Additional Director General, DAVP, New Delhi

(iii) PCI member

(iv) Principal Secretary/Secretary (in-charge of Election Expenditure)

(v) Principal Secretary (Legal)

(vi) Principal Secretary (in-charge of the State/UT from where reference in received)

(vii) Principal Secretary (in-charge of CC & B.E. Division)

(viii) Director/Principal Secretary/Dy. Secretary (Media Division) - Convener Members at SI No. (i), (ii) & (iii) are based on nominations by concerned Ministries/Departments.

4.3.2 This committee deals with the appeal against the decision of State level MCMCs. Wherever complaints on Paid News cases are made to the Commission directly, the Commission shall forward cases to the State level MCMC for initial consideration. The Committee to also examine and recommend on references , directly received in the Commission, which are not any State/UT specific, regarding Paid News.

4.3.3 The Committee also supports policy formulation at ECI on issues like - Paid News, issues relating to

usage of electronic media and print media for campaigning proposed by parties and candidates, Do's and Don'ts to be followed by both print and electronic media, etc.

5. For Paid news monitoring, following points are to be noted for systematic procedure and prompt action:-

5.1 CEOs, DEOs to brief political parties and media houses before commencement of the election campaign about instructions related to pre-certification of political advertisements on electronic media, media related provisions of the R.P. Act viz. Section 126 & Section 127A, Section 171H of IPC, Paid News and consequences of violation and to avoid surrogate advertising.

5.2 CEOs to obtain a list of television channels/radio channels/newspapers, broadcasting/ circulated in the State/UT and their standard rate cards, six months before the due date of expiry of Lok Sabha or the State/ UT Legislative Assembly, as the case may be and forward it to the Commission. [In case of any technical doubt relating to the application of the standard rate card, the matter can be referred to the DAVP, Ministry of I&B, Govt. of India for advice]. This list is also to be shared with MCMC for reference to add notional expenditure in confirmed paid news cases.

5.3 In case of bye-election to a Parliamentary or Assembly constituency, the standard rate cards shall be obtained by the District Election Officer concerned immediately on announcement of the bye-election and Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) need to take due action immediately afterwards.

d) The Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) at District level and State level will monitor all political advertisements in relation to candidates, either overt or covert, and will intimate the Returning Officer for issue of notices to candidates for inclusion of notional expenditure based on standard rate cards in their election expenses account, even if, they actually do not pay any amount to the channel/newspaper, that is otherwise the case with "Paid News". This will also include publicity by or on behalf of candidate(s) by Star Campaigner (s) or others, to impact his electoral prospects. A copy of the notice will also be marked to the Election Expenditure Observer.

e) Legal provisions under Sec127 A of the RP Act 1951 make it mandatory for a publisher of an election advertisement, pamphlet, etc. to print the name and address of the publisher as well as printer and failure to do so attracts penalty of imprisonment up to two years and /or fine of Rs 2000. For the purpose of Sec.127A (1) of the R.P.Act, 1951,"'election pamphlet or poster' means any printed pamphlet, hand-bills or other document distributed for the purpose of promoting or prejudicing the election of a candidate or group of candidates …...". Thus, 'Paid News' would also fall in the category of 'other document' liable to be included in 'election pamphlet & poster' and action taken accordingly.

f) District MCMC to strictly monitor campaigns through print/ electronic media. There should be vigorous scrutiny of all newspapers, published or having circulation in the district in order to locate political advertisement in the garb of news coverage appearing within the election period. DEOs should closely monitor advertisements released in print media in any form including surrogate advertising in the form of news, and serve notices to candidates/political parties where called for, so that the expenses incurred thereon are duly reflected in the account of the concerned candidate/ party.

g) Similarly, the Committee should also keep a watch on the election news/features, etc. on the electronic media in the district. When there is disproportionate coverage to the speech/activities of a candidate on television/radio channels, which is likely to influence the voters and yield electoral benefit to a particular candidate, and the same coverage appears in several channels, then the

candidate should be served with notices by the DEOs to explain her/his stand as to why the coverage should not be treated as advertisement.

h) Media shall be asked to exercise self-regulation.

6. It has come to notice of ECI from the recently concluded elections that the follow up action in confirmed Paid News Cases has not been taken up promptly and further some discrepancies are also noticed in reporting format. In this regard, following action points are to be considered: -

i. Weekly report on Paid News is to be submitted by CEO to ECI in **Annexure-I** format on the last day of every week starting from the last date of nominations of each phase.

ii. Further, a compiled list having information of Paid News in **Annexure-I** including the details from all districts is to be furnished to the Commission along with the details of confirmed cases of paid news in **Annexure-II**, just after the completion of elections.

iii. All relevant documents of paid news cases with clear and legible copy [Constitution of MCMCs of the regions, Proceedings/Minutes of meetings with due reasons as to how the news considered as paid news, News reports/advertisements/cuttings of newspaper along with its Hindi/English transcript/videos/Clippings of paid news etc.] must be provided along with **Annexure-II** and compiled **Annexure-I**.

iv. It has been observed that in certain cases, notices on paid news have been issued in large numbers while further action on the same remains pending. MCMCs may ensure that due deliberation takes place on each case and only cases that appear to be suspected cases of 'Paid News' are referred to the RO for issue of notice to the candidate. While seeing that frivolous cases are not taken up, MCMC should ensure that there is no laxity on checking actual 'Paid News'.

7. In respect of confirmed paid news cases, following actions are to be taken:-

i) Where the suspected cases of Paid News are decided as a "Paid News" either at District level/CEO level, as the case may be, **the actual/ notional expenditure shall be treated as part of election expenses of the Candidate concerned**, with due intimation to him/ her or his/her agent.

ii) Paid News cases related to Print Media are sent to PCI and those related to Electronic Media are referred to NBSA. The same are forwarded to these authorities by ECI and not by CEO/DEO.

iii) **The names of concerned candidates shall be put on the website of the Chief Electoral Officer of respective states.** In this regard, a separate tab in the name of 'Paid News' is to be created where the details of erring candidates will be uploaded.

8. It is requested that the instructions/guidelines may be brought to the notice of all Media Monitoring and Certification Committees(MCMCs)/District Election Officers/Returning Officers/Media/Political parties, Media houses & all other Stakeholders in the State/UT for strict compliance. It may also be brought to the notice of all the stakeholders that **failure to comply with the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court will amount to contempt of court**.

Yours Faithfully,

(Rajesh Kumar Singh)

Under Secretary

Annexure A

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION OF ADVERTISEMENT

I.

(i) Name and full address of the applicant

(ii) Whether the advertisement is by a political party/contesting candidate / any other person / group of persons / association/ organization / Trust (give the name)

(iii) (a) In case of political party, the status of the party (whether recognized National/ State / unrecognized party)

(b) In case of a candidate, name of the Parliamentary / Assembly Constituency from where contesting

(iv) Address of Headquarters of political party / group or body of persons /association/ organization / Trust

(v) Platform(s) on which the advertisement is proposed to be telecast/broadcast

(vi) (a) Is the advertisement for the benefit of prospects of election of any candidate(s)

(b) If so, give the name(s) of such candidate(s) with full address and name(s) of constituency (ies)

(vii) Date of submission of the advertisement

(viii) Language(s) used in the advertisement (advertisement is to be submitted with two copies in electronic form along with a duly attested transcript)

(ix) Title of advertisement

(x) Cost of production of the advertisement

(xi) Approximate cost of proposed telecast with the breakup of number of insertions and rate proposed for each such insertion

(xii) Total expenditure involved (in Rupees)

II.

I, Shri / Smt. _____, S/o / D/o / W/o _____, (full address) _____, undertake that all payments related to the production and telecast/broadcast of this advertisement will be made by way of cheque / demand draft.

Place: **Signature of the applicant**

Date:

III. (Applicable for advertisement by a person / persons, other than a political party or a candidate) I, Shri/Smt._____,S/o/D/o/W/o _____,(full address, hereby state and affirm that the advertisement(s) submitted herewith is not for the benefit of any political party or any candidate and that this advertisement(s) has / have not been sponsored / commissioned or paid for by any political party or a candidate.

Place: **Signature of the applicant**

Date:

Annexure – B

CERTIFICATION OF POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

I.

(i) Name and address of the applicant /political party / candidate/ person / group of persons /association / organization/ Trust

(ii) Title of advertisement

(iii) Duration of advertisement

(iv) Language(s) used in advertisement

(v) Date of submission of advertisement

(vi) Date of certification for telecast

II. Certified that the above advertisement is fit for use as per the guidelines prescribed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

Signature of chairperson/
members of committee / Designated Officer

_____

_____

_____

Place:

Date:

*Applicable for telecast/broadcast on TV and Cable network/Cable Channels, advertisements to be displayed year round in Cinema Halls, Radio including private FM channels, audio-visual displays in public places, advertisements in e-newspapers, bulk SMS/voice messages, advertisements on social media and internet websites, print media (pre-poll & poll day)

Annexure – C

Schedule- 4

Details of expenditure on campaign through print and electronic media including cable network, bulk SMS or Internet or social media, news items/TV/radio channel etc., including the paid news so decided by MCMC or voluntarily admitted by the candidate. The details should include the expenditure incurred on all such news items appearing in privately owned newspapers/TV/radio channels etc.

S. No	Nature of medium (electronic / print) and duration	Name and address of media provider (print /electronic /SMS / voice/ cable TV, social media etc.)	Name and address of agency, reporter, stringer, company or any person to whom charges / commission etc. paid/ payable, if any	Total Amount in Rs. Col. (3) +(4)	Sources of Expenditure		
					Amt. By candidate/ agent	Amt. By Pol. Party	Amt. By others
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1							
2							
3							
4							
Total							

Schedule-4A

Details of expenditure on campaign through print and electronic media including cable network, bulk SMS or Internet or social media, news items/TV/radio channel etc., including the paid news so decided by MCMC or voluntarily admitted by the candidate. The details should include the expenditure incurred on all such news items appearing in newspapers/TV/radio channels, owned by the candidate or by the political party sponsoring the candidate.

S. No	Nature of medium (electronic / print) and duration	Name and address of media provider (print /electronic /SMS / voice/ cable TV, social media etc.)	Name and address of agency, reporter, stringer, company or any person to whom charges / commission etc. paid/ payable, if any	Total Amount in Rs. Col. (3) +(4)	Sources of Expenditure		
					Amt. By candidate/ agent	Amt. By Pol. Party	Amt. By others
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1							
2							
3							
4							
Total							

Annexure-D

Illustrations of suspected paid news cases:-

Some illustrations of the cases for suspected paid news are prepared and can be seen here below: -

1. Identical articles with photographs and headlines appearing in competing publications carrying by-lines of different authors around the same time.

2. On the same page of specific newspapers, articles praising competing candidates claiming that both are likely to win the same elections.

3. News item stating that one candidate is getting the support of each and every section of society and that he would win elections from the constituency.

4. News items favoring a candidate, not carrying any byline.

5. Newspaper publishing a banner headline stating that a party/candidate is ready to create history in the state/constituency but not carrying any news item related to this headline.

6. News item saying that the good work done by a Party/Candidate had marginalized the electoral prospects of the other party/candidate in the state with each and every sentence of the news item in favor of the party/ candidate.

7. There are instances of fixed size news items, each say of a length of 125- 150 words with a double-column photo. News items are seldom written in such a rigid format and size whereas advertisements are most often.

8. In specific newspapers, multiple font types and multiple drop case styles were noticed within the same page of a single newspaper. This happened because - the layouts, fonts, printouts, photographs - were provided by candidates who had paid for slots in the pages of the newspaper.

Annexure-E

1. Letter no. 509/75/2004/JS-I dated 15.04.2004 regarding Supreme Court's Order dated 13th April 2004 relating to advertisements of political nature in TV Channel and Cable Network and Letter No. 509/75/2004-JS-I, dated 22.07.2004 regarding Commission's Order dated 15.4.2004 relating to advertisements of political nature on TV Channel and cable networks

2. Letter no. 3/9/2004/JS-II dated 24.08.2004 on restrictions on the Printing of pamphlets, posters etc.

3. Letter no. 509/75/2004/J.S.-I/Vol. II dated 26.09.2007 regarding Supreme Court Order dated 13th April 2004, relating to advertisement of political nature on TV Channel and cable networks.

4. Letter no. 509/75/2004/JS-I/Vol.II/RCC dated 21.11.2008 and 18.03.2009 regarding advertisements of political nature on TV channels and Cable Networks and on Radio- clarification

5. Letter no. 3/ER/2009/SDR dated 19.03.2009 regarding advertisements of political nature on TV channels and Cable Networks and on Radio

6. Letter no. 491/Media/2009 dated 18.03.2011 regarding measures to check "Paid News" during elections i.e. advertisement in the garb of news in Media.

7. Letter no. 491/Paid News/2012/Media dated 27.08.2012 regarding Measures to check 'Paid News' during elections i.e. advertisement in garb of news in Media and related matters-revised guidelines.

8. Letter no. 491/Media Policy/2013 dated 10.10.2013 regarding clarification on certification of advertisement at public places.

9. Letter no. 491/Paid News/2014 dated 07.02.2014 and 26.02.2014 clarification on certification of advertisement and Composition of Media Certification and Monitoring Committees on Certification and Paid News.

10. Letter no. 491/MCMC/2014(Communication) dated 15.03.2014, 24.03.2014, 11.04.2014, 12.04.2014 and 25.04.2014 regarding Clarification of Political Advertisement, Certification of advertisement on political nature on electronic media, Guidelines on applications received from individuals seeking pre-certification of ads of political nature on TV Channels/Cable Network/ Radio regarding.

11. Letter no. 491/Media Policy/2015/Communication dated 28.05.2015 regarding Pre-Certification of political advertisements – Use of bulk SMSs/voice messages in political campaigning

12. Letter no. 491/Media/2011 (Advt) dated 16.08.2011 & Letter no. 491/Media Policy/2016 dated 03.01.2016 for dealing with candidates' advertisements on TV/Cable channels/newspapers owned by political parties or their functionaries/office bearers during elections.

13. Letter no. 491/MCMC/2018/Communication dated 13.09.2018 on provision of pre- certification of political advertisements applicable in the whole territory of India at all times

14. Letter no. 491/Paid News/2019/Communication dated 25.02.2019 on inclusion of a social media expert in the MCMC

15. Letter no. 491/MCMC/2021/Communication dated 19.03.2021 regarding reconstitution of State Level MCMC.

16. Letter No. 491/Media/2010 dated 8th June, 2010 regarding measures to check "Paid News" during elections i.e. advertisement in the garb of news in Media.

17. Letter No. 491/Media Policy/2010 dated 23rd September, 2010 regarding measures to check "Paid News" during elections i.e. advertisement in the garb of news in Media.

18. Order No. 491/Paid News/2012/Media dated 15th March, 2012 regarding Constitution of a Committee at ECI level with a view to examine complaints/ references of "Paid News" received from State CEOs/MCMC

19. Letter No. 491/Paid News/2012/ Media dated 9th October, 2012 regarding Timeline for the candidate to reply to the notice issued by District/ State MCMC.

20. Letter No. 491/Paid News/2012/ Media dated 15th October, 2012 regarding inclusion of advertisement to be displayed in cinema halls.

21. Letter No. 491/Media Policy/2013 dated 7th March, 2014 regarding Measures to check 'Paid News' during elections i.e. advertisement in garb of news in Media and related matters – Revised Guidelines.

22. Letter no. 491/Media Policy/2016 dated 10.03.2016 regarding timeline for certification of political advertisement.

23. Letter No. 491/Paid News/2014 dated 22nd April, 2014 regarding Measures to check paid news during elections – time period for determining paid news against a candidate - Clarification.

24. Letter No. 491/SM/2013/Communication dated 25.10.2013 regarding Instructions of the Commission with respect to use of Social Media in Election Campaigning

25. Letter No. 491/SM/Comm./2013 dated 16.04.2014 regarding Clarification in respect of advertisements on social networking sites and E-Papers.

26. Letter No. 491/Paid News/2019 dated 4th June, 2019 on publicizing the confirmed cases of paid news on CEO's website as a measure to check its spread during elections.

27. Letter no. 491/MCMC/5/2023/Communication dated 04.08.2023 regarding reconstitution of State Level MCMC.

Signature

INSTRUCTION No. 21

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No.491/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-II/KAP/BASELINE/Lok Sabha/2023 **Dated: 3rd July, 2023**

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
All States / UTs

Subject: Conduct of Baseline Survey of Knowledge, Attitude, Practices (KAP) of citizens for General Elections of Lok Sabha, 2024 – regarding.

Sir / Madam,

I am directed to state that the Commission has directed to conduct Baseline Survey (KAP) ahead of the General Elections of Lok Sabha, 2024 in your States. In this regard, I am directed to say the following:-

1. The Survey would be called KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practices) survey. A standard updated questionnaire for Baseline Survey is enclosed. The questionnaire includes a section for Persons with Disabilities. The findings of the survey will be tracked across states, over time for measuring the efficacy of various interventions undertaken by the ECI and CEO.

2. As per SVEEP Template, in addition to the existing knowledge gaps, the following may be stressed onto:-

    - Extent of gaps in voting and reasons behind low voter turnout (if applicable)
    - Extent of unregistered voters, in the light of significant migration
    - Media Consumption Patterns
        - Urban
        - Semi Urban
        - Rural
    - Extent of Awareness of postal ballots and other Accessibility measures, among the people

3. CEO has the option of adding questions after those given in the standard questionnaire in related sections at the bottom. Similarly options within a question can be added at the bottom. However, the sequencing and the codes for existing options should not be tinkered with.

4. Relevant questions may be added. Further, Baseline Survey should broadly indicate the impact of voter awareness and various facilitation measures on voter turnout.

5. The raw data in SPSS/STATA format (along with codebook) shall be required to be submitted to ECI along with the survey report. Pooling the raw data of multiple states at different points of time will allow for a wide range of analysis. Accordingly, this may be included in the deliverable when soliciting proposals in response to its Terms of Reference (ToR).

6. Survey reports should be written in a consistent format as per the recommendations of TISS. The Sample Chapter Plan, Sampling Methodology and Terms of Reference for a Survey Agency are also enclosed.

7. The Survey process shall be monitored by SVEEP Division in synergy with EDMD at Commission level. The representatives from Commission (SVEEP and EDMD) shall be made part of the important stages of survey including presentation given by the Implementation agency at the time of submission of Report so that factors/areas to be highlighted based on data collected from field, could be suitably captured in the survey findings.

8. You are, therefore, requested to engage the services of a suitable Institute/ Agency to carry out the Baseline Survey. The selection of the Agency/ Institute will be done within the administrative and financial procedures of the concerned state and may be completed latest by **29th July, 2023**. The same to be intimated to the ECI.

9. The Commission has directed that the CEOs should scrutinize the operational procedures followed by the Survey organizations and closely monitor whether quality norms are being followed during recruitment and training of enumerators, field work and data entry.

10. The Baseline survey is to be completed by **29th August, 2023** so that the findings are available for framing the State and District SVEEP Plan for the upcoming elections. The survey reports alongwith the raw data, as mentioned above, are to be submitted to the Commission.

Yours faithfully,

Encl: As above

(LOVE KUSH YADAV)
UNDER SECRETARY

Questionnaire number ■ ■ ■ ■ Confidential when filled

Endline Survey Template
Knowledge, Attitude and Practice(KAP)

Introduction and consent: Greeting! My name is ---------- (full name). I work for ---------- (name of institute) a research organization based in ---------- (place) that regularly conducts surveys on various socio-economic and political issues. Presently we are interviewing people here in ---------- (name of town/village) in ---------- (state) and collecting information regarding about their electoral participation. I'm going to ask you some questions related to registration and participations in elections. Some of the answers to the questions may be personal, but I want you to know that all your answers will be kept completely confidential. There is no compulsion on answering every question and you may choose not to respond to any question. Further, you may also terminate this interview at any time if you are uncomfortable answering the questions. There is no penalty for refusing to take part in this interview nor is there any incentive for participation. However, your honest answers to these questions will help us better understand how people think. We would greatly appreciate your help in responding to this survey. The survey will take about ---------- minutes to ask these questions. Would you be willing to participate?

Section A: Identification and quality control

Q No.	Question	Response	Code	Skip
A1	Consent	Not received	0	→END
		Received	1	
A2	Name of state/UT & census code			
A3	Name of district & census code			
A4	Type of residence and region	Rural (Hilly)	1	
		Rural (Non- Hilly)	2	
		Urban(Hilly)	3	
		Urban (Non- Hilly)	4	
A5	Name of AC & code			
A6	Name of polling station & part no.			
A7	Name of village/urban block & code			
A8	Landmark near house			
Subsection A(i): Details of interview				
A9	Date of interview	(In DD-MM format) 2022		
A10	Start time of interview	(In HH:MM, 24 hour format)		
A11	End time of interview	(In HH:MM, 24 hour format)		
A12	Interview result codes	Completed	1	
		Entire HH absent for a long time	2	
		Postponed	3	
		Refused (Pl. specify reasons)	4	
		HH/dwelling vacant	5	
		Address of HH/dwelling not found	6	
A13	Name of enumerator and ID/code			
A14	Name of supervisor and ID/code			

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

Subsection A(ii): Quality control				
A15	Field: back check	No	0	
		Yes	1	
A16	Field: scrutiny	No	0	
		Yes	1	
A17	Data entry: double entry	No	0	
		Yes	1	

Section B: Selection of respondent

Q No.	Question	Response	Code
B1	How many people (including you) ordinarily reside in this household?		
B2	How many people are older than 18 years? (as on .... as per SSR)		

Subsection B(i): Household (HH) roster

NOTE: LIST ALL THOSE WHO LIVE UNDER THE SAME ROOF, SHARE THE SAME KITCHEN AND ARE ABOVE 18 YEARS OLD STARTING WITH THE HH HEAD. THE NUMBER OF ENTRIES IN THE HH ROSTER (B3) SHOULD BE EQUAL TO THE CODE IN B2.

B3	B4	B5		B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11
S No.	Name	Relation with HH head		Sex	Age (in years)	Disabled	Migrated in last 1 year	Voted in last LokSabha election	Voted in last Assembly election
1		0	1						
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									

CODE LIST FOR HH ROSTER:

- **Relationship with HH head:** Head=01; Wife/Husband=02; Son/Daughter=03; Daughter-in-law/Son-in-law=04; Grandchild=05; Father/Mother=06; Brother/Sister=07; Father-in-law/Mother-in-law=08; Nephew/Niece=09; Brother-in-law/Sister-in-law=10; other relatives=11; Servant/Others=12
- **Sex:** Male=1; Female=2; Third gender =3
- **Disabled:** No=0; Yes (in seeing)=1; Yes(in speech)=2; Yes(in hearing)=3; Yes(in movement)=4;
- **Migrated in last 1 year:** No=0; Yes=1
- **Voted in last LokSabha /Assembly election:** No=0; Yes=1

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

Subsection B (ii): Kish grid

LAST DIGIT OF QUESTIONNAIRE NO.	TOTAL NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE RESPONDENTS IN HOUSEHOLD							
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
0	1	2	2	4	3	6	5	4
1	1	1	3	1	4	1	6	5
2	1	2	1	2	5	2	7	6
3	1	1	2	3	1	3	1	7
4	1	2	3	4	2	4	2	8
5	1	1	1	1	3	5	3	1
6	1	2	2	2	4	6	4	2
7	1	2	1	4	1	2	6	4
8	1	1	2	1	2	3	7	5
9	1	1	2	1	2	3	7	5

INSTRUCTIONS TO SELECT RESPONDENTS FROM KISH GRID: Look at the last digit of the questionnaire number on the cover page. This is the row number you should circle. Check the total number of eligible respondents from the household roster or B2. This is the column number you should circle. Find the box where the circled row and the circled column meet and circle the number that appears in the box. Record this in B12. This is the selected respondent to whom you should administer the questionnaire. For example, if the household questionnaire number is '3716', go to row 6 and circle the row number ('6'). If there are three people eligible for an interview in the household (it does not matter if they are available for interview or not), go to column 3 and circle the column number ('3'). Draw lines from row 6 and column 3 and find the box where the two meet, and circle the number in it ('2'). This means you have to select the second eligible person.

Q No.	Question	Response	Code	Skip
B12	Number selected from kish grid	Enter code from kish grid		
B13	S. No. of the sampled respondent	Enter code from HH roster/B3		

Section C: Voter registration

Q No.	Question	Response
C1	Do you have a voter's card/EPIC? (If registered as a voter) (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
C2	If no, why? (Write 1 = Not aware, how to procure this card; 2 = Lost by self; 3 = **Not Received;** 4 = Could not get time to get photographed; 5 = Did not get information when they are making; 6 = Lack of time; 7 = Cumbersome procedure; 8 = Not Interested in getting the same)	
C3	Are you aware of 'Voter's List'? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say/do not know)	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

C4	If yes to Q-3, has your name been enrolled/ included in the voter's list? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say/do not know)	
C5	If no to Q-3 what was the reason? (Write 1 = Did not know about it; 2 = Was not told; 3 = Can't say/don't know; 4 = Was not interested)	
C6	If yes to Q-4 how did you come to know that your name has to be enrolled? (Write 1 = Friends/Relatives; 2 = Newspapers; 3 = Local Community leaders; 4 = BLO; 5 = TV; 6 = Social Media/Website) 7=Any other medium 8=can't say	
C7	If yes to Q-4, was it correctly written in voter's list? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say/do not know)	
C8	Are there members in your family who are 18+ years of age and not registered? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
C9	If yes to Q8, what are the reasons for them not to enroll in the voter's list? (Write 1 = Lack of awareness; 2 = Lack of interest; 3 = Lack of valid documents; 4 = Lengthy (difficult) procedure; 5 = Not permanent resident)	
C10	Do you know where to get registered as elector? (Write 1 = Taluka Office; 2 = BDO; 3 = Panchayat Office; 4 = Collector's Office; 5 = Matdata Sahayata Kendra / Voter Centre) 6=VHA/NVSP/ECI website and ECI mobile app/through online methods	
C11	Are you aware of the EPIC (Election Card)? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say)	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

C12	If yes to Q12, when did you get the EPIC made? (Write 1 = Before last assembly elections; 2 = After last assembly elections; 3 = Don't remember)	
C13	How many days did it take for you to get the EPIC? (Write 1 = Within 15 days; 2 = Within 1 month; 3 = Within six months; 4 = Don't know)	
C14	Was it easy for you to get the EPIC? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say/ don't remember)	
C15	If no, what were the main problems you witnessed while getting your EPIC? (Write 1 = Long procedure; 2 = Unfriendly officials; 3 = Can't say; 4 = Inaccessibility of the concerned office)	
C16	Are you aware that you can vote with alternative ID? (1=Yes;2=No)	
C17	If you did not have EPIC, which alternative ID did you use for voting? (Write 1 = License; 2 = Ration Card; 3 = Opening Bank account; 4 = Voter Slip; 5 = Any other)	
C18	Do you know that Govt. /Election office has appointed local persons to help for enrolment? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
C19	If yes, to Q18 then what is his/her designation? (Write 1 = Booth Level Officer; 2 Identification Officer; 3 = Election Agent; 4 = Don't know)	
C20	Has s/he ever visited your house / office? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say)	
C21	Do you know where your Polling booth is? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

Section D: ELECTIONS – KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOUR, BELIEF, AND PRACTICES

Q No.	Question	Response
D1	Did you vote in previous Assembly Elections? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
D2	Did you vote in 2019 Parliamentary Elections? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
	Are you aware of 'Voter's List'? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say/do not know)	
D3	If no to D1 or D2 what were the reasons? (Can record more than one reasons) (Write 1 = I did not have electoral photo ID Card; 2 = I did not know my polling station; 3 = Polling station was at distance (I had transportation logistic problem; 4 = Long queue and I did not have time; 5 = No faith in political system (or electoral democracy); 6 = Did not vote as community or religious leader said so; 7 = Head of family said not to vote; 8 = Voting is not essential for maintenance of democracy; 9 = There was no good candidate; 10 = Candidate was not of my choice or community; 11 = I just did not want to vote as nothing will change; 12 = I was not in my constituency a.Education b.Marriage c.Work d.Premanently shifted e.Temporary absence f.other reasons (please specify) 13 = I was afraid/felt insecure to go to the polling station; 14 = My name was not on electoral roll; 15=I was not aware of the poll date and time; 16=I was not aware of the fact voting can be done with alternative document; 17=Any Other (Specify)……	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

D4	If yes to D1 or D2 what were the reasons? (Can record more than one reasons) (Write 1 = I am political party sympathizer; 2 = Casted vote due to threat or coercion; 3 = Head of family said to vote; 4 = Influenced by friends; 5 = Wanted to defeat a particular candidate and/or a political party; 6 = It was my duty/right; 7 = Because of repeated appeal and advertisement by Election Commission; 8 = Because of enabling environment (free and Fair) created by Election; 9 = Commission; 10 = I got registered in electoral roll; 11 = Candidate was good; 12= Candidate was of my choice and from community and religion; 13 = Candidate visited me personally; 14 = Money / Liquor/inducement was offered; 15 = Any Other (Specify)……..…	
D5	How did you find the electoral experience during your last voting? (Write 1 = Convenient; 2 = Inconvenient; 3 = Taxing; 4 = Can't remember)	
D6	What motivated your choice of the candidate during last elections? (Write 1 = Personally known; 2 = Experience; 3 = Honesty; 4 = Commitment; 5 = Any other specify……..)	
D7	Are there any family members eligible for voting who have not voted? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
D8	If yes to Q7, specify possible reasons: (Write 1 = S/he did not have electoral photo ID Card; 2 = S/he did not know the polling station; 3 = Polling station was at distance (S/he had transportation /logistic problem; 4 = Long queue and S/he did not have time; 5 = No faith in political system (or electoral democracy); 6 = Did not vote as community or religious leader said so; 7 = Head of family said not to vote; 8 = Voting is not essential for maintenance of democracy; 9 = There was no good candidate; 10 = Candidate was not of his/her choice or community; 11 = S/he just did not want to vote as nothing will change; 12 = S/he was not in his/her constituency; 13 = S/he did not get voter slip even on polling day at the booth; 14 = S/he was afraid/felt insecure to go to the polling station; 15 = His/her name was not on electoral roll; 16 = Any Other (Specify)……	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

D9	Which is the most influencing factor that affects your voting preference? (Write 1 = Family; 2 = Caste; 3 = Religion; 4 = Candidate; 5 = Any other)	
D10	The Factor influencing high Voter turnout is: (Write 1 = Money power; 2 = Muscle power; 3 = Both; 4 = Good Candidate; 5 = Favourable environment for voting) 6=Very high awareness for importance of voting 7=Any other	
D11	Do you feel there was security threat during elections at any point? (Write 1 = Very much; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Not at all; 4 = Can't say)	
D12	Do you think the deployment of police force was sufficient during the last elections? (Write 1 = Very much; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Not at all; 4 = Can't say)	
D13	What was your experience at the polling booth during elections? (Write 1 = Very Good; 2 = Good; 3 = Not so good; 4 = Not at all good; 5 = Can't Say)	
D14	Whether the polling staff was cooperative during the election process? (Write 1 = Very Cooperative; 2 = Cooperative; 3 = Not so cooperative; 4 = Not at all cooperative; 5 = Can't say)	
D15	Did you face any difficulties in voting? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
D16	If Yes to Q 16, then difficulties were (can record more than one option) (Write 1 = Long queue; 2 = No separate queue for senior citizen; 3 = Lack of facilities including drinking water toilet and ramp; 4 = Coercion/threat by political party booth operators; 5 = Difficulties in locating my polling station; 6 = Difficulties in getting my voter slip at facilitation center; 7 = No guidance from polling personnel; 8 = Any other, specify……)	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

Section E: Voter awareness and attitudes

Q. No.	Question	Response	Code		
E1	Do you know name of your assembly constituency	1=Yes			
		2=no			
E2	What is the minimum age of registration to be a voter? * Code 99 FOR DON'T KNOW	In years			
E3	What is the date for determining qualifying age for getting registered on the electoral roll/voting?	18th Birthday	0		
		1st January/1st April/1st July/1st October	11		
		Don't know	99		
E4	Are you aware of Special Summary Revision every year?	1=Yes			
		2=no			
E5	When is the National Voters' Day celebrated?	Incorrect Date	0		
		Correct date	1		
		Don't Know	99		
E6	Do you know about: a. option of NOTA/none of the above on EVM that could be used if you don't like any candidate b. names of candidates available in Braille on the EVM? c. Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail VVPAT, that helps verify your vote?	**Responses**	**a.**	**b.**	**c.**
		1. Yes, saw it when I cast my vote	1	1	1
		2. Yes, have seen one in electoral literacy	2	2	2
		3. Yes, have heard/read about it	3	3	3
		4. No	4	4	4
E7	Have you ever accessed Voters website Portal or any other election related website? 1. No 2.Yes 3. Don't know				
E8	If yes, for what purpose did you access the website? 1. To search name and other details on the Electoral Roll 2. To register/make modification online 3. To download registration forms 4. To know polling station details 5. Others(please specify)				
E9	Are you Aware that just having an Epic does not provide you the right to vote unless until your name is included in the latest Electoral Roll. (1=Yes;2=No)				

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

E10	Are you aware that it is an offence to have an EPIC for more than one place	1=Yes			
		2=no			
E11	Finally, I am going to read out a few more statements and I would like to know your opinion on them. Please tell me if you strongly disagree (=1), disagree (=2), neither agree nor disagree (=3), agree (=4) or strongly agree (=5). There are no correct or incorrect responses so please give me your honest opinion.	Every vote counts			
		Voting should be made compulsory			
		Voting is cumbersome chore			
		Elections are conducted freely and fairly in India			
		EVMs provide accurate results			
		Women should consult male members or elders before voting in elections			
		The influence of money and muscle is increasing in elections			
		I do not intend to vote in the upcoming elections			

Section F: Background information

Q. No.	Question	Response	Code
F1	What's your educational qualification?	Illiterate	1
		Primary school	2
		High school	3
		Higher secondary	4
		Diploma/ Certificate	5
		Graduate & above including Professional/Technical Courses	6
F2	What's your occupation?	Student	1
		Unemployed	2
		Government Service/Semi Government	4
		Private Service	5
		Own enterprise/self employed	6
		Labourer/ Cultivator/ Agricultural and allied activities	7
		Home maker	8
		Others (please specify)	
F3	What's your social group?	SC	1
		ST	2
		OBC	3
		Others	4

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

F4	How often do you:	**Responses**	**a.**	**b.**	**c.**	**d.**
	a. read a newspaper or magazine?	1. Almost every day	1	1	1	1
	b. listen to the radio?	2. At least once a week	2	2	2	2
	c. watch television?	3. Less than once a week	3	3	3	3
	d. Internet (Facebook, WhatsApp etc.)?	4. Not at all	4	4	4	4
F5	During elections, which of the following sources did you rely on the most to get news on elections and politics?	Newspaper/Magazine	1			
		Television	2			
		Radio	3			
		Internet	4			
		Mobile phone	5			
		Family/relatives/friends	6			
		Others (please specify)				

Section G: Only for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)

Q No.	Question	Response
G1	Have you come across any publicity/voter edutainment material aimed at participation of PwDs? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
G2	Have you been contacted by the BLO of your area? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
G3	Do you know about an app Saksham app developed by ECI for PwD's? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
G4	How you rate the process of registration (Write 1 = Easy; 2 = Neither easy nor difficult; 3 = Difficult) If option 3 is chosen, please elaborate on the difficulties faced in the process of registration.	
G5	Please elaborate on the difficulties faced in the process of voting. (can record more than one option) (Write 1 = Long queue; 2 = No separate queue for senior citizen/pwds; 3 = Lack of facilities including drinking water toilet and ramp; 4 = Coercion/threat by political party booth operators; 5 = Difficulties in locating my polling station; 6 = Difficulties in getting my voter slip at facilitation center; 7 = No guidance from polling personnel; 8 = Any other, specify……)	
G6	Are you aware of the facility of postal ballots is extended to Senior citizens above 80 years and Person with benchmark Disabilities (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

Section H: Inducement

Q No.	Question	Response
H1	Were there any inducements from any groups to influence voting? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
H2	Was there use of money power / muscle power by candidates / political parties to influence voters during the last elections? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
H3	Do you participate in rallies/meetings organized by political parties / candidates? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
H4	If yes in I3, Who bears the expenditure incurred on participating in those rallies? (Write 1 = Own expense; 2 = Organizing party)	
H5	Do you know about cVIGIL App? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
H6	Do you know about KYC App? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
H7	Were any of the following inducements used to lure you during the last elections: [Multiple options Applicable] (Write 1= Distributing cash among women through self help groups; 2 = Funding of local club to organize cricket / football matches; 3 = Distributing TV, Radio, Projector etc. for small groups / communities / schools; 4 = Distributing Purse, Bangles, Vanity Case among women; 5 = Distributing liquor; 6 = Distributing food packets; 7 = Distributing coupons for free Diesel, Petrol, LPG, Kerosene; 8 = Distributing cash for construction of toilets, hand pumps and buying of mobile phones and laptops; 9 = Any other, specify……...……)	

Any others Suggestions/Inputs

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

INSTRUCTION No. 22

By Mail/Speed Post

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

[Note: This instruction serves for All States / UTs during G.E to LS / LA]

No.491/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-II/KAP/Endline Survey/KA/2023 **Dated: 25.05.2023**

To

The Chief Electoral Officer of
Karnataka
Bengaluru

Sub: Conduct of Endline Survey of Knowledge, Attitude, Practices (KAP) of citizens – reg.

Sir,

I am directed to state that State Legislative Assembly Election has concluded recently in Karnataka State and Commission has directed conduct of 2nd generation of survey –

"Endline Survey" immediately in your State. In this regard, I am directed to say that:-

1. The Surveys would be called KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practices) survey. A standard questionnaire for Endline Survey is enclosed. The questionnaire includes a section for Persons with Disabilities. The findings of the survey will be tracked across states, over time for measuring the efficacy of various interventions undertaken by the ECI and CEO.

2. As per SVEEP Template, in addition to the existing knowledge gaps, the following may be stressed onto in view of COVID-19:-

    - Extent of gaps in voting and reasons behind low voter turnout (if applicable)
    - Extent of unregistered voters, in the light of significant migration
    - Media Consumption Patterns (changes post Covid19)
        - Urban
        - Semi Urban
        - Rural
    - Extent of Awareness of postal ballots and other Accessibility measures, among the people
    - Extent of Awareness of COVID-19 constraints

3. CEO has the option of adding questions after those given in the standard questionnaire in related sections at the bottom, similarly options within a question can be added at the bottom. However, the sequencing and the codes for existing options should not be tinkered with.

4. Relevant questions may be added. Further, Endline Survey should broadly indicate the impact of voter awareness and various facilitation measures on voter turnout.

5. The raw data in SPSS/STATA format (along with codebook) shall be required to be submitted to ECI along with the survey report. Pooling the raw data of multiple states at different points of time will allow for a wide range of analysis. Accordingly, this may be included in the deliverable when soliciting proposals in response to its Terms of Reference (ToR).

6. Survey reports should be written in a consistent format as per the recommendations of TISS. The Sample Chapter Plan, Sampling Methodology and Terms of Reference for a Survey Agency are also enclosed.

7. You are, therefore, requested to engage the services of a suitable Institute/ Agency to carry out the Endline Survey. The selection of the Agency/ Institute will be done within the administrative and financial procedures of the concerned state and may be completed latest by **12th June, 2023**. The same to be intimated to the ECI.

8. The Commission has directed that the CEOs should scrutinize the operational procedures followed by the Survey organizations and closely monitor whether quality norms are being followed during recruitment and training of enumerators, field work and data entry.

9. The Endline survey is to be completed by **30th September, 2023** so that the findings are available for future reference. The survey reports along with the raw data, as mentioned above, are to be submitted to the Commission.

10. In view of on-going COVID-19 pandemic, necessary and appropriate precautions must be taken during the survey by the State. Also, strict adherence to prescribed norms/guidelines issued by GoI must be ensured.

Yours faithfully,

Encl.: as above

(LOVE KUSH YADAV)
UNDER SECRETARY

Questionnaire number ■ ■ ■ ■ Confidential when filled

Baseline Survey Template
Knowledge, Attitude and Practice(KAP)

Introduction and consent: Greeting! My name is ---------- (full name). I work for ---------- (name of institute) a research organization based in ---------- (place) that regularly conducts surveys on various socio-economic and political issues. Presently we are interviewing people here in ---------- (name of town/village) in ---------- (state) and collecting information regarding about their electoral participation. I'm going to ask you some questions related to registration and participations in elections. Some of the answers to the questions may be personal, but I want you to know that all your answers will be kept completely confidential. There is no compulsion on answering every question and you may choose not to respond to any question. Further, you may also terminate this interview at any time if you are uncomfortable answering the questions. There is no penalty for refusing to take part in this interview nor is there any incentive for participation. However, your honest answers to these questions will help us better understand how people think. We would greatly appreciate your help in responding to this survey. The survey will take about ---------- minutes to ask these questions. Would you be willing to participate?

Section A: Identification and quality control

Q No.	Question	Response	Code	Skip
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A3	Name of district & census code			
A4	Type of residence and region	Rural (Hilly)	1	
		Rural (Non- Hilly)	2	
		Urban(Hilly)	3	
		Urban (Non- Hilly)	4	
A5	Name of AC & code			
A6	Name of polling station & part no.			
A7	Name of village/urban block & code			
A8	Landmark near house			
Subsection A(i): Details of interview				
A9	Date of interview	(In DD-MM format) 2022		
A10	Start time of interview	(In HH:MM, 24 hour format)		
A11	End time of interview	(In HH:MM, 24 hour format)		
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		Entire HH absent for a long time	2	
		Postponed	3	
		Refused (Pl. specify reasons)	4	
		HH/dwelling vacant	5	
		Address of HH/dwelling not found	6	
A13	Name of enumerator and ID/code			
A14	Name of supervisor and ID/code			

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

Subsection A(ii): Quality control				
A15	Field: back check	No	0	
		Yes	1	
A16	Field: scrutiny	No	0	
		Yes	1	
A17	Data entry: double entry	No	0	
		Yes	1	

Section B: Selection of respondent

Q No.	Question	Response	Code
B1	How many people (including you) ordinarily reside in this household?		
B2	How many people are older than 18 years? (as on .... as per SSR)		

Subsection B(i): Household (HH) roster

NOTE: LIST ALL THOSE WHO LIVE UNDER THE SAME ROOF, SHARE THE SAME KITCHEN AND ARE ABOVE 18 YEARS OLD STARTING WITH THE HH HEAD. THE NUMBER OF ENTRIES IN THE HH ROSTER (B3) SHOULD BE EQUAL TO THE CODE IN B2.

B3	B4	B5		B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11
S No.	Name	Relation with HH head		Sex	Age (in years)	Disabled	Migrated in last 1 year	Voted in last LokSabha election	Voted in last Assembly election
1		0	1						
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									

CODE LIST FOR HH ROSTER:

- **Relationship with HH head:** Head=01; Wife/Husband=02; Son/Daughter=03; Daughter-in-law/Son-in-law=04; Grandchild=05; Father/Mother=06; Brother/Sister=07; Father-in-law/Mother-in-law=08; Nephew/Niece=09; Brother-in-law/Sister-in-law=10; other relatives=11; Servant/Others=12
- **Sex:** Male=1; Female=2; Third gender =3
- **Disabled:** No=0; Yes (in seeing)=1; Yes(in speech)=2; Yes(in hearing)=3; Yes(in movement)=4;
- **Migrated in last 1 year:** No=0; Yes=1
- **Voted in last LokSabha /Assembly election:** No=0; Yes=1

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

Subsection B (ii): Kish grid

LAST DIGIT OF QUESTIONNAIRE NO.	TOTAL NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE RESPONDENTS IN HOUSEHOLD							
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
0	1	2	2	4	3	6	5	4
1	1	1	3	1	4	1	6	5
2	1	2	1	2	5	2	7	6
3	1	1	2	3	1	3	1	7
4	1	2	3	4	2	4	2	8
5	1	1	1	1	3	5	3	1
6	1	2	2	2	4	6	4	2
7	1	2	1	4	1	2	6	4
8	1	1	2	1	2	3	7	5
9	1	1	2	1	2	3	7	5

INSTRUCTIONS TO SELECT RESPONDENTS FROM KISH GRID: Look at the last digit of the questionnaire number on the cover page. This is the row number you should circle. Check the total number of eligible respondents from the household roster or B2. This is the column number you should circle. Find the box where the circled row and the circled column meet and circle the number that appears in the box. Record this in B12. This is the selected respondent to whom you should administer the questionnaire. For example, if the household questionnaire number is '3716', go to row 6 and circle the row number ('6'). If there are three people eligible for an interview in the household (it does not matter if they are available for interview or not), go to column 3 and circle the column number ('3'). Draw lines from row 6 and column 3 and find the box where the two meet, and circle the number in it ('2'). This means you have to select the second eligible person.

Q No.	Question	Response	Code	Skip
B12	Number selected from kish grid	Enter code from kish grid		
B13	S. No. of the sampled respondent	Enter code from HH roster/B3		

Section C: Voter registration

Q No.	Question	Response
C1	Do you have a voter's card/EPIC? (If registered as a voter) (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
C2	If no, why? (Write 1 = Not aware, how to procure this card; 2 = Lost by self; 3 = **Not Received;** 4 = Could not get time to get photographed; 5 = Did not get information when they are making; 6 = Lack of time; 7 = Cumbersome procedure; 8 = Not Interested in getting the same)	
C3	Are you aware of 'Voter's List'? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say/do not know)	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

C4	If yes to Q-3, has your name been enrolled/ included in the voter's list? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say/do not know)	
C5	If no to Q-3 what was the reason? (Write 1 = Did not know about it; 2 = Was not told; 3 = Can't say/don't know; 4 = Was not interested)	
C6	If yes to Q-4 how did you come to know that your name has to be enrolled? (Write 1 = Friends/Relatives; 2 = Newspapers; 3 = Local Community leaders; 4 = BLO; 5 = TV; 6 = Social Media/Website) 7=Any other medium 8=can't say	
C7	If yes to Q-4, was it correctly written in voter's list? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say/do not know)	
C8	Are there members in your family who are 18+ years of age and not registered? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
C9	If yes to Q8, what are the reasons for them not to enroll in the voter's list? (Write 1 = Lack of awareness; 2 = Lack of interest; 3 = Lack of valid documents; 4 = Lengthy (difficult) procedure; 5 = Not permanent resident)	
C10	Do you know where to get registered as elector? (Write 1 = Taluka Office; 2 = BDO; 3 = Panchayat Office; 4 = Collector's Office; 5 = Matdata Sahayata Kendra / Voter Centre) 6=VHA/NVSP/ECI website and ECI mobile app/through online methods	
C11	Are you aware of the EPIC (Election Card)? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say)	
C12	If yes to Q12, when did you get the EPIC made? (Write 1 = Before last assembly elections; 2 = After last assembly elections; 3 = Don't remember)	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

C13	How many days did it take for you to get the EPIC? (Write 1 = Within 15 days; 2 = Within 1 month; 3 = Within six months; 4 = Don't know)	
C14	Was it easy for you to get the EPIC? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say/ don't remember)	
C15	If no, what were the main problems you witnessed while getting your EPIC? (Write 1 = Long procedure; 2 = Unfriendly officials; 3 = Can't say; 4 = Inaccessibility of the concerned office)	
C16	Are you aware that you can vote with alternative ID? (1=Yes;2=No)	
C17	If you did not have EPIC, which alternative ID did you use for voting? (Write 1 = License; 2 = Ration Card; 3 = Opening Bank account; 4 = Voter Slip; 5 = Any other)	
C18	Do you know that Govt. /Election office has appointed local persons to help for enrolment? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
C19	If yes, to Q18 then what is his/her designation? (Write 1 = Booth Level Officer; 2 Identification Officer; 3 = Election Agent; 4 = Don't know)	
C20	Has s/he ever visited your house / office? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say)	
C21	Do you know where your Polling booth is? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	

Section D: ELECTIONS – KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOUR, BELIEF, AND PRACTICES

Q No.	Question	Response
D1	Did you vote in previous Assembly Elections? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
D2	Did you vote in 2019 Parliamentary Elections? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

	Are you aware of 'Voter's List'? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No; 3 = Can't say/do not know)	
D3	If no to D1 or D2 what were the reasons? (Can record more than one reasons) (Write 1 = I did not have electoral photo ID Card; 2 = I did not know my polling station; 3 = Polling station was at distance (I had transportation logistic problem; 4 = Long queue and I did not have time; 5 = No faith in political system (or electoral democracy); 6 = Did not vote as community or religious leader said so; 7 = Head of family said not to vote; 8 = Voting is not essential for maintenance of democracy; 9 = There was no good candidate; 10 = Candidate was not of my choice or community; 11 = I just did not want to vote as nothing will change; 12 = I was not in my constituency a.Education b.Marriage c.Work d.Premanently shifted e.Temporary absence f.other reasons (please specify) 13 = I was afraid/felt insecure to go to the polling station; 14 = My name was not on electoral roll; 15=I was not aware of the poll date and time; 16=I was not aware of the fact voting can be done with alternative document; 17=Any Other (Specify)……	
D4	If yes to D1 or D2 what were the reasons? (Can record more than one reasons) (Write 1 = I am political party sympathizer; 2 = Casted vote due to threat or coercion; 3 = Head of family said to vote; 4 = Influenced by friends; 5 = Wanted to defeat a particular candidate and/or a political party; 6 = It was my duty/right; 7 = Because of repeated appeal and advertisement by Election Commission; 8 = Because of enabling environment (free and Fair) created by Election; 9 = Commission; 10 = I got registered in electoral roll; 11 = Candidate was good; 12= Candidate was of my choice and from community and religion; 13 = Candidate visited me personally; 14 = Money / Liquor/inducement was offered; 15 = Any Other (Specify)……	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

D5	How did you find the electoral experience during your last voting? (Write 1 = Convenient; 2 = Inconvenient; 3 = Taxing; 4 = Can't remember)	
D6	What motivated your choice of the candidate during last elections? (Write 1 = Personally known; 2 = Experience; 3 = Honesty; 4 = Commitment; 5 = Any other specify……..)	
D7	Are there any family members eligible for voting who have not voted? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
D8	If yes to Q7, specify possible reasons: (Write 1 = S/he did not have electoral photo ID Card; 2 = S/he did not know the polling station; 3 = Polling station was at distance (S/he had transportation /logistic problem; 4 = Long queue and S/he did not have time; 5 = No faith in political system (or electoral democracy); 6 = Did not vote as community or religious leader said so; 7 = Head of family said not to vote; 8 = Voting is not essential for maintenance of democracy; 9 = There was no good candidate; 10 = Candidate was not of his/her choice or community; 11 = S/he just did not want to vote as nothing will change; 12 = S/he was not in his/her constituency; 13 = S/he did not get voter slip even on polling day at the booth; 14 = S/he was afraid/felt insecure to go to the polling station; 15 = His/her name was not on electoral roll; 16 = Any Other (Specify)…….	
D9	Which is the most influencing factor that affects your voting preference? (Write 1 = Family; 2 = Caste; 3 = Religion; 4 = Candidate; 5 = Any other)	
D10	The Factor influencing high Voter turnout is: (Write 1 = Money power; 2 = Muscle power; 3 = Both; 4 = Good Candidate; 5 = Favourable environment for voting) 6=Very high awareness for importance of voting 7= Any other	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

D11	Do you feel there was security threat during elections at any point? (Write 1 = Very much; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Not at all; 4 = Can't say)	
D12	Do you think the deployment of police force was sufficient during the last elections? (Write 1 = Very much; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Not at all; 4 = Can't say)	
D13	What was your experience at the polling booth during elections? (Write 1 = Very Good; 2 = Good; 3 = Not so good; 4 = Not at all good; 5 = Can't Say)	
D14	Whether the polling staff was cooperative during the election process? (Write 1 = Very Cooperative; 2 = Cooperative; 3 = Not so cooperative; 4 = Not at all cooperative; 5 = Can't say)	
D15	Did you face any difficulties in voting? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
D16	If Yes to Q 16, then difficulties were (can record more than one option) (Write 1 = Long queue; 2 = No separate queue for senior citizen; 3 = Lack of facilities including drinking water toilet and ramp; 4 = Coercion/threat by political party booth operators; 5 = Difficulties in locating my polling station; 6 = Difficulties in getting my voter slip at facilitation center; 7 = No guidance from polling personnel; 8 = Any other, specify……)	

Section E: Voter awareness and attitudes

Q. No.	Question	Response	Code
E1	Do you know name of your assembly constituency	1=Yes	
		2=no	
E2	What is the minimum age of registration to be a voter? * Code 99 FOR DON'T KNOW	In years	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

E3	What is the date for determining qualifying age for getting registered on the electoral roll/voting?	18th Birthday	0		
		1st January/1st April/1st July/1st October	11		
		Don't know	99		
E4	Are you aware of Special Summary Revision every year?	1=Yes			
		2=no			
E5	When is the National Voters' Day celebrated?	Incorrect Date	0		
		Correct date	1		
		Don't Know	99		
E6	Do you know about: a. option of NOTA/none of the above on EVM that could be used if you don't like any candidate b. names of candidates available in Braille on the EVM? c. Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail VVPAT, that helps verify your vote?	**Responses**	**a.**	**b.**	**c.**
		1. Yes, saw it when I cast my vote	1	1	1
		2. Yes, have seen one in electoral literacy	2	2	2
		3. Yes, have heard/read about it	3	3	3
		4. No	4	4	4
E7	Have you ever accessed Voters website Portal or any other election related website? 1. No 2.Yes 3. Don't know				
E8	If yes, for what purpose did you access the website? 1. To search name and other details on the Electoral Roll 2. To register/make modification online 3. To download registration forms 4. To know polling station details 5. Others(please specify)				
E9	Are you Aware that just having an Epic does not provide you the right to vote unless until your name is included in the latest Electoral Roll. (1=Yes;2=No)				
E10	Are you aware that it is an offence to have an EPIC for more than one place	1=Yes			
		2=no			

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

E11	Finally, I am going to read out a few more statements and I would like to know your opinion on them. Please tell me if you strongly disagree (=1), disagree (=2), neither agree nor disagree (=3), agree (=4) or strongly agree (=5). There are no correct or incorrect responses so please give me your honest opinion.	Every vote counts			
		Voting should be made compulsory			
		Voting is cumbersome chore			
		Elections are conducted freely and fairly in India			
		EVMs provide accurate results			
		Women should consult male members or elders before voting in elections			
		The influence of money and muscle is increasing in elections			
		I do not intend to vote in the upcoming elections			

Section F: Background information

Q. No.	Question	Response	Code
F1	What's your educational qualification?	Illiterate	1
		Primary school	2
		High school	3
		Higher secondary	4
		Diploma/ Certificate	5
		Graduate & above including Professional/Technical Courses	6
F2	What's your occupation?	Student	1
		Unemployed	2
		Government Service/Semi Government	4
		Private Service	5
		Own enterprise/self employed	6
		Labourer/ Cultivator/ Agricultural and allied activities	7
		Home maker	8
		Others (please specify)	
F3	What's your social group?	SC	1
		ST	2
		OBC	3
		Others	4

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

F4	How often do you:	**Responses**	**a.**	**b.**	**c.**	**d.**
	a. read a newspaper or magazine?	1. Almost every day	1	1	1	1
	b. listen to the radio?	2. At least once a week	2	2	2	2
	c. watch television?	3. Less than once a week	3	3	3	3
	d. Internet (Facebook, WhatsApp etc.)?	4. Not at all	4	4	4	4
F5	During elections, which of the following sources did you rely on the most to get news on elections and politics?	Newspaper/Magazine	1			
		Television	2			
		Radio	3			
		Internet	4			
		Mobile phone	5			
		Family/relatives/friends	6			
		Others (please specify)				

Section G: Only for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)

Q No.	Question	Response
G1	Have you come across any publicity/voter edutainment material aimed at participation of PwDs? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
G2	Have you been contacted by the BLO of your area? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
G3	Do you know about an app Saksham app developed by ECI for PwD's? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
G4	How you rate the process of registration (Write 1 = Easy; 2 = Neither easy nor difficult; 3 = Difficult) If option 3 is chosen, please elaborate on the difficulties faced in the process of registration.	
G5	Please elaborate on the difficulties faced in the process of voting. (can record more than one option) (Write 1 = Long queue; 2 = No separate queue for senior citizen/pwds; 3 = Lack of facilities including drinking water toilet and ramp; 4 = Coercion/threat by political party booth operators; 5 = Difficulties in locating my polling station; 6 = Difficulties in getting my voter slip at facilitation center; 7 = No guidance from polling personnel; 8 = Any other, specify……)	
G6	Are you aware of the facility of postal ballots is extended to Senior citizens above 80 years and Person with benchmark Disabilities (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

Section H: Inducement

Q No.	Question	Response
H1	Were there any inducements from any groups to influence voting? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
H2	Was there use of money power / muscle power by candidates / political parties to influence voters during the last elections? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
H3	Do you participate in rallies/meetings organized by political parties / candidates? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
H4	If yes in I3, Who bears the expenditure incurred on participating in those rallies? (Write 1 = Own expense; 2 = Organizing party)	
H5	Do you know about cVIGIL App? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
H6	Do you know about KYC App? (Write 1 = Yes; 2 = No)	
H7	Were any of the following inducements used to lure you during the last elections: [Multiple options Applicable] (Write 1= Distributing cash among women through self help groups; 2 = Funding of local club to organize cricket / football matches; 3 = Distributing TV, Radio, Projector etc. for small groups / communities / schools; 4 = Distributing Purse, Bangles, Vanity Case among women; 5 = Distributing liquor; 6 = Distributing food packets; 7 = Distributing coupons for free Diesel, Petrol, LPG, Kerosene; 8 = Distributing cash for construction of toilets, hand pumps and buying of mobile phones and laptops; 9 = Any other, specify……...……)	

Any others Suggestions/Inputs

* Instruction in bold are highlighted for the enumerator/surveyor, Kindly pay attention.

INSTRUCTION No. 23

By Mail/Speed Post

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No.491/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-II/LS20192018 **Dated: 29th May, 2018**

To

The Chief Electoral Officers,
All States & UTs (Except Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Mizoram)

Subject: SVEEP Strategy for Lok Sabha Elections 2019 including the Special Revision of Electoral Roll of Intensive nature and the SVEEP Action Plan thereof — regarding

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to refer to the aforesaid subject and to convey that the Commission has directed for the preparation of the comprehensive State SVEEP plan for enhanced electoral participate on for the Lok Sabha Election 2019 which should include strategies for the Special Revision of Electoral Roll which is being undertaken as per the letter no 23/LET/ECI/FUNC/ERD-ER/2018 dated 7th May 2018.

2. The Plan may be prepared on the basis of situation analysis of field level data and findings. The consultations on 'Accessible Elections' have been undertaken at district and state level. The recommendations from these consultations may also be incorporated in the SVEEP plan for facilitating Persons with Disability(PwDs).

3. A broad template for the SVEEP Plan is enclosed for reference. District and Assembly Constituency level SVEEP Plans shall also be prepared. The 'Manual on SVEEP' and the SVEEP —III Project document, which have put up on the SVEEP website (www.ecisveep.nic.in) may also be referred to for the formulation of a comprehensive SVEEP Plan on the following lines:

I. Area of Focus:

A. <u>Electoral Roll Management related</u>

i. Registration of New Voters

ii. Improving Gender Ration

iii. Removal of multiple entries; deletion of deceased / shifted names, correction of entiries

iv. 100% coverage of PwD and their mapping with the polling station

v. Increase in enrollment of Service Personnel

vi. Increase in enrolment overseas Indian electors

vii. Identification and mapping of prospective voters i.e those eligible on 01.01.2019

B. Electoral Roll Management related

viii. To target an increase in voter turnout in the identified low turnout polling stations and an overall increase in turnout by atleast 5-10% over the last Lok Sabha election.

ix. To remove the gender gap in turnout

x. To target an increase in turnout among PwD electors by making elections accessible and widely disseminating the facilitation extended

xi. Special focus on marginalized groups like domestic migrants and other groups identified by the State/District

xii. Visible enhancement in the quality of electoral participation in terms of informed, ethical and inducement free voting

xiii. Increase in postal ballot voting by facilitating and education service voters and employees

xiv. Awareness on NOTA

C. EVM/VVPAT related

xv. Awareness of EVM/VVPAT among all voters with special measures targeting youth, women and PwDs voters

xvi. Awareness in remote villages, slums, marginalized segments and difficult areas.

xvii. Awareness among political parties, media, civil society and educational institutions.

II. Situation Analysis

A. Gaps at Micro-level and Targeted intervention

a) Identification of gap in registration among the newly eligible voters of 18-19 years, PS wise; identification of PS with lowest enrolment in 18-19 years age-group.

b) Identification of gaps in the enrolment of PwDs, PS wise.

c) Identification of excluded groups, like NRI voters, service voters, migrants, tribal marginalized and doubly marginalized communities.

d) Identification of 10% polling station in each district with lowest turnout in last Lok Sabha Election and reasons thereof.

e) Identification of overall 10% lowest turnout polling stations in the State and reasons thereof.

f) Identification of lowest turnout Assembly Constituencies and reason thereof.

g) Identification of reasons for drop in turnout (if any) between last Assembly election and last LS election in the State.

III. Strategy

a) The State, District and AC SVEEP plan shall include situation analysis, outputs/activities, monitoring and evaluation mechanism as per the template given (annexure). Reference may also be taken from

the activity chart mentioned in the SVEEP III Project document while creation of the comprehensive SVEEP plans.

b) The last KAP baseline/endline survey findings may be suitably utilized while formulating Plans.

c) Targeted campaign on major gaps like first time voter, women, urban, weaker sections, PwDs, Overseas voters, Service voters, besides domestic migrants etc. shall be a part of the plan. To overcome the gap in turnout, targeted interventions have to be carried out at polling station level.

d) DEOs shall innovate at their level and prepare specific operational plan after identifying excluded communities/groups in each polling station. The AC SVEEP Plan shall be drawn up based on grass root level requirements and contribute to the District Plan. The District plans shall flow out of the broad State plan, and also contribute to it.

e) Intensive and extensive campaign shall be carried out for emphasising the robustnesss and integrity of EVM and for VVPAT awareness and familarisation.

f) Appropriate information dissemination on NOTA and emphasis on informed and inducement free voting shall be part of the strategy

g) Facilitation of the Voter will be a key component besides the range of Informed and Motivation measures

IV. Planning & Implementation

a. **SVEEP Nodal Officer:** SVEEP Nodal **officer** for each AC shall be appointed immediately who shall coordinate the **entire** SVEEP **implementation** in the AC. The **officer shall be involved in drafting the** AC SVEEP Plan. District SVEEP Nodal Officer shall guide the AC Nodal officer in preparing the SVEEP Plan.

b. **Core Committees:** The State SVEEP **Core** Committee headed by the CEO shall supervise the implementation of the SVEEP Plan in the entire state. The Committee shall have **representation** from **various** Departments, **Agencies** and organisations. The District **Core Committee** shall be chaired by DEO/CEO(ZP) to supervise the implementation of the SVEEP plan in the district. Each district shall appoint a Nodal Officer who will be the incharge of SVEEP. S/he will functions as the Member secretary of the District Core Committee. The core Committees should be set up immediately.

c. **Booth Awareness Groups:** BAGs shall be revived at every booth and their capacity built through workshops. BAGs shall be suitably equipped with communication material and other resources. Their roles shall be clearly explained and handbooks prepared in line with the roles and responsibilities specified by the Commission vide its letter no 491/SVEEP-I/2016(BAG) dated 10th May 2016 (copy enclosed). DEOs shall draw up calendar for the training of BAGs, reflect it in the District Plan and also share with the CEO.

d. **Partnership:** The network of partnership shall be developed at State level and also at District level for strengthening the SVEEP programme. In this connection, the framework of partnerships already issued by the Commission in relation to CSOs, PSU/ Corporate and Media shall be optimally harnessed. CEOs and DEOs will mobilise and brief partner agencies and provide them requisite resources and outreach material at state level and district level respectively.

e. **Use of Technology:** IT tools may be suitably used for information dissemination and motivation as well as for facilitation of electors and voters.

f. Targeted Interventions:

A. Youth (incl newly eligible)

i. Campus Ambassadors (CAs) shall be **appointed in Colleges and Universities** in line with the 'Terms of Engagement' **issued by** ECI **(copy enclosed)**. **The CAs** shall be provided with kits including a Handbook. (copy of the Handbook by CEO Tamil Nadu is available at https://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/SVEEP/resources/TAMIL%20NADU%20CAMPUS%20AMBASSADORS%20HANDBOOK.pdf). Workshop of CAs shall be conducted by the DEO and the training calendar duly reflected in the District SVEEP Plan shared with the CEO.

ii. The Nodal officers from Campuses, who are the faculty, shall be utilized besides the NSS and the NCC.

iii. Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) be established in Colleges and Universities.

iv. Enrolment drive for first time electors followed up with further engagement to promote voting.

v. Outreach initiatives shall be taken up in all college campuses through cultural and sports activities.

vi. Form 6 shall be mandatorily given out along with Admission forms in all colleges. An order to this effect may be got issued from the concerned department. Forms 6, 7, 8 and 8A shall be made available in all Colleges and Universities, and also in High Schools for newly eligible electors.

vii. Special initiatives may be taken to reach out to students staying in hostels and their enrolment also encouraged and facilitated.

viii. Outreach for non-student youth shall be taken up with NYKS and CSOs.

ix. Chunav Pathshala, the ELCs in Communities, to target youth outside the formal education system.

x. Identification and mapping of prospective voters in 16-17 years age-group and reaching out to them through suitable interventions under ELCs.

B. Women

i) Outreach through educational institutions shall have a special focus on women.

ii) ASHA and AWW network shall be systematically utilized to target young women. Newly married young women may be specifically targeted through government field functionaries as they are usually not enrolled at their place of marriage.

iii) Women specific activities like rangoli, group songs competition etc shall be conducted in rural areas to motivate and encourage their electoral participation.

iv) Coopt media and Field formations to reach out to women.

v) Use SHGs and Cooperatives of women to spread awareness.

C. Persons with Disabilities

i) State level and District level Committees shall be constituted for the purpose of accessible and inclusive electoral process with regard to all persons with disabilities. Instructions on the constitution of these Committees are being separately issued.

ii) Polling Station wise database of PwDs shall be prepared with support from Department of Disability/Social Welfare/Hospitals or CMOs office. Database shall be prepared through BLOs and information on the type of disability maintained in the BLO register to help in facilitation.

iii) Single window for PwDs can be explored.

iv) Identify Community Radio networks or magazines, channels, etc for PwDs to partner. Use programmes on AIR, DD and private radio and Cable TV to reach out to PwDs.

v) Identify credible CSOs working for PwDs and reach out through them.

vi) Special camp may be taken up to register PwDs and such camps widely publicized.

vii) CEO and DEO Website shall be disabled friendly and adhere to Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

D. Service Personnel & Overseas Indian citizens

i) Awareness and registration drive shall be carried out for the defence personnel in cantonment areas with special focus on the newly inducted young defence personnel. Share the Service Voters brochure with the cantonment officials. (also available at http://ecisveep.nic.in/ and http://servicevoter.nic in/).

ii) Film for Service Voters on ETPBs and other facilities has been shared with CEOs and available on ECI website. The same should be widely screened in the cantonment areas.

iii) Train Nodal Officers from defence as Resource Persons for dissemination of information on the entire process of registration and voting.

iv) Target families having their children studying abroad and promote their registration as overseas Indian electors.

v) Popularize NVSP links for online registration of overseas Indians

vi) BLOs to share form 6A with families having a member who is overases and familarise them with NVSP portal.

E. Rural & Tribal Areas.

i) Special registration camps in weekly haats, during festivals and through mobile vans shall be conducted.

ii) Use of public address system and announcements in Gram Sabha in rural areas alongwith 'prabhat pheris' shall be encouraged

iii) DEOs in violence-affected areas shall involve the SPs in operationalizing SVEEP programme so that the environment of confidence and fearlessness against intimidation is built into the programme.

iv) Folk art and activities specific to the local populace shall be carried out to motivate the people for participation in elections.

F. Domestic Migrants and Other Marginalized Segments.

The issue of domestic migrants may be looked into and interventions planned to reach out to this segment. Specific interventions may be designed around other identified segments specific to the State/districts, based on situation analysis.

g. EVM & VVPAT Campaign: Intensive and extensive communication and outreach to be conducted on EVM and VVPAT awareness and reaffirming people's faith in the robustness and integrity of EVMs. Comprehensive instructions have been given vide letter no No.491/SVEEP-II/EGS/2017 dated 22nd September, 2017(copy enclosed). The same needs to be further intensified in view of the preparations for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

i) A State of Art Permanent EVM Sensitization and Hands on Experience Centre has to be set up at the State and District Capital

ii) Camps to be held for Political Parties, Media Houses and Journalists, Government officials and in Colleges and Sr. Secondary Schools where live demo on EVM and VVPAT may be given.

iii) EVM-VVPAT familarisation camps to be held at every booth in a staggered fashion so that by the time the elections are announced all the Booths are covered. Alternatively Mobile vans with EVM- VVPAT model and publicity material may be used with a set calendar covering all constituencies/polling stations in the district. The calendar to be prepared by the DEOs in advance and shared with the CEOs. BAGs and BLOs may be involved in these camps and BLOs may be trained on VVPAT functioning.

iv) Sensitisation on EVM/VVPAT is already a component in the Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs). Live demo of EVM/VVPAT on rotation in established ELCs and Chunav Pathshalas may be planned along with the conduct of the activity 'Chunav Yantr and Build the Ballot' as per the prescribed Resource Guides under ELC Project.

v) Festivals, Haats and other public gatherings may have stalls disseminating information about EVMs/VVPAT and display it or dummy EVMs.

vi) Monthly film screenings on EVM- VVPATs be conducted at village panchayats.

vii) EVM/VVPAT Posters at each Centre of Public Services such as Polling Stations, School buildings, Panchayat Bhawans, PHCs, AWC Ration Shops, CSCs, Banks, post offices, etc.

viii) 360 degrees communication plan may be exclusively developed for EVM and VVPAT campaign including Public Service Announcements regularly on All India Radio and Doordarshan.

h. 360 degrees Communication Campaign: Comprehensive communication may be planned including electronic, digital and social media besides inter-personal communication and outreach.

A. Multi-Media Campaign

i) Campaigns through mass media, folk media and other media vehicles shall be conducted. All India Radio, Doordarshan to be main vehicles combined with a good measure of private channels, FM Radio and Print Media.

ii) Social Media use, besides use of digital and other new media in urban and semi-urban areas shall be taken up.

iii) Informed and Ethical voting component besides information on NOTA may be widely disseminated.

iv) For content development, CEO and team to consider the archive of approved material compiled at the SVEEP Digital Library (www.ecisveep.nic.in). Outreach material developed for Special Revision, National Voter's Day to be used after suitable modification.

v) CEO to take necessary steps for further inventory building on Voters' Information and Awareness material for the state. CEO to set up an expert Committee at State level for quality check and control of content comprising of Heads of AIR & DD among others.

vi) Past Survey findings to be utilized for designing the campaign material and deciding the media vehicles for dissemination.

vii) All messages used in the elections at State level shall require approval of the Commission, if these are not earlier vetted. District level content and messaging shall be vetted and cleared at CEO level.

viii) Media is one of the most effective partners in SVEEP. Regular media briefings about different initiatives, facilitation measures shall help in wide publicity of various interventions. Media calendar may be devised with a topic assigned in advance for each day of briefing.

B. Common Outreach Activities. Specific outreach activities based on the situation anlaysis shall be carried out as follows.

i.) Forms 6, 7, 8 and 8A made available at all prominent places e.g Post Offices, banks, hospitals and other public places having large footfall.

ii.) 'Sankalp patras' issued by DEOs through school students to their parents and collected back with signature pledging on enroll and vote.

iii.) Special registration camps on need basis and dedicated camps catering to specific target groups like Service Voters and Overseas electors.

iv.) Corporates to be contacted to ensure registration of their employees. Alternative registration hubs for corporate employees to be established.

v.) Instruction issued through Labour department to private contractors to strictly comply regarding paid leave on poll day.

vi.) Mass mobilization activities close to elections to motivate people to participate in the electoral process.

vii.) Regional and/or local icons shall be identified and promotional material for voting shall be prepared availing their services, after getting approval of Commission on the content (messages), in addition to the National Icons of ECI and the regional icons already approved by Commission.

viii.) Material on voter awareness may be given to partner CSOs/media houses for wider dissemination.

ix.) Under ECI-NLMA MoU, Sakshar Bharat workers (NLMA) shall carry out electoral literacy programmes besides helping BLOs for enrolment during continuous updation. DEOs may also disseminate their outreach material through these Literacy workers.

x.) Inter-personal communication through Govt. of India Media units - Song & Drama Division, Directorate of Field Publicity etc. and through organizations like Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, National Service Scheme volunteers, National Cadet Corps, Scouts & Guides etc. to be extensively used for mobilizing youth and creating awareness.

i. Voters' Facilitation:

I. Voter assistance mobile apps to be launched and widely publicised to impart information and provide assistance regarding registration, location of polling station and other such facility to the voter.

II. Voter Registration and Education centres /Voter Facilitation Centres(VFCs) shall be set up at strategic locations for facilitation and awareness generation as well. The Centres should be supplied education and awareness material in good quantity.

III. EROs and A ER0s to ensure that EPIC are issued to all those enrolled.

IV. Ensuring that Voters' Slips are distributed on time as per directions of the commission

V. One Voter Guide per family of an elector, to be distributed along with Voter Slip ahead of poll day.

VI. DEOs to ensure that suitable and adequate arrangements are made for provision of drinking water, shed, ramp, signages, toilets for women and other facilities at all Polling Stations as directed by the Commission from time to time, to make voting a friendly experience, including setting up of model polling station equipped with necessary facilities.

VII. model Polling Stations and All Women Polling Stations may be suitably planned and given wide publicity

VIII. Voter Facilitation Posters at every polling station

IX. Poll day reminders through different media

j. National Voters' Day: Falling just ahead of the Lok Sabha election, NVD 2019 may be strategically harnessed to mobilise the people and facilitate their registration and motivate them to participate in the election. Focus on 18-19 years old, as always remains the focus of NVD.

V. Monitoring & Review

a. Implementation of SVEEP programme within the districts shall be constantly **monitored** by the DE0 and across districts by the CEO and reviewed periodically to **assess** the **efficacy of** the interventions and make mid-term course correction, **wherever required**.

b. Regular **Video Conferences** to be organised by CEO with all DE0s for review of implementation.

c. The **programme** shall **be reviewed** at the national **level by** the **commission**. The **reporting** format shall be shared **close to** poll **dates**.

VI. Evaluation & Documentation

a. The DEOs shall evaluate the interventions carried out in their district and submit a report to the CEO within a month of closing of polls. They shall focus on the following in their report besides an analysis of the overall turnout:

i. Analysis of the registration ahead of polls.

ii. Analysis of the comparative turnout among women, urban voters and youth.

iii. Analysis of the turnout of the identified excluded groups/communities (PwDs, migrants, NRI Voters, Service Electors) at specific polling stations.

iv. Analysis of comparative turnout in the identified 10% of the lowest turnout polling stations.

b. The CEO shall submit a documented report to the Commission within two months of closure of polls. The CEOs report shall also focus on the aforesaid points for the entire state.

4. The detailed State, District and AC Plan shall be prepared on the aforementioned lines and the activity calendar shall be drawn out and included in the Plans.

5. The interventions related to Special Revision, as given above, shall be rolled out immediately while the comprehensive plan document may be submitted for approval of the Commission latest by 15th July, 2018.

Yours Sincerely,

(A K PATHAK)

INSTRUCTION No. 24

By Mail/Speed Post

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

[Note: This instruction serves for All States / UTs during G.E to LS / LA during Pandemic period]

No. 491/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP PLAN/SVEEP-II/2020 **Dated: 26th November, 2020**

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, West Bengal & Tamil Nadu

Sub: SVEEP Template updated in view of COVID-19 – reg.

Sir / Madam,

Please refer to Commission's letter of even no. dated 16th July, 2020, wherein, you were requested to peruse the Updated Draft SVEEP Template. In this connection, I am directed to forward herewith, the updated SVEEP Plan template, with the request to refer the aforesaid template for further planning of awareness measures explicitly following the guidelines mentioned therein. The detailed State, District and AC Plan shall be prepared on the aforementioned lines and the activity calendar shall be drawn out and included in the plans for all upcoming elections.

2. At each stage of the SVEEP plan, suitable precautions as per the COVID-19 related guidelines may be incorporated, as mentioned in the aforesaid template. Relevant links related to Bihar State SVEEP Plan, creative for Bihar elections and Updated Voter guide.

3. You are also requested to provide a report on the steps taken so far regarding SVEEP and Accessibility, as a measure of advance planning for the upcoming election to Legislative Assembly in your State / UT, latest by 04th December, 2020.

Yours faithfully,

(GUNCHA BATRA ANEJA)
UNDER SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION No. 25

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No.491/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-III/EPIC/ENVELOPE/2021 **Dated: 14th October, 2021**

To

The Chief Electoral Officers,
All States & UTs

Subject: Distribution of EPIC in a designed envelope- regarding.

Sir/Madam,

As you are aware that superintendence, direction and control of preparation of electoral rolls for elections to the Parliament and State Legislatures are vested in the ECI, the Commission provides for identity card known as Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) to every elector with a view to prevent impersonation of electors and facilitate their identification at the time of polling. Initially the Commission had issued EPIC with black and white photograph and a hologram with certain specifications. Later, the Commission decided to go for a PVC EPIC with color photograh.

Further, to build a truly participative democracy by encouraging all eligible citizens to vote and make an informed decision during the elections, comprehensive SVEEP measures for voter's awareness are being taken up to enhance people's participation in the upcoming elections. In continuation of these measures, the Commission, during the two-day SVEEP consultation workshop held on August 25-26, 2021 launched an initiative to reach out to new voters through a personalized letter when sending out their voter ID cards.

As EPIC is the first formal interaction point of voters with the Commission, in order to standardize the experience and gives a personalized touch to the EPIC delivery, it is envisaged and directed that CEOs/DEOs should hand over / deliver / courier this kit to newly registered electors, which contains a personalized letter along with a voter guide and voters pledge. The open file of the letter and voter guide is shared herewith and it may be noted that this voter guide is only for the newly registered electors.

Further, you are directed to translate the content suitably in regional language. Also, kindly put a copy of letter for general information on CEO/DEOs visitors display board at an appropriate location.

Yours faithfully,

(ANUJ CHANDAK)
JOINT DIRECTOR

INSTRUCTION No. 26

By Mail/Speed Post

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

[Note: This instruction serves for All States / UTs during G.E to LS / LA]

No. 491/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-II/Checklist/2022 **Dated: 21.01.2023**

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of

1. Meghalaya 2.Nagaland 3.Tripura

Sub: Forwarding CEO/DEO checklist and Voter Guide for SVEEP for General Assembly Elections 2023–reg.

Sir,

I am directed to forward Updated Voter Guide for upcoming General Elections, 2023 to be held in your States. You are requested to make regional translation of the Voter Guide and use it wide dissemination in each household. The open file of the voter guide has been shared for this purpose.

The Voter Guide is also to be translated in vernacular language and shared with the Commission. Further, the Voter Guide should be forwarded to all DEOs and also upload and prominently display on the CEO/DEO website.

Further, updated CEO/DEO checklists as per SVEEP-IV Strategy document for SVEEP are also attached herewith for preparation for upcoming General Elections in your States. You are, therefore, requested to provide an action taken report to the Commission with respect to checklist and vernacular translation of voter guide by 31st January, 2023.

Yours faithfully,

Encl: As above

(SANTOSH KUMAR)

SECRETARY

CEO's CHECKLIST FOR SVEEP

GENERAL

1. Mainstream ECI's core themes (inclusive and accessible election, informed and ethical election, leveraging technology for election and continuous electoral and democracy education) in the entire organization; ensure that these themes are deeply ingrained in the attitude and the day-to-day functioning of the entire election machinery of the state.

2. Conduct workshops to create awareness in the whole organization about SVEEP-4 strategy framework including its vision, goal, objectives, voter-focus, booth-focus, evidence-focus, IMF-EEE paradigm, six key strategies (Booth level planning and action, addressing the low registration/ low turnout ACs, targeted interventions, strengthening flagship programs like ELC/ SSR/ NVD, Building partnerships and Designing effective SVEEP campaigns) and capacity building through HR augmentation of training; ensure that the entire election machinery of the state is fully committed to this framework.

3. Appoint suitable icons at the state, district, and AC level as per ECI guidelines to motivate different segments of voters and involve them in all SVEEP campaigns.

4. Strengthen the SVEEP set up at the state, district and AC level by hiring domain experts, engaging interns, and appointing nodal officers for SVEEP and social media as per the HR framework given by ECI.

5. Hire professional agencies at the state level for designing and running SVEEP campaigns and producing SVEEP creatives for print/ outdoor media and electronic media and digital/ social media.

6. Constitute broad based SVEEP core committees at the state, district and AC levels as per the guidelines of ECI and ensure their regular meetings; monitor follow up action on recommendations.

7. Monitor the functioning of Voter Facilitation Centers (VFCs) of all the ACs in the state regularly; ensure that every VFC is fully accessible and duly equipped with all citizen-friendly amenities like drinking water station, well-furnished waiting room, functional landline number, facilitation desk, information signages, SVEEP messages, well-groomed and ISL trained staff and a citizen friendly work culture.

8. Enter into suitable SVEEP partnerships at the state level with specific govt, non-govt and private entities (in the fields of public service, welfare, business, culture, media, professions, technology, academics etc) and formalize them by signing MoUs clearing laying down the role and responsibilities of both parties; involve these partners in formulation and roll out of SVEEP campaigns at the state level; review the output of district and AC level partnerships; ensure that BAGs, RWAs and BLAs are active at the booth level; engage with recognized political parties to ensure appointment of booth, AC, district and state level agents and use them for increasing voter awareness and take their help during SSR for improving the health of electoral rolls.

9. Implement the SVEEP training framework of the ECI in the state; designate NLMTs/ SLMTs/ DLMTs/ ALMTs (SVEEP) and ensure their training and retraining; conduct regular trainings and workshops for capacity building of all DEOs/ EROs/ ROs/ BLOs/ BAGs/ BLAs/ RWAs as well as the state level ER/ SVEEP machinery and partners.

10. Monitor the performance of every DEO/ ERO/ RO with reference to their checklists and hold them fully accountable for carrying out the assigned tasks; recognize and reward the best performing DEOs/ EROs/ AEROs/ BLOs during NVD.

11. Obtain data from education department, social welfare department and registrar of births and deaths; share data with DEOs; monitor progress in collection of relevant forms by through BLOs using Garuda app.

12. Promote citizen-centric portals, mobile apps and social media handles of ECI/CEO through SVEEP campaigns; ensure that BLOs explain their features and benefits to the voters during H2H visits.

13. Utilise radio and TV channels at the state level; produce and disseminate SVEEP content regularly for posting on these channels.

14. Set up a state level election museum and display all artefacts and documents depicting the rich history of elections conducted by ECI in the state; conduct museum tours of ELC members, partner agencies and citizens.

15. Develop SVEEP facilities like inhouse unipole for SVEEP hoardings, inhouse studio for song/ video/ debate/ talk-show recording, inhouse 3-D movie theater for playing SVEEP movies/ videos; make extensive use of these facilities for wider voter awareness.

16. Prepare the state level SVEEP action plans for the SSR period, the continuous updation period and the election period, as the case may be; these plans should be based on an objective situation analysis (including turnout during last LS & VS election, findings of the last KAP Survey, catalogue of non-voter communities, BLO reports on poll day non-voters, recent field surveys done in the district and the findings of gap analysis carried out on the basis of Format 1-8); ensure that these plans are consistent with the strategy framework, have clear evidence, booth and citizen focus, conform to IMF-EEE paradigm, comprehensively address the core themes, target groups, identified gaps and urban/ youth apathy and duly involve the ELCs and partners; share the plans with ECI and implement with all vigour and passion; closely monitor the execution of district and AC level plans by DEO/ ERO/ RO.

17. Ensure that the state level SVEEP campaigns inter alia include publicity through print media advertisement, radio jingles on FM and AIR channels, train/ bus wrapping, bus scrolls, utility bills, outdoor media at prominent locations in all districts, digital and social media, announcements at train/ bus stations, SMS/ WhatsApp messages, government websites; the messages/ creatives used must be appropriate to the needs/ gaps of the state as determined through the objective situation analysis; frequently conduct phone-in programs, social media live, press conferences and issue press notes.

18. Report the SVEEP activities carried out at state level by making data entry in the MIS module of ECI SVEEP portal; learn from the SVEEP activities shared by other states on the portal and replicate the relevant good practices; monitor the SVEEP performance of every district/ AC using the CEO dashboard on the portal.

19. Monitor the status of grievance redressal at NGRS portal on a weekly basis for every District/ AC; insist on prompt redressal and randomly call some complainants through 1950 call center to check their level of satisfaction with the claimed redressal; ensure that the receipt of complaints on NGRS steadily goes down (not up) in the state.

20. Check whether DEOs have created/ registered/ activated ELC in every senior secondary school and every college/ university of the district, VAF in every major govt/ private workplace and Chunav Pathshala in every booth; schedule and monitor their activities; insist on 100% enrollment of eligible left out voters in every ELC/ VAF/ CP; ensure collection of advance Form-6 from every prospective (17+) voter through school level ELC; involve them in all SVEEP campaigns through districts.

21. Celebrate the NVD at the state level with great fanfare; mobilize local community and leading citizens of the area, felicitate first time voters and give awards to best performing EROs/ ROs/ BLOs/ ELCs/ partners as per the ECI scheme; use the occasion as a platform for imparting continuous electoral and democracy education in the state; monitor NVD celebration at district/ AC/ booth level.

22. Maintain an inventory of the most visible outdoor sites in the state for outdoor publicity hoardings for SVEEP during SSR and election periods.

23. Maintain verified official social media handles of CEO office; appoint a nodal officer for social media; expand the social media footprint and engagement; follow the ECI handles and propagate all ECI social media posts; monitor social media performance of DEOs/ EROs; insist that all BLOs follow the official social media handles and disseminate the content to the voters through WhatsApp/ Telegram groups; frequently put out bytes/ testimonials of citizens satisfied with electoral services; use social media to counter youth/ urban apathy.

24. Develop innovative mobile apps for engaging with voters in a creative interactive way to enhance their motivation to vote and overcome youth/ urban apathy; develop apps for providing innovative solutions for better planning and monitoring of voter registration and participation particularly in respect of accessible elections and inclusion of target groups; develop and promote e-learning apps for continuous electoral and democracy education.

25. Review and improve the CEO website, make it fully accessible and citizen friendly, add a landing page for providing ready access to the information/services that citizens often visit the website.

26. Manage 1950 call center in a professional manner; constantly update and upgrade the knowledge of call agents; log all complaints into NGRS; monitor call statistics daily; enhance manpower during SSR and election periods.

27. For enhancing the voter turnout the CEO should focus on

    a. purging every part-roll of the dead, shifted, untraceable and duplicate electors,

    b. reaching out to the non-voter communities,

    c. motivating the individual non-voters of last election as documented by BLO on poll day,

    d. convincing the out-migrants over phone/ WhatsApp to come and vote on poll day,

    e. engaging with the urban youth and white-collar workers to overcome their apathy,

    f. carrying out mass mobilization campaigns in the low turnout ACs and booths, and

    g. roping in all employers to call out the employees who avail the paid holiday but don't actually vote, and putting out this arrangement in the media well before the poll day

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

28. Lead the organization in realizing the imperative of maintaining a truly inclusive, updated, pure and error-free electoral roll in every district, AC and booth; rate the electoral roll of every DEO/ ERO/ BLO and monitor their efforts to improve their rating.

29. Monitor whether Chunav Pathshala and the Masik Matdata Baithak are regularly conducted in all booths of the state as per schedule.

30. Review the health of the electoral roll of every district/ AC on a monthly basis during the continuous updation period; ensure that any gender gap and/ or youth gap (18-29 years) in the electoral roll (with reference to census data) is rapidly eliminated through meticulous planning and execution by the DEO/ ERO; ensure that all target groups (as per strategy document) are fully included by undertaking the necessary field work; ensure that all social welfare institutions and NGOs are roped in and their inmates/ beneficiaries are enrolled; try to launch door-step services for PwD/ 80+ citizens.

31. Use the continuous-updation period for improving the functioning of VFCs/CPs,/ ELCs, improving the delivery of electoral services, reducing receipt of complaints on NGRS, improving the ramps and toilet facilities at PSLs and imparting continuous electoral and democracy education to the community.

32. Meticulously plan the SSR operations; review the health of the electoral roll of each district/ AC with reference to EP ratio, Gender Ratio, PwD ratio, Age cohorts (particularly 18-19 &, 20-29 for 100% enrollment and 80+ for 100% verification), DSE, PSE, turnout at the previous LS and VS election; prepare Format 1-8 and identify/ analyse all gaps; prepare a strategy for addressing all gaps through H2H visits of BLOs; ensure 100% marking of PwD voters and 100% verification of 80+ voters in every SSR; prepare a SVEEP action plan and design a SVEEP campaign for the SSR period for the state.

33. Insist that every ERO inspects every PSL before SSR; review PSLs of all ACs with reference to the suitability of the building, number of existing booths at the PSL, status of permanent ramps of prescribed quality, sufficiency of separate male/ female/ accessible toilets, status of every other AMF, mobile/ data connectivity (shadow area); ensure that all deficiencies are comprehensively rectified the SSR.

34. Review every PS of every AC with reference to GIS tagging, 6 maps, standardization of addresses and sections, family tagging, Aadhar linking, mobile linking, e-EPIC downloads, BLO WhatsApp/ Telegram group with voters, eturned undelivered EPICs and get all gaps addressed by DEOs through the BLO during SSR.

35. Be aware that the targeted 75% turnout cannot be achieved in the low turnout ACs/ booths unless their part-rolls are cleaned up by verifying all 80+ voters, acting on DSE, PSE, duplicate/ multiple entries, repeat EPICs, ASD and poll day non-voter lists of the previous election, identifying all dead and permanently shifted electors through H2H visits and deleting all dead, shifted and duplicate electors in a mission mode during the SSR period.

36. Verify whether the H2H visits for the SSR have been carefully planned by DEO/ERO and a checklist prepared for the BLO to ensure that all aspects are enquired, all relevant forms are collected (Form-6 from all prospective (17+) voters, newly eligible voters and left out voters; Form 8 from all newly in-migrated and newly arrived brides; Form-7 with respect to all dead, permanently-shifted voters) and verification carried out by the BLO in the same visit through Garuda app; BLO must verify every single entry of the part-roll during H2H visit in order to truly purify the part-roll.

37. Use the SSR to identify non-voter communities in every district/ AC living in nomadic, homeless, socially alienated (third gender, sex workers, forced labour etc) or other peculiar situations which hamper their participation in the electoral process; catalogue all such non-voter communities in every AC and ensure their registration using Garuda app.

ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

38. Conduct the baseline and endline KAP survey before and after the election; design the questionnaire carefully based on the situation analysis in order to understand the reasons for gaps more objectively; design the SVEEP campaign and create content in the light of the insights gained from KAP survey; use the endline survey to assess the impact of the SVEEP campaign.

39. Design and roll out an attractive, informative and effective SVEEP campaign at the state level based on the IMF-EEE paradigm, focused on evidence/ booths/ voters, carrying messages specifically aimed at the gaps and turnout profile of the AC concerned apart from covering the core themes of inclusive, accessible, ethical elections, EVM/ VVPAT and citizen-centric mobile apps/ portals/ 1950 helpline; involve all ELCs/ Icons/ partners; carry out extensive hands-on EVM awareness; take green initiatives at PSLs; ensure that the state level SVEEP campaigns inter alia include publicity through print media advertisement, radio jingles on FM and AIR channels, train/ bus wrapping, bus scrolls, utility bills, outdoor media at prominent locations in all districts, digital and social media, announcements at train/ bus stations, SMS/ WhatsApp messages, government websites; the messages/ creatives used must be appropriate to the needs/ gaps of the state as determined through an objective situation analysis.

40. Frequently conduct phone-in programs, social media live, press conferences and issue press notes; do interesting media stories on different aspects of election; provide e-Pledge facility on CEO website on the landing page with e-Certificate of pledge which citizens can proudly share on social media or frame and display at home.

41. Verify whether DEOs have ensured 100% AMF at every PSL, organized pink booths, divyang booths and model booths in every AC to attract voters and release advance media stories on these arrangements, ensured timely and 100% delivery of VIS, VAG and CEO's voter appeal to every voter through BLOs, arranged mass voter pledges and e-pledge, used sankalp patra to motivate parents of schools students, ensured ease of voting and a memorable voting experience, and redressed voter grievances promptly.

42. Check whether every RO has made special arrangements to reach out to all 11 target groups identified by this strategy document, all out-migrant electors, all catalogued non-voter communities and all poll day non-voters of the last election (as identified by every BLO) and motivated them by means of IMF-EEE activities.

43. Achieve the voter turnout target of 75% in the state as envisaged in the strategy document, which would critically depend on how pure are the partrolls; identify low turnout ACs / booths and carry out massive mass mobilization campaign there in a mission mode.

44. Make the election truly accessible and festive in the state; create a buzz in social and electronic media with pictures/ videos of voting-from-home conducted for PwD/ 80+ voters, testimonials of happy PwD/ 80+ voters, PwD managed booths, pink booths, centenarian voters' felicitation at booth, use of braille in electoral process, pick and drop facility, AMF, volunteers, wheelchairs, ISL interpreters, selfie points etc; carefully plan well in advance for the smooth implementation of AVPD/ AVSC postal ballot facility.

45. Issue instructions regarding identification of individual non-voters (who didn't turn up at booth nor voted through postal ballot) by BLO at the end of the poll, conduct of field survey after the election (using the ASD list and Non-voter list as the base documents) and ascertaining all deceased/ permanently-shifted voters (to initiate their deletion proceedings using Garuda app) and enquiring into the reasons for non-participation from those residing in the area but not voting (to analyze, document and take remedial action for future elections) and submitting a comprehensive report to the ERO within one month after the election; ensure that every ERO compiles all such reports and submits the AC level report to DEO who then compiles and submits district level report to the CEO with his analysis.

DEO's CHECKLIST FOR SVEEP

GENERAL

1. Disseminate ECI's core themes of ECI of inclusive and accessible election, informed and ethical election, leveraging technology for election and continuous electoral and democracy education amongst the EROs/ ROs and the entire electoral machinery of the district; ensure that these themes are deeply ingrained in the attitude and the day-to-day functioning of the entire machinery.

2. Ground the SVEEP-4 strategy framework including its vision, goal, objectives, voter-focus, booth-focus, evidence-focus, IMF-EEE paradigm, six key strategies (booth level planning and action, addressing the low registration/low turnout ACs, targeted interventions, Strengthening flagship programs like ELC/ SSR/ NVD, building partnerships and designing effective SVEEP campaigns) and capacity building, HR augmentation of training; ensure that the entire machinery is fully committed to this framework.

3. Tenaciously pursue the imperatives of maintaining a truly Inclusive, updated, pure and error-free electoral roll for every AC of the district; ensure that the roll of every booth also conforms to these imperatives.

4. Appoint/ review district and AC level icons with the approval of CEO; strengthen the SVEEP set up at the District and AC level by hiring domain experts, engaging interns, and appointing nodal officers for SVEEP and social media as per the HR framework given by ECI; hire professional agency to assist in campaign design and creatives.

5. Review the ER staffing at the district, AC and booth levels and ensure filling up of all vacancies; ensure that only those who can use smart phone, mobile apps, social media apps and web portals are deployed as BLO; issue a kit to every BLO as per ECI guidelines.

6. Ensure constitution of broad based SVEEP core committees at the district and AC levels as per the guidelines of ECI and ensure their regular meetings; implement recommendations and report to CEO.

7. Visit the voter facilitation centers of all the ACs of the district on a quarterly basis; ensure that every VFC is fully accessible and duly equipped with all citizen-friendly amenities like drinking water station, well-furnished waiting room, functional landline number, facilitation desk, information signages, SVEEP messages, well-groomed and ISL trained staff and a citizen-friendly work culture.

8. Forge suitable SVEEP partnerships at the district level with specific govt, non govt and private (CSR) entities and formalize them by signing MoUs clearly laying down the role and responsibilities of both parties; involve these partners in formulation and roll out of SVEEP campaigns at the district level; review the output of AC level partnerships; ensure that BAGs, RWAs and BLAs are active at the booth level; follow up with recognized political parties for appointment of Booth, AC and District level agents and use them for increasing voter awareness and take help during SSR for improving the health of electoral rolls.

9. Diligently implement the SVEEP training framework of the ECI in the district; designate DLMTs/ ALMTs (SVEEP) and ensure their training through ECI/ CEO; conduct regular trainings and workshops for capacity building of all EROs/ ROs/BLOs/ BAGs/ BLAs/ RWAs as well as the district level ER/ SVEEP officers and partners by using SLMTs/ DLMTs/ ALMTs as resource persons.

10. Monitor the performance of every ERO/ RO with reference to the Checklist for EROs/ ROs and hold them fully accountable; recognize and reward the best performing EROs/ AEROs/ BLOs on NVD; rate the electoral roll of every ERO and BLO and monitor their efforts to improve the rating; ensure that Chunav Pathshala and the Masik Matdata Baithak are regularly conducted in all booths of the district as per schedule.

11. Segregate AC wise the data received from education department, social welfare department and registrar of births and deaths and ensure collection of relevant forms through BLOs using Garuda app.

12. Promote citizen-centric portals, mobile apps and social media handles of ECI/CEO; ensure that BLOs explain their features and benefits to the voters during H2H visits.

13. Prepare a SVEEP action plan for the district as a whole (to be implemented at by DEO) and specifically for every AC (to be implemented by ERO) for the SSR period, the continuous-updation period and the election period, as the case may be; these plans should be based on an objective situation analysis of the AC (including turnout during last LS & VS election, findings of the last KAP survey, catalogue of non-voter communities, BLO reports on poll day nonvoters, recent field surveys done in the district and the findings of gap analysis carried out at the district and AC level on the basis of Format 1-8); ensure that these plans are consistent with the strategy framework, have clear evidence, booth and citizen focus, conform to IMF-EEE paradigm, comprehensively address the core themes, the target groups, identified gaps and urban/ youth apathy and duly involve all ELCs and partners; get the plans approved by CEO and implement it with all vigour and passion; closely monitor the execution of AC level plans by ERO/ RO.

14. Ensure that the district and AC level SVEEP campaigns particularly include on door-to-door visits, SVEEP display at every PSL, selfie points at all crowded locations, mass mobilization events, activities, and contests, munadi, vehicle wrapping and mobile canopies to give mobility and visibility to the campaign, special camps for registration, local vernacular media, folk media, nukkad nataks, outdoor media, interaction of DEO/ ERO/ RO with the print and electronic media and extensive use of community radio; the messages/ creatives used in each AC must be appropriate to the needs/ gaps of that specific AC as determined.

15. Report the SVEEP activities carried out at the district level by making data entry in the MIS module of ECI SVEEP portal; learn from the SVEEP activities shared by other districts/ states on the portal and replicate the relevant good practices; monitor the SVEEP performance of every AC using the DEO dashboard on the portal

16. Monitor the status of grievance redressal at NGRS portal on a weekly basis for every AC; ensure prompt redressal and randomly call some complainants to check their level of satisfaction with the claimed redressal; ensure that the receipt of complaints on NGRS steadily goes down (not up) in each AC.

17. Ensure that ELC is created/ registered/ activated in every senior secondary school and every college/ university of the district; VAF be established in every major govt/ private workplace and Chunav Pathshala in every booth; schedule and monitor their activities; ensure 100% enrollment of eligible left out voters in every ELC/ VAF/ CP; ensure collection of advance Form-6 from every prospective (17+) voter through school level ELC; involve them in all SVEEP campaigns

18. Celebrate the NVD at the district and AC level with great fanfare; mobilize local community and leading citizens of the area, felicitate first time voters and give awards to best performing EROs/ ROs/ BLOs/ ELCs/ partners; use the occasion as a platform for imparting continuous electoral and democracy education to the local community.

19. Maintain an inventory of the most visible outdoor sites in the district for outdoor publicity hoardings for SVEEP and share it with the CEO.

20. Maintain verified official social media handles of the district; appoint a nodal officer for social media; follow ECI/ CEO handles and share all content with EROs/ BLOs; ensure that BLOs follow the official social media

handles and disseminate the content to the voters through WhatsApp/ Telegram groups; frequently put out bytes/ testimonials of citizens satisfied with electoral services; use social media to counter youth/ urban apathy

21. Review and improve the DEO website, make it accessible and citizen-friendly, add a landing page for providing ready access to the information or services that a voter often looks for.

22. Utilize the SVEEP fund and submit the utilization certificate in a timely manner; adhere to ECI guidelines on the use of SVEEP fund; make adequate provision in the state budget for SVEEP activities at the district, AC and booth levels.

23. Review the health of the electoral roll of every AC on a monthly basis during the continuous updation period; ensure that any gender gap and/ or youth gap (18-29 years) in the electoral roll of every AC (with reference to census data) is rapidly eliminated through meticulous planning and execution; ensure that all target groups (as per strategy document) are fully included in every AC by undertaking the necessary field work; ensure all social welfare institutions and NGOs are roped in and their inmates/ beneficiaries are enrolled; try to launchdoor-step services for PwD/ 80+ citizens; ensure 100% marking of PwD voters.

24. Meticulously plan the SSR operations; review the health of the electoral roll of each AC with reference to EP ratio, gender ratio, PwD ratio, age cohorts (particularly 18-19 &, 20-29 for enrollment and 80+ for verification), DSE, PSE, turnout at the previous LS and VS election; prepare Format 1-8, identify and analyse all gaps; prepare a strategy for addressing all gaps through H2H visits of BLOs; arrange public reading out of the draft roll at a fixed time at the booth on the day of publication; prepare a SVEEP action plan and SVEEP campaign for the SSR period for every AC as stated above.

25. Ensure that every ERO inspects every PSL before SSR; review PSLs of all ACs with reference to the suitability of the building, number of existing booths at the PSL, status of permanent ramps of prescribed quality, sufficiency of separate male/ female/ accessible toilets, status of every other AMF, mobile/ data connectivity (shadow area); ensure that all deficiencies are comprehensively addressed in the AC level SVEEP plan for the SSR.

26. Review every PS of every AC with reference to GIS tagging, 6 maps, standardization of addresses and sections, family tagging, Aadhar linking, mobile linking, e-EPIC downloads, BLO WhatsApp/ telegram group with voters, returned undelivered EPICs and address all gaps during SSR using Garuda app.

27. Do remember that the targeted 75% turnout cannot be achieved in the low turnout ACs/ booths unless their part-rolls are cleaned up by verifying all 80+ voters, acting on DSE, PSE, duplicate/ multiple entries, Repeat EPICs, ASD and poll day non-voter lists of the previous election, identifying all dead and permanently shifted electors through H2H visits and deleting all dead, shifted and duplicate electors in a mission mode during the SSR period

28. Plan the H2H visits carefully for the SSR and prepare a checklist for H2H visits of the BLO so that all aspects are enquired, all relevant forms are collected (Form-6 from all prospective (17+) voters, newly eligible voters and left out voters; Form 8 from all newly in-migrated and newly arrived brides; Form-7 with respect to all dead, permanently-shifted voters) and verification be carried out by the BLO in the same visit through Garuda app; BLO must be asked to verify every single entry of the part-roll during H2H visit in order to truly purify the part-roll.

29. Use the continuous-updation period for improving the functioning of VFCs/ CPs,/ ELCs/ VAFs, improving the delivery of electoral services, reducing receipt of complaints on NGRS, improving the ramps and toilet facilities at PSLs and imparting continuous electoral and democracy education to the community.

30. Use the SSR to identify non-voter communities in every AC living in nomadic, homeless, socially alienated (third gender, sex workers, forced labour etc) or other peculiar situations which hamper their participation in the electoral process; catalogue all such non-voter communities in every AC and ensure their registration using Garuda app.

31. Design and roll out an innovative, attractive, informative and effective SVEEP campaign at the district level and in every AC based on the IMF-EEE paradigm, focused on evidence/ booths/ voters, carrying messages specifically aimed at the gaps and turnout profile of the AC concerned apart from covering the core themes of inclusive, accessible, ethical elections, EVM/ VVPAT and citizencentric mobile apps/ portals/ 1950 helpline; involve all ELCs/ Icons/ partners; carry out extensive hands-on EVM awareness; take green initiatives at PSLs; use social media, outdoor media, mass media, folk media, SVEEP display at PSL and BLO WhatsApp/ Telegram groups extensively to inform and motivate voters.

32. Ensure 100% AMF at every PSL; organize pink booths, divyang booths and model booths in every AC to attract voters and release advance media stories on these arrangements; ensure timely and 100% delivery of VIS, VAG and CEO's voter appeal to every voter through BLOs; arrange mass voter pledges and e-pledge; use sankalp patra to motivate parents of schools students; ensure ease of voting and a memorable voting experience; redress voter grievances promptly; do regular media briefing and put out interesting media stories.

33. Ensure that every RO makes special arrangements to reach out to all 11 target groups identified by this strategy document, all out-migrant electors, all catalogued non-voter communities and all poll day non-voters of the last election (as identified by every BLO) and motivates them to vote by means of IMF-EEE activities.

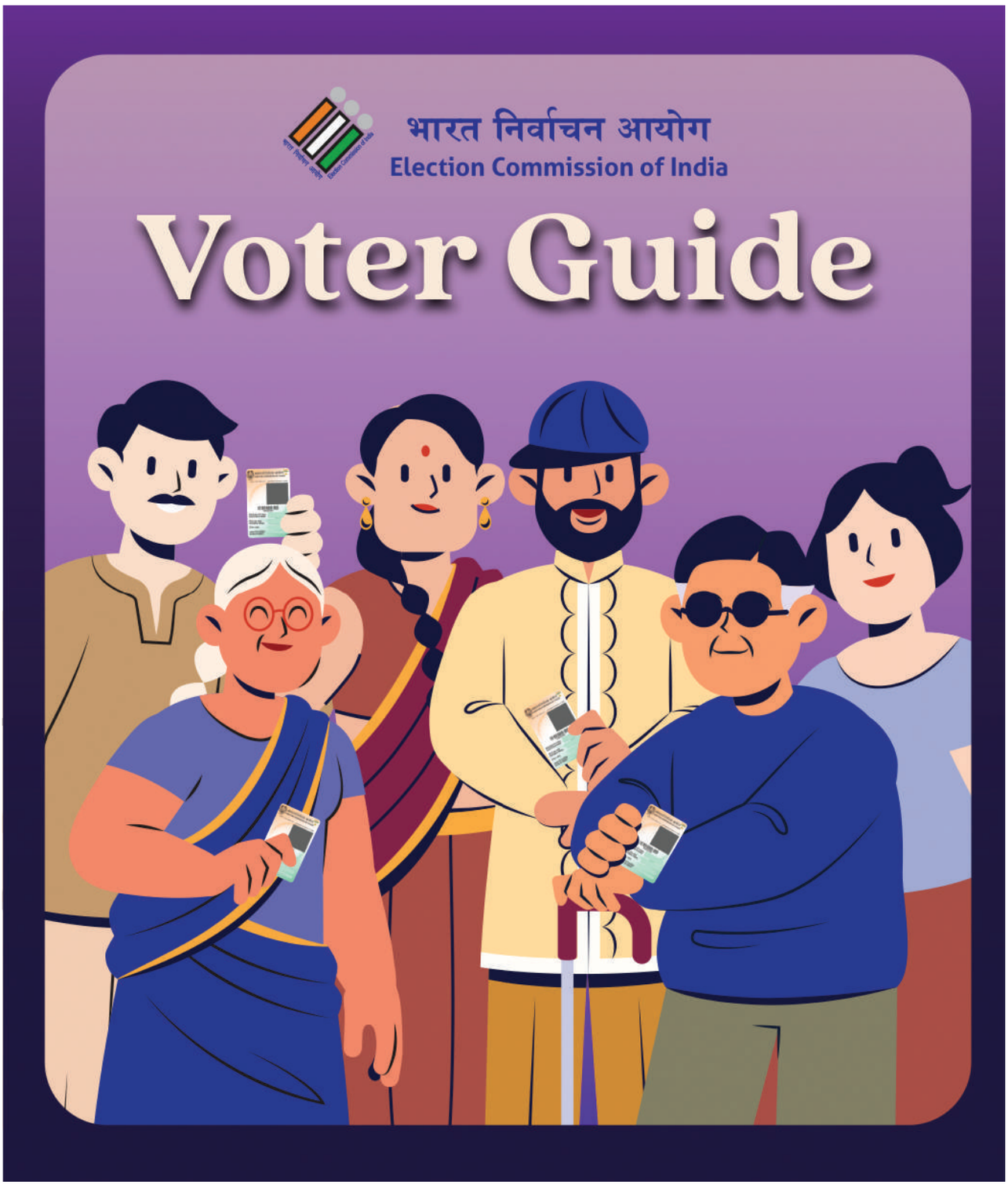
34. Achieve the voter turnout target of 75% in every AC as envisaged in the strategy document; identify low turnout ACs / booths and carry out massive mass mobilization campaign there in a mission mode.

35. Carefully plan activities to make the election truly accessible and festive in all ACs; create a buzz in social and local media with pictures/ videos of voting from home conducted for PwD/ 80+ voters, testimonials of happy PwD/ 80+ voters, PwD managed booths, pink booths, centenarian voters' felicitation at booth, use of ISL and Braille in electoral process, pick and drop facility, AMF at booths, volunteers, wheelchairs, ISL interpreters, selfie points etc; carefully plan well in advance for the smooth implementation of AVPD/ AVSC postal ballot.

36. Ensure that every BLO convenes a special meeting of Chunav Pathshala and through collective conversation identifies the reasons of non-voting and addresses the same.

37. Ensure that every BLO prepares a list of individual non-voters (who didn't turn up at booth nor voted through postal ballot) at the end of the poll, does a field survey after the election (using the ASD list and Non-voter list as the base documents) and ascertains all deceased/ permanently-shifted voters (to initiate their deletion proceedings using Garuda app) and to enquire into the reasons for non-participation from those residing in the area but not voting (to analyze, document and take remedial action for future elections) and submit a comprehensive report to the ERO within one month after the election; ensure that every ERO compiles all such reports and submits the AC level report to DEO; compile and submit these reports to CEO.

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भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India
Voter Guide

To Enroll As A Voter

You should be

- An Indian citizen
- Resident of polling area
- 18 years or above of age

Check your name in the Voter List mandatorily after announcement of elections



To cast your vote, you must have your name in the *Voter List*

Search Your Name in Voter List

- voterportal.eci.gov.in
  ceo____.nic.in
- SMS to 1950:
  ECI<space> <EPIC No>



Use Voter Helpline App



1 Call Helpline 1950 for Election related query

To Register

Any Election Related Query :

Call Helpline **1950**

ONLINE

- www.nvsp.in
- www.voterportal.eci.gov.in
- Voter Helpline mobile app

OFFLINE

- Contact your BLO
- Voter Facilitation Centre



Voter Helpline App

- One stop solution for registration and election related services
- Check the details of Contesting Candidates
- Generate your Voter Information Slip

FB.com/ECI @ecisveep youtube.com/eci @ecisveep 2


Postal Ballot
Following can fill Form 12D & avail Postal Ballot facility:
Senior Citizens (Above 80 years of age)
(PwD) Person with Disabilities marked in the Electoral Roll
Electors employed in notified essential services
For Postal Ballot facility call 1950 or contact your BLO
KNOW YOUR BLO
SMS to 1950: ECICONTACT<space> <EPIC No>
Know Your Candidate
KYC
Know your candidate app
Use Voter Helpline App
CEO/DEO website
https://affidavit.eci.gov.in
Check the details of each candidate of your constituency as given in their Affidavit- qualification, criminal antecedents & assets (if any)
3
Link EPIC with AADHAAR Card (Voluntary)

On Poll Day

Holiday is declared on the day of Poll

Locate your Polling Station at:

voterportal.eci.gov.in

SMS to 1950: ECIPS <space> <EPIC No>

Voter Helpline App

Voter information slip provided by BLO/ Can be generated using Voter Helpline App.

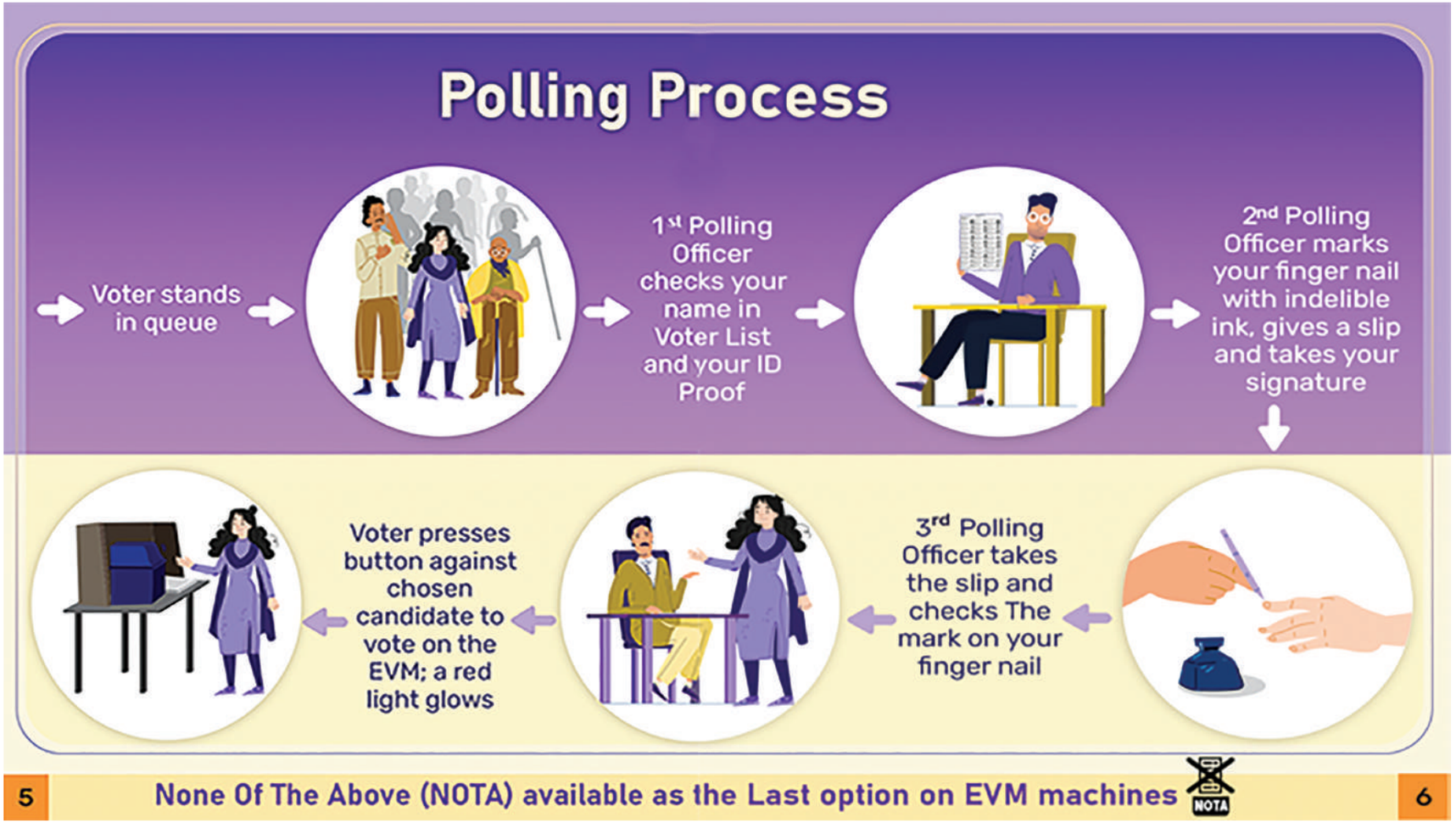
NO GADGETS ALLOWED IN POLLING BOOTH



Carry any one of the Approved Identity Document and Voter Information Slip to the Polling Station

- Voter ID Card (EPIC, e-EPIC)
- Aadhaar Card
- PAN Card
- Unique Disability ID (UDID)
- Service Identity Card
- Passbook with photo by Bank/Post Office
- Health Insurance Smart Card (M/o Labour)
- Driving License
- Passport
- Smart card issued by RGI under NPR
- Pension Document
- Official identity
- card issued to MPs / MLAs/ MLCs
- MNREGA Job Card

Report unlawful activity through cVIGIL App 4


Polling Process
Voter stands in queue
1st Polling Officer checks your name in Voter List and your ID Proof
2nd Polling Officer marks your finger nail with indelible ink, gives a slip and takes your signature
3rd Polling Officer takes the slip and checks The mark on your finger nail
Voter presses button against chosen candidate to vote on the EVM; a red light glows
5
None Of The Above (NOTA) available as the Last option on EVM machines
NOTA
6


Casting your Vote
If you do not see the ballot slip in the VVPAT or hear the loud beep contact the Presiding Officer
The slip will be visible through the glass for 7 seconds. Printed slip will be secured in the VVPAT
AAA
VVPAT
Ready to Vote
The 3rd Polling Officer enables the Ballot Unit (BU) as you enter the voting compartment. The 'READY' light of BU will glow
1
Cast your Vote
Press the Blue Button on the Ballot Unit against the name/ symbol of candidate of your choice
2
See the Light
The red light against the name/ symbol of candidate chosen will glow
3
Verify your Vote
The VVPAT will print & display the ballot slip containing Serial Number, Name and Symbol of the chosen candidate
4
Hear the 'BEEP'
The BEEP sound from the Control Unit marks that vote has been cast successfully
5
7
Other Facilities at Polling Station - Separate Queues, Drinking Water, First Aid, Waiting Shed, Toilet
8


Facilitation Apps by ECI
Person with Disabilities App
ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES BUILT IN
MARK YOURSELF AS PwD
APPLY FOR A NEW PwD VOTER
APPLY FOR WHEEL CHAIR
Request for New Voter Enrollment as PwD
Request for Changes as PwD
Request for Wheelchair
Register Complaint
Read/View Blog
cVIGIL App
Report unlawful activities
Connected through a mobile phone
VIDEO
PHOTO
Facilities For PwDs & Senior Citizens
RAMP & WHEELCHAIR
EVM WITH BRAILLE
SPECIAL VOLUNTEER
PRIORITY ACCESS TO PwD & SENIOR CITIZENS
SIGN LANGUAGE
TRANSPORT FACILITY FOR PwD
9
For Postal Ballot facility call 1950 or contact your BLO

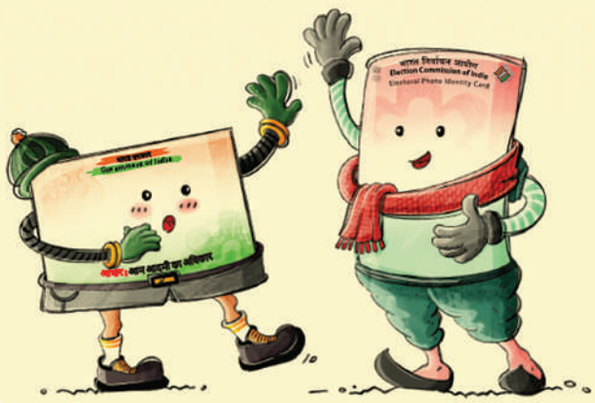
Correct your Details

Form 8 — Change of address/ Correction of entries/ Replacement of EPIC/ Marking of PwDs

Form 7 — Objections against proposed inclusion/ deletion of name in Voter List

Voter Helpline App | nvsp.in | Contact your BLO

EPIC-AADHAAR Linkage



Link your EPIC with AADHAAR

Form 6B

Linkage is Voluntary

Making elections inclusive, accessible & voter friendly 10


The Pledge
"We, the citizens of India, having abiding faith in democracy, hereby pledge to uphold the democratic traditions of our country and the dignity of free, fair and peaceful elections, and to vote in every election fearlessly and without being influenced by considerations of religion, race, caste, community, languages or any inducement."
Register Online or verify your details at www.nvsp.in
eci.gov.in
FB.com/ECI
@ecisveep
youtube.com/eci
@ecisveep
Apps to install
KYC
KNOW YOUR CANDIDATE
eci.gov.in
1950
NO VOTER TO BE LEFT BEHIND

INSTRUCTION No. 27

By Mail/Speed Post

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

[Note: This instruction serves for All States / UTs during G.E to LS / LA in case of deployment of CAO]

No. 491/SVEEP/29/2013/KT(AO) **Dated: September 27, 2013**

To

The Chief Electoral Officer,
Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Delhi and Mizoram.

Subject: Central Awareness Observers for General Elections to the State Assemblies 2013-reg

Sir,

I am directed to say that the Election Commission of India under article 324 of the Constitution of India and Section 20B of the Representation of People Act, 1951 has appointed central Awareness Observers for the Assembly Elections to the States of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Delhi and Mizoram. They will be on observer duty in two phases of 7 days each(excluding travel time) and cover ACs in upto 3 districts in each phase.

2. The Awareness Observers will oversee the efficient and effective management of the electoral process at the field level mainly in the field of Voter education and facilitation besides Media related aspects of RP Act and 'Paid News'. For all purposes, they will act as the eyes and ears of the Commission during the period of the election and provide direct inputs to the Commission from the field about the steps taken up to provide information and facilitation to the people so that they can participate in the electoral process. Their inputs/observations are confidential and solely for the use of the Commission and not for any other agency including media. It is clarified that while the formal report/input/observation sent by the observers are meant for the use of the Commission, the observers will discuss with the CEO/RO/DEO about their observation in order to facilitate mid-course corrections.

3. The Addl/Joint CEO(SVEEP) shall be the nodal officer to ensure smooth flow of communications between the Commission and the Awareness Observers deployed in the state so as to ensure the presence of Observers in the assigned districts as per the schedule laid down by the Commission and smooth flow of information among Observers, district level authorities, State level authorities and the Commission.

4. ARRIVAL OF OBSERVERS IN THE CONSTITUENCIES

a) The observer is mandated to report in the first district on the specified date before forenoon. The deployment details and duration of stay in each district shall be shared subsequently. 483

b) The DEO shall appoint an English knowing officer as the liaison officer for the observer and the liaison officer shall receive the observer at the point of his arrival in the state and escort him to the place of stay.

c) The DEO has to make arrangements for accommodation, vehicle and communication modes like SIM card, internet, fax, etc.

d) The DEO and RO shall compile information/particulars as enumerated in the check list and furnish the same to the Awareness Observer on his/her arrival alongwith the District SVEEP Plan and a map.

5. INTERFACE OF DEO WITH THE AWARENESS OBSERVER: The DEO will organize a structured meeting with the Awareness observers as early as possible.

a) All the Nodal Officers and MCMC members should be present in the meeting to apprise the Observer about the specific issues needing his special attention. The observer should proactively use this meeting to familiarise himself/herself of the state of preparedness of the district with regards to SVEEP and Media related matters.

b) After reviewing the check list, the Observer shall take up the matter with the ECI, if any deficiency is found in the election preparedness.

6. ROLE OF AWARENESS OBSERVERS: The Awareness Observer (AO) arrives within 7 days of announcement of the date of elections by the Election Commission of India in the first phase and completes the second phase of tour before the day of poll.

a) Targeted Approach in Planning: S/he may observe that the DEO has identified the 10% lowest turnout Polling Stations (PS) in the district and also the excluded groups and communities at the PS level for making suitable interventions.

b) Partnerships: The Awareness Observer may observe that a network of partners have been developed for carrying out the outreach programme. S/he may also observe that educational institutions and state departments besides GoI Media departments are roped in. In view of the signing of MoU between ECI and National Literacy Mission, Department of Adult Education, Ministry of HRD, GoI coming the Awareness Observer may observe if the State Literacy Mission are partnering the DEO for electoral literacy among the rural population.

c) District SVEEP Core Committees: The Awareness Observer may observe that meetings of the Core Committee are held periodically. The Core Committee shall ensure quality production and monitor timely distribution of the material. The Observer shall see if the communication/outreach material has been produced/received on time, stored properly and distributed well ahead of the polling date right upto the polling station areas.

d) Nominations: The Awareness Observer may observe that the affidavit submitted by the candidates to the RO regarding criminal background, assets, liabilities and educational qualifications is suitably displayed by the RO outside his/her office and also given to those who ask for it free of cost. S/he 484 may also observe that the affidavits are updated on the CEO's website and the details regarding the government dues as given in the affidavit (under the heading 'liabilities') is also published in two newspapers with local circulation.

e) Roll Related: The Awareness Observer may observe that the citizens are facilitated at Matdar Sahayata Kendras/Voter Facilitation Centres/Common Service Centers for issue of EPIC, duplicate EPICs, display of Voter List and Voter Education material. The observer should visit some of the VFCs. The Awareness Observer may observe that DEO has carried out awareness campaign informing people that having name

in the Voter List is a pre-requisite for casting a vote. The Awareness Observe may observe that DEO has extended facilities for searching name in the Voter List and locating polling station through internet, SMS, telephone and other means. S/he may also observe that the Voter Helpline number 1950 and the local helpline number is functional and widely publicized.

f) **Informed and Inducement Free Voting:** The Awareness Observer may observe that campaign has been taken up to inform the people that under Section 123 of RPA 1951, giving as well as taking of bribe is deemed a corrupt practice and can invite disqualification from voting. S/he may observe that ethical and inducement free voting forms a vital part of the campaign carried out for promoting electoral participation among people.

g) **Dos And Don'ts For Electors:** The Awareness Observer may observe if the DEO has adequately disseminated to the people the aspects that are considered as corrupt practices or electoral offences.

h) **Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC):** The Awareness Observer may observe that the MCMC is set-up and its members are imparted training specially regarding 'paid news'. S/he may see the paid news register to monitor the cases of paid news referred to the MCMC and action taken thereafter. The Observer may extend help in way of advice and suggestions to the desired functioning of the MCMC.

i) **District Media Cell:** The Awareness Observer shall also observe that the District Media Cell is active and functioning. The Observer shall also observe that the election machinery at district level has proper communication established with the public through media.

j) **Electronic Voting Machine:** The Awareness Observers will check if adequate EVM awareness has been undertaken in the district to familarise electors with the operation of the EVM. S/he may also observe if an EVM is also displayed at the Voter Facilitation Centre or Common Services Centre. It may be observed if the DEO has undertaken special camps at rural hamlets to display and provide hand-on experience to people on the EVM.

k) **Preparations for Poll day:** The Awareness Observer may observe if adequate information is disseminated at public places regarding alternate identity documents that can be used for voting. S/he may also observe that voter awareness and motivational messages are displayed at major public places and through mass media. The Awareness Observer may see that Voter Slip is distributed timely ahead of poll day and also observe that facilities exist at PS for proper lighting, drinking water, toilets, sheds, ramps etc.

7. **VISIT OF AREAS IN THE CONSTITUENCY AND POLLING STATIONS:** The Awareness observer should visit the constituencies to understand the constituency in social, economical and political context. During their visits, the Awareness Observer shall definitely visit some of the Voter Facilitation Centers /Common Service centers in the district where citizens are extended facilitation for making their EPICs, checking their names in the Voters' List etc. S/he shall interact with the public and gauge the level of awareness among people regarding various aspect that would relate to their participation in the polls.

I. The checklist and Awareness Observers Reports are enclosed for reference.

II. The provision of facilities for Observer shall be as per the Commissions letter No 464/OBS/2009/EMS dated 4th March, 2009(encl).

III. The number of Awareness Observers being deployed is Madhya Pradesh is 17, Rajasthan-11, Chhattisgarh – 9, Delhi – 3, Mizoram – 2. CEOs are required to identify slots (group of ACs for each Observer) and send it to the undersigned **urgently** through mail/fax latest by **29th September 2013**.

IV. The sim card number for local telephone facility to the Awareness Observer against each slot may also be provided for updation in the ECI data bank, by **7th October 2013**.

Yours sincerely,

(Padma Angmo)
Deputy Secretary

INSTRUCTION No. 28

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No.491/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-II/TIP/2022 **Dated: 12th June, 2023**

To

The Chief Electoral Officers,
All States & UTs

Subject: Turnout Implementation Plan (TIP) for States- regarding.

Sir/Madam,

This is with reference to the follow-up on the decisions taken in the light of the SVEEP strategy discussion and recommendations that emerged from the deliberations of CEOs' conference held at LBSNAA and IIIDEM in April 2023.

2. In order to enhance voter turnout, the concept of AC wise **Turnout Implementation Plan (TIP)**, as a major SVEEP Intervention/ strategy, to be implemented across the Country is approved by the Hon'ble Commission. In this regard CEOs/ DEOs will have to compile a comprehensive gap analysis template, as placed at Annexure, and accordingly prepare SVEEP intervention for the Assembly Constituency. These templates will serve as the foundation for developing the TIP i.e. SVEEP interventions for the area. Further, **the template has specific fields which allow the State to customise and add any additional information** to be highlighted, which could not be captured in the questions asked. **CEOs may, based on their experience and deeper knowledge of ground conditions, come to the conclusion that multiple ACs could be combined together in one TIP**.

3. The following is a general guideline for preparation of TIP:

A. **For States where the voter turnout is below the National average during Lok Sabha 2019 elections i.e. 67.4% or marginally higher (For state like Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh):** The aim here is to substantially improve voter turnout through various means, including targeted communication efforts to remove voter apathy and enhance overall voter participation. The following broad strategy needs to be adopted while preparing the TIP:

i) Analysis and plan for bringing voter turnout of each AC/ PC below the national average to the level of the national average;

ii) Plan for all ACs having above national average voter turnout to maintain the same;

iii) All polling booths in PC/ AC where voter turnout was less than that of the State/ national average to make efforts to maintain the State/ national average voter turnout, whichever is higher; and

iv) The State must plan to aspire for the higher voter turnout which shall be atleast at the level of national average of 2019 elections or to the State average, whichever is higher. Prepare a comprehensive State Turnout Implementation plan with appropriate aspirations for higher voter turnout.

B. States/ UTs other than mentioned in part (a) above (substantially having higher voter turnout than the National average during Lok Sabha 2019 elections i.e. 67.4%): The aim here will be to retain the voter turnout of last election (2019 Loksabha) as an absolute minimum. Further, states will have to make further efforts to improve the turnout to the extent possible. The following broad strategy needs to be adopted while preparing the TIP:

i) All ACs (aggregation to PCs) with voter turnout lower than the State average to aspire to maintain the State average voter turnout;

ii) All polling booths in each AC where voter turnout was less than that of the State average to make efforts to maintain the State average voter turnout;

iii) All PSs/ ACs/ PCs having higher voter turnout than the state average to maintain the same.

iv) Prepare a comprehensive State Turnout Implementation plan with appropriate aspirations for higher voter turnout.

4. Considering the above objectives, a detailed **Analysis Template** is enclosed, which is intended to serve as a guide for CEOs / DEOs, towards the preparation of suitable **TIP (to be prepared in consultation with DEO concerned)** that will eventually be implemented by respective DEOs. The various fields and inputs mentioned in the template will **serve as a guide** towards:

i) Major gap analysis,

ii) media consumption habits,

iii) apathetic groups including youth and urban segments,

iv) other segments requiring specific attention,

v) key messages,

vi) organisations, platforms, and channels through which targeted, communication interventions can be made,

vii) icons/ influencers/ partners who could be roped in at the local level.

5. **Instructions for combining multiple ACs together under one TIP: As mentioned, CEOs while combining multiple ACs together in one TIP, basis their similarities.** Shall specify clearly which ACs are

being clubbed together under one TIP. The analysis template has to be filled very carefully, for all ACs and for each such group (where ACs have been combined under one TIP). However, it may kindly be ensured that urban constituencies and rural constituencies should not be clubbed under the same group.

6. Before filling in the template, the **key to the template annexed may be seen. Only the relevant sections of the template are to be filled, in accordance with the key. The filled-in templates along with the preparation of TIP should reach the ECI no later than 15.07.2023.** For any further questions and clarifications, this office may be contacted.

Yours faithfully,

(SANTOSH KUMAR)
SECRETARY

Annexure

Key to the template

Section A - pre-filled data

Section B – AC specific data - fill only if providing AC level feedback

Analysis Template for Rural Constituencies

Analysis Template for Urban Constituencies

Analysis Template for constituencies which are critical (ACs less than 50% VTR)

Analysis Template for the mega / metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Surat and Pune

Analysis Template (AC level) for Rural ACs

- No. of ACs *(tentative)*:
- No. of Districts/ DEOs:

Section A (Core data: Pre-filled or automatic fetching from ECI database)	
State:	
Parliamentary Constituency:	
No.:	Name:
Assembly Constituency:	
No.:	Name:
Voter Turnout:	
• LS 2014:	
• LS 2019:	
• Most recent Assembly Election:	
Section B (Demographics and other significant data - to be filled by DEO)	
• Data source(s) for filling this section:	
• Gender Ratio (F/M):	
• E/P Ratio:	
• Literacy Rate:	
Age Profile (as percentage of population): • 18-19 years: • 20-40 years: • 40-80 years: • 80+ years:	
• Severely disadvantaged groups which might include, but may not be limited to SC, ST, other socially vulnerable segments, PwD, PVTGs, Third Genders, etc. (please also indicate the overall percentage of such population):	
• Urban population as percentage of total population:	
Polling statistics (LS 2019): • Average turnout of ten lowest polling booths: • Ratio of urban booths to rural booths among the above ten booths: • Percentage Difference between Male and Female Voter Turnout (M-F):	
Section C: Applicable for ACs having more than 30% rural population	
• Did any segment or socio-economic group face difficulty in voting in LS 2019? If so, elaborate:	
• If (M-F) is greater than 5%, specific causes for low female turnout:	
• If female voting in the AC is usually markedly lower than male turnout, any initiatives taken so far for the same:	
Booth remoteness check: • No. of booths in remote or inaccessible areas (> 500 meters from nearest motorable road): • Average turnout in these booths in LS 2019: • No. of booths with no mobile connectivity: • Average turnout in these booths in LS 2019:	

Note on media consumption habits in rural areas of the AC: • Any locally popular TV stations? • Any locally popular AIR stations? • Any locally popular FM stations? • Any community radio stations active in the AC? • Any locally published newspapers with strong readership in the AC? Are any of the above-mentioned media outfits owned by politically active individuals? Specify details.
Note on large employers in the rural areas of the AC: • Any prominent PSU located in the area? • Any prominent mining establishments in the area? • Any agri/ dairy cooperatives/ other cooperatives/ SHGs active in the area? • Any industrial clusters in the region? • Any other large employers in the region, especially those with rural catchment? • Does the region have a large presence of ex-servicemen? • No. of post offices in rural areas of the AC • No. of PSU bank branches and cooperative banking in rural areas of the AC • No. of railway stations in rural areas of the AC • No. of Panchayats in the AC
Note on education, social/cultural organisations present in the region: • Prominent higher education institutions present in the region (colleges/ universities - name and number of students): • Prominent social/cultural organisations active in the rural areas: • Specify any local festivals, fairs, melas, or other traditional mass gathering occasions in the area, especially in the September to February period: • Frequency of ASHA workers visiting households: • Frequency of Anganwadi workers visiting households: • Any other local government representatives/ officials regularly visiting villages (specify frequency): • Any traditional handicrafts, arts, local village or cottage industry that is prevalent in the rural areas of the AC? • Any prominent or popular sportspersons/ musicians/ folk artists/ actors or other influential persons (including local social media influencers) of the region (exclude people of known political leaning):
Agricultural outreach: • Any Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the region? • Details of Mandis in the area • Details of fertilisers and seeds outlets/ shops in the region • Any other agriculture related PSUs or agri extension workers frequently interacting with farmers in the rural areas of the AC?
• Any other important aspect of the rural areas of the AC, which has a potential to positively or negatively impact voter turnout:
• **Booth Level Strategy (SVEEP interventions at booth level):**
• **Based on above information and inputs, what is your plan for improving voter turnout:**

Analysis Template (AC level) for Urban Constituencies

- No. of ACs *(tentative)*:
- No. of Districts/ DEOs:

Section A (Core data: Pre-filled or automatic fetching from ECI database)	
State:	
Parliamentary Constituency:	
No.:	Name:
Assembly Constituency:	
No.:	Name:
Gender Ratio (F/M):	
E/P Ratio:	
Age Profile (as percentage of population): • 18-19 years: • 20-40 years: • 40-80 years: • 80+ years:	
Voter Turnout: • LS 2014: • LS 2019: • Most recent Assembly Election:	
Section B (Demographics and other significant data - to be filled by DEO)	
• Data source(s) for filling this section:	
• Literacy Rate:	
• Severely disadvantaged groups which might include, but may not be limited to SC, ST, other socially vulnerable segments, PwD, PVTGs, Third Genders, etc. (please also indicate the overall percentage of such population):	
• Urban population as percentage of total population:	
Polling statistics (LS 2019): • Average turnout of ten lowest polling booths: • Ratio of urban booths to rural booths among the above ten booths: • Percentage Difference between Male and Female Voter Turnout (M-F):	
Section C: Applicable for ACs having more than 30% urban population - to be filled by DEO	
• Did any segment or socio-economic group face difficulty in voting in LS 2019? If so, elaborate:	
• If (M-F) is greater than 5%, specific causes for low female turnout:	
• If female voting in the AC is usually markedly lower than male turnout, any initiatives taken so far for the same:	
Note on media consumption habits in urban areas of the AC: • Any locally popular TV stations? • Any locally popular AIR stations? • Any locally popular FM stations?	

• Any community radio stations active in the urban areas of the AC? • Any locally published newspapers with strong readership in the AC? Are any of the above media outfits owned by politically active individuals? Specify details.
• Are there any prominent social media influencers active in urban areas of the AC. Specify with details.
Note on large employers in the urban areas of the AC: • Any prominent PSUs located in the area? • Any agri/ dairy cooperatives active in the area? • Any industrial clusters in the town? • Any other large employers in the urban areas? • Does the town have a large presence of ex-servicemen? • No. of post offices in urban areas of the AC • No. of PSU bank branches in urban areas of the AC • No. of railway stations in urban areas of the AC • Any airports located in the urban areas of the AC
Note on education, social/ cultural organisations/ ULBs present in the urban areas of the AC: • Prominent higher education institutions present in the region (colleges/universities - name and number of students): • Prominent social/cultural/women organisations active in the urban areas: • Specify any local festivals, fairs, melas, or other traditional mass gathering occasions in the area, especially in the September to February period: • Any other local government representatives/officials regularly visiting households (specify frequency): • Any traditional handicrafts, arts, local industry that is prevalent in the urban areas of the AC? • Any prominent or popular sportspersons/musicians/folk artists/actors of the region (exclude people of known political leaning):
• Any industry chambers active in the urban areas of the AC?
Note on public transport services: • Metro networks? • Cab services/aggregators? • Local bus networks (public/private)? • Local train systems? • Do the urban areas have significant presence of RWAs, or other residents' associations. Elaborate. • Any prominent market associations in the AC: • Any prominent sports tournaments held in the AC between September and February:
Professional Associations active in the AC: • Doctors: • Lawyers: • Engineers: • Architects: • CAs: • MBAs: • CEOs/ Startups:

• Others: • Details of PSUs and Government Departments present in the urban areas of the AC
Note on prominent landmarks in the urban areas of the AC: • Tallest buildings: • Fields/Maidans: • Main thoroughfares: • Main markets/malls/food-courts: • Airports/Railway Stations/Bus Terminals: • Any other places of daily/weekly or periodic mass congregation: • Any other feature of interest:
• **Booth Level Strategy (SVEEP interventions at booth level):**
• **Based on above information and inputs, what is your plan for improving voter turnout:**

Analysis Template (AC level) for ACs with less than 50% VTR

- No. of ACs *(tentative)*:
- No. of Districts/ DEOs:

Section A (Core data: Pre-filled or automatic fetching from ECI database)	
State:	
Parliamentary Constituency:	
No.:	Name:
Assembly Constituency:	
No.:	Name:
Voter Turnout: • LS 2014: • LS 2019: • Most recent Assembly Election:	
Section B (Demographics and other significant data - to be filled by DEO)	
• Data source(s) for filling this section:	
• Gender Ratio (F/M):	
• E/P Ratio:	
• Literacy Rate:	
Age Profile (as percentage of population): • 18-19 years: • 20-40 years: • 40-80 years: • 80+ years:	
• Severely disadvantaged groups which might include, but may not be limited to SC,ST, other socially vulnerable segments, PwD, PVTGs, Third Genders etc (please also indicate the overall percentage of such population):	
• Urban population as percentage of total population:	
Polling statistics (LS 2019): • Average turnout of ten lowest polling booths: • Ratio of urban booths to rural booths among the above ten booths: • Percentage Difference between Male and Female Voter Turnout (M-F):	
Section C: Applicable for ACs below 50% turnout in LS 2019	
• Did any segment or socio-economic group face difficulty in voting in LS 2019? If so, elaborate:	
• If (M-F) is greater than 5%, specific causes for low female turnout:	
• If female voting in the AC is usually markedly lower than male turnout, any initiatives taken so far for the same:	
Note on media consumption habits in urban areas of the AC: • Any locally popular TV stations? • Any locally popular AIR stations? • Any locally popular FM stations?	

• Any community radio stations active in the urban areas of the AC? • Any locally published newspapers with strong readership in the AC? Are any of the above media outfits owned by politically active individuals? Specify details.
• Are there any prominent social media influencers active in urban areas of the AC. Specify with details.
Note on large employers in the urban areas of the AC: • Any prominent PSUs located in the area? • Any agri/dairy cooperatives active in the area? • Any industrial clusters in the town? • Any other large employers in the urban areas? • Does the town have a large presence of ex-servicemen? • No. of post offices in urban areas of the AC • No. of PSU bank branches in urban areas of the AC • No. of railway stations in urban areas of the AC • Any airports located in the urban areas of the AC
Note on education, social/cultural organisations/ULBs present in the urban areas of the AC: • Prominent higher education institutions present in the region (colleges/universities - name and number of students): • Prominent social/cultural/women organisations active in the urban areas: • Specify any local festivals, fairs, melas, or other traditional mass gathering occasions in the area, especially in the September to February period: • Any other local government representatives/officials regularly visiting households (specify frequency): • Any traditional handicrafts, arts, local industry that is prevalent in the urban areas of the AC? • Any prominent or popular sportspersons/ musicians/ folk artists/ actors of the region (exclude people of known political leaning):
• Any industry chambers active in the urban areas of the AC?
Note on public transport services: • Metro networks? • Cab services/aggregators? • Local bus networks (public/ private)? • Local train systems?
• Do the urban areas have significant presence of RWAs, or other residents' associations. Elaborate.
• Any prominent market associations in the AC:
• Any prominent sports tournaments held in the AC between September and February:
Professional Associations active in the AC: • Doctors: • Lawyers: • Engineers: • Architects: • CAs: • MBAs: • CEOs/ Startups:

• Others:
• Details of PSUs and Government Departments present in the urban areas of the AC
Note on prominent landmarks in the urban areas of the AC: • Tallest buildings: • Fields/Maidans: • Main thoroughfares: • Main markets/malls/food-courts: • Airports/Railway Stations/Bus Terminals: • Any other places of daily/weekly or periodic mass congregation: • Any other feature of interest:
Section D: To be filled for ACs below 50% turnout in LS 2019
Note on health of electoral roll, and measures taken to purify health of electoral roll:
• Recent measures taken to improve health of electoral roll
• Does the AC face significant outward migration? Elaborate.
• Share inputs on the extent (percentage etc) of migrants who come back to vote, if relevant
• Average number of voters per booth (LS 2019):
• Average number of booths per location:
• Note on status of AMF in booths:
• Suggestions on any of the above (Section E):
• **Booth Level Strategy (SVEEP interventions at booth level):**
• **Based on above information and inputs, what is your SVEEP plan for improving voter turnout?**

Analysis Template (AC level) for Mega Cities

- No. of ACs *(tentative)*:
- No. of Districts/ DEOs:

Section A (Core data: Pre-filled or automatic fetching from ECI database)	
State:	
Parliamentary Constituency:	
No.:	Name:
Assembly Constituency:	
No.:	Name:
Gender Ratio (F/M):	
E/P Ratio:	
Age Profile (as percentage of population): • 18-19 years: • 20-40 years: • 40-80 years: • 80+ years:	
Voter Turnout: • LS 2014: • LS 2019: • Most recent Assembly Election:	
Section B: (Demographics and other significant data - to be filled by DEO)	
• Data source(s) for filling this section:	
• Literacy Rate:	
• Severely disadvantaged groups which might include, but may not be limited to SC, ST, other socially vulnerable segments, PwD, PVTGs, Third Genders etc (please also indicate the overall percentage of such population):	
• Urban population as percentage of total population:	
Polling statistics (LS 2019): • Average turnout of ten lowest polling booths: • Ratio of urban booths to rural booths among the above ten booths: • Percentage Difference between Male and Female Voter Turnout (M-F):	
Section C: Applicable for ACs having more than 30% urban population	
• Did any segment or socio-economic group face difficulty in voting in LS 2019? If so, elaborate:	
• If (M-F) is greater than 5%, specific causes for low female turnout:	
• If female voting in the AC is usually markedly lower than male turnout, any initiatives taken so far for the same:	
Note on media consumption habits in urban areas of the AC: • Any locally popular TV stations? • Any locally popular AIR stations? • Any locally popular FM stations?	

• Any community radio stations active in the urban areas of the AC? • Any locally published newspapers with strong readership in the AC? Are any of the above media outfits owned by politically active individuals? Specify details.
• Are there any prominent social media influencers active in urban areas of the AC. Specify with details.
Note on large employers in the urban areas of the AC: • Any prominent PSUs located in the area? • Any agri/dairy cooperatives active in the area? • Any industrial clusters in the town? • Any other large employers in the urban areas? • Does the town have a large presence of ex-servicemen? • No. of post offices in urban areas of the AC • No. of PSU bank branches in urban areas of the AC • No. of railway stations in urban areas of the AC • Any airports located in the urban areas of the AC
Note on education, social/cultural organisations/ULBs present in the urban areas of the AC: • Prominent higher education institutions present in the region (colleges/universities - name and number of students): • Prominent social/cultural/women organisations active in the urban areas: • Specify any local festivals, fairs, melas, or other traditional mass gathering occasions in the area, especially in the September to February period: • Any other local government representatives/officials regularly visiting households (specify frequency): • Any traditional handicrafts, arts, local industry that is prevalent in the urban areas of the AC? • Any prominent or popular sportspersons/musicians/folk artists/actors of the region (exclude people of known political leaning):
• Any industry chambers active in the urban areas of the AC?
Note on public transport services: • Metro networks? • Cab services/aggregators? • Local bus networks (public/private)? • Local train systems?
• Do the urban areas have significant presence of RWAs, or other residents' associations. Elaborate.
• Any prominent market associations in the AC:
• Any prominent sports tournaments held in the AC between September and February:
Professional Associations active in the AC: • Doctors: • Lawyers: • Engineers: • Architects: • CAs: • MBAs: • CEOs/ Startups:

• Others:
• Details of PSUs and Government Departments present in the urban areas of the AC
Note on prominent landmarks in the urban areas of the AC: • Tallest buildings: • Fields/Maidans: • Main thoroughfares: • Main markets/malls/food-courts: • Airports/Railway Stations/Bus Terminals: • Any other places of daily/weekly or periodic mass congregation: • Any other feature of interest:
Section F: Municipal Commissioners/Relevant CEOs of 9 Metro cities to respond: Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Surat, Pune
Commonalities between ACs in mega-cities How many ACs are part of your metropolitan area? Do you believe multiple ACs in your metropolitan area would yield largely similar responses to Sections D and E? If the answer to the above question is yes, kindly enumerate the ACs within your metropolitan area that would be part of a common group, in your view? (Multiple groupings may be indicated, if required)
Are there certain localities in your city, which see daily migration of people from the surrounding hinterland? • Government offices? • PSUs? • Private Office Complexes? • Informal labour pools? In the above cases, details of any SVEEP or voter awareness activities carried out in the recent past?
Identify specific areas of regular youth congregation within the metropolitan area: • Market hubs? • Malls? • Restaurant complexes? • Specific localities in the vicinity of college/university campuses? • Parks/Gardens/Community spaces? • Any other places of daily, weekly or mass congregation?
Identify consumer tech platforms which are popular in your metropolitan area: • E-commerce: Amazon, Flipkart, AJIO etc • Delivery platforms: Swiggy, Zomato etc • Cab aggregators: Uber, Ola, BluSmart • OTT platforms (Netflix, Amazon Prime, Zee5, etc) • Multiplex chains (INOX, PVR) • Event Platforms (Bookmyshow) • Any others (please specify)
• **Booth Level Strategy (SVEEP interventions at booth level):**
• **Based on above information and inputs, what is your SVEEP plan for improving voter turnout?**

INSTRUCTION No. 29

By Mail/Speed Post

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No.491/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-II/Vol.II/SSR/2023 **Dated: 13th June, 2023**

To

Chief Electoral Officers of All States & UTs
(Except Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Telangana)

Subject: Annual Summary Revision of Photo Electoral Rolls with reference to 1st January, 2024 as the qualifying date - regarding

Sir/ Madam,

With reference to the instructions No. 23/2023-ERS (Vol.III) dated 29.05.2023 issued for the upcoming Annual Summary Revision of electoral rolls with reference to 1st January, 2024 as the qualifying date, the **overall objectives are as follows:**

i.) EP ratio on the electoral rolls to match the 18+ population as per census

ii.) Gender ratio on rolls to match the gender ratio as per census

iii.) To increase the percentage of enrolment in the newly eligible 18-19 year age group

iv.) To increase enrolment of Service elector in the last past of electoral roll

v.) To increase enrolment of overseas Indian electors in the roll

vi.) Registration of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the Electoral Roll to match with the census data of 18+ PwDs of each state

vii.) Visible improvement in the enrolment of people from marginalised groups and communities (Inclusion)

viii.) Purification of Electoral Rolls

2. In this regard, I am directed to convey that the Commission has directed you to launch a comprehensive campaign for the universal enrolment of all eligible citizens and de-duplication of entries in the electoral roll by drawing up a plan of action, based on the following:

I. Strategy and Implementation

A. Gaps at Micro-level and Targeted intervention

i.) Analysis at AC and PS level - to detect gaps in enrolment

ii.) Door to Door survey by BLOs & distribution of awareness materials

iii.) Identification of groups, communities with lower representation at AC/ PS level

iv.) Special Enrolment camps of all eligible voters through music, street plays, etc. and through Social Media

v.) Wide circulation of SSR Creatives through Social Media (Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp, etc.)

vi.) Displays of SSR related videos at SSR camps, CEO & DEO offices

vii.) Display of posters/ creatives on Enrolment, Voting, etc.

viii.) Extensive use of social media, FM Radio, Community Radio, Web Radio, DDK local cable TV and AIR

ix.) Advertisements on CEO & DEO websites, print media & other platform

x.) Utilisation of Electoral Literacy Clubs at Schools, College Level, Community Level, Corporate levels, etc.

xi.) Active participation of members of Voter Awareness Forums

xii.) Holding of regular press meets

xiii.) Popularization of Voter Helpline Mobile App for online filling of application along with www.voterportaleci.gov.in and www.nvsp.in

B. Youth enrolment (including newly eligible)

i.) Utilisation of Electoral Literacy Clubs at Schools, College Level, Community Level, Corporate Levels, etc.

ii.) Enrolment drive in colleges/ campuses

iii.) Higher involvement of Nodal officers from Campuses in enrolment drive

iv.) Special drive for enrolment of non-student youth in this age-group

v.) Coordinate with NSS and NYKS for reaching out to youth widely

vi.) Make Youth Voter Festival' a part of the Calendar ahead of summary revision

vii.) Engaging State & District Icons to motivate & aim for 100% coverage of registration of young & future voters.

viii.) Forging of widened Partnership, stakeholder-ship and collaboration with prominent youth organizations, having strong peer group influence in educational institutions, along with robust digital presence for organizing online digital Electoral Literacy Clubs through various Social Media Platforms

ix.) Identification of dynamic and robust organizations, creative communities for deploying creative messaging on E2E process (Enrolment to Elections)

x.) Various online programmes such as ELC Boot Camp, Talk with Icons, Creatives and various online competitions may be organized in collaboration with the youth organizations to engage young and future voters through online mode

xi.) Organizing finales of all Competitions conducted at the District Level to enhance, amplify & widen visibility for all cumulative electoral campaign and targeted messaging

xii.) State/ District Level Online Quiz competitions shall be organized

C. Gender Gap

i.) Co-opting media and field formations to enrol women

ii.) Focused attention for enrolment of housewives and women engaged as labour in cities in factories, small industrial establishments, commercial establishments, textile mills etc.

iii.) Special camps for enrolment of women

iv.) Appointment of Women Icons to motivate & aim for 100% coverage of registration of Women voters

v.) Special advertisements targeting Women Voters

D. Persons with Disabilities

i.) Maintain information in the BLO register on their disability to help in facilitation and facilitate their registration in the electoral roll

ii.) Special camp and campaign may be taken up to register PwDs and such camps widely publicised

iii.) Identify Community Radio networks or magazines, channels, etc for PWDs to partner. Use programmes on AIR, DD and private radio and Cable TV to reach out to PwDs

iv.) Engaging State &District Disability Icons to motivate & aim for 100% coverage of registration of PwDs voters

v.) Collaboration with Commissioner of Disabilities for awareness & registration Camps of PwDs

vi.) Special disability oriented programmes (Blind football, wheel chair basketball, visually impaired music band etc) with its proper coverage through various media platforms.

E. Inclusion

i.) Identify marginal groups and segments and their details within the Constituency

ii.) Design educational material for identified segments or groups like Migrant labourers, Sex workers, Third Gender. Homeless, Nomads etc. Denotified, Nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes can be enrolled in the electoral roll only when they settle down at some particular place and satisfy the condition of ordinary residence.

iii.) Identify credible partners to reach out to the identified groups and segments

iv.) Outreach with help of partners with special registration camps

v.) Design special awareness material for Tribal Communities in the region is their dialect

vi.) Survey by BLOs for Migrant labourers, Sex workers, Third Gender, Homeless, Nomads etc

vii.) Leveraging of tribal festivals

viii.) Engaging with community leaders from these special category groups

ix.) Collaboration with Govt. departments & ministries

F. Service Electors

i.) Special awareness and registration camps for Defence personnel disseminating information on enrolment as General or Service Voter

ii.) Training Nodal Officers from defence as Resource Persons for dissemination of information on the entire process of registration and voting (explain FAQs & reasons for rejection of Postal ballots)

iii.) Popularisation of http://servicevoter.nic.in/ for registration

iv.) Special campaign for wives of service personnel

v.) Tie up with local AIR and DD on their special broadcasts for Defence personnel to carry message on registration of service personnel; CEO can also have interactive sessions in these programmes

vi.) Special Camps at Cantonment areas

vii.) Awareness Posters & Hoarding in Cantonment areas

viii.) Orienting of Nodal Officer from the Armed forces by DEO

ix.) Ad Plug ins on the websites of Defence Personnel

G. Overseas Indians

i.) Focus on families having NRIs and promote registration of NRIs among them

ii.) Popularise NVSP link for online registration of NRIs

iii.) BLOs to share form 6A with families having a member who is NRI and familiarize them with NVSP portal

iv.) Distribution of awareness materials by BLOs to families having NRIs

v.) Distribution of guidelines for filling up of Form 6A to families having NRIs

vi.) Wide Publicity at the Airports

vii.) Collaboration with Ministry of External affairs & Other Embassies.

III. Multi-Media Campaign

Error free roll, surrender of multiple entries and voter portal & App has to be widely publicized. Suitable multi-media content may be created to support the drive and for wide dissemination of information and publicity of dates of registration drive adequate content may be created on motivational aspects and disseminated to Districts for wider reach. Ready-made content from the SVEEP portal and also from Voter Education Channel, Hello Voter Programme and from CEO's own archives may be used after due scrutiny of their local relevance and applicability

i.) Advertisements of SSR related videos in theatres/ OTT platforms. Advertisements should be voter service centric and not just an administrative exercise of announcement

ii.) Advertisement of SSR creatives in local dailies/ local cable and online news channels

iii.) Campaign shall appeal to all target audience

iv.) Campaign Creatives shared by the Commission shall be translated in vernacular language.

v.) QR code to download Voter Helpline App shall be included in all multimedia creatives

vi.) Hoardings & posters on schedule of SSR in Public places and govt offices.

vii.) Wide circulation of SSR Creatives through Social Media (facebook, twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Whatsapp, etc.)

viii.) FAQs videos to be widely circulated

ix.) Use of Web Radio & Community Radio

x.) Explore new media vehicles to enhance reach of the campaign.

Engagement with Icons: Video Bytes by State & District Icons shall be used on social media. Messages on various themes such as registration, checking name in the voter's list, Facilities of Voter Helpline App.

IV. Developing Partnerships: To carry forward the SVEEP programme in relation to registration, partnerships may be strengthened with the following:

i.) State Govt Departments

ii.) Departments of Ministry of I&B such as Press Information Bureau, Bureau of Outreach and Communication, Public Broadcaster, AIR and DD

iii.) Railways

iv.) Shopping Malls

v.) Airport Authority of India

vi.) Private Media - TV Channels, FM Channels, Newspapers

vii.) Educational Institutions

viii.) BSNL/ MTNL

ix.) Corporate Federations

x.) Transport Department

xi.) PSUs like Indian Oil Bharat Petroleum

xii.) Individuals like celebrities, artists etc

V. Inputs for Social Media Campaign for SSR activity: The CEOs can effectively utilise the social media platforms to further enhance electors engagement during the SSR activity. SSR should be carried out in a campaign mode.

- CEO/ DEOs should proactively post about the various important dates and information of the SSR program on CEOs social media platforms.
- Innovative social media campaigns may be organized like

  i.) **Selfie campaigns on social media**

  ii.) Selfie with the BLO: Selfie at the Voter Facilitation Centre'

  iii.) An engaging hashtag campaign with a photo/ small video of the user with a hashtag like **'Tag Your Friend Along'** may also interest the first-time voters to go register and encourage their friends to register as well during the revision period.

  iv.) Online competitions like **'5-minute challenge'** asking voters to submit their forms online or using voter helpline app in less than 5 minutes.

    - CEOs/ DEOS may also use **crowdsourcing** for getting important creatives for the SSR promotion by organizing online competitions on social media and involving local media/ journalism college students.
    - Information related to **Voter Helpline App** along with the downloading links may be shared on social media platforms for wider outreach and awareness.
    - CEOs/ DEOs may use the following hashtags while sharing any posts related to SSR on social media #SSR #Nothing Like Voting #I Vote for Sure
    - SVEEP Icons motivating videos to be used to promote SSR activity and motivate people for registration or any corrections.

VI. CEOs may ensure that an Addl/ Jt. CEO exclusively for SVEEP and a competent nodal officer in each district is in position as per directions given by the Commission from time to time. These directions are suggestive and CEOs/ DEOs may take up initiatives locally as required to meet the objectives of Special Summary Revision.

VII. Action as directed above may be taken up on a most immediate basis for the Special Summary revision. A reporting format for Special Summary Revision (SSR) is attached herewith which may be furnished to the Commission.

This issue with the approval of the competent authority.

Yours Sincerely,

(SANTOSH KUMAR)
SECRETARY

Enclosed: As above

Copy to :

1. PSO to Hon'ble CEC
2. PSO to Hon'ble EC (ACP)
3. PSO to Hon'ble EC (AG)
4. PS to DEC (MKS)
5. ER Division
6. South Section - I
7. West Section – I
8. North Section - I

Reporting Format for Special Summary Revision (SSR)

(Report to be sent by the CEOs to SVEEP Division after the conclusion of activity

Name of the State / UT: **Date of Reporting :**

1.	Identification of low EP Ratio/ Gender Ratio PS done. If yes numbers identified	
2.	Any steps taken to identify person with disability (PWDs) electors	
3.	Any Organisation/ Agencies partnered with for Summary Revision (Pl. specify)	
4.	Media in which publicity given to the following:	
	a. schedule of Summary Revision & date of eligibility for enrolment (1st January, 2024) b. location of display of draft Roll including its availability on CEO's website c. Types of Forms for enrolment d. Details of BLO/Know your BLO	(Specify whether given in newspaper, website, radio, TV, or posters/ pamphlets) (Detail thereof)
5.	Total No of Media insertions at State & UT level a. In print (newspapers) b. In TV c. In Radio d. Any other media (pl specify)	
6.	Total no of mobilization/ special activities in the State & UT	
7.	Special drives carried all for Youth Women PwD Service Electors Inclusivity Overseas Indians	
8.	No of camps in the State & UT	Nos
	(Pl specify no. and dates)	Dates
9.	How was the day and location of camp publicised a) In print media b) Electronic media c) Interpersonal (door-door, mike announcement, prabhat pheri, etc.) d) Any other (pl specify)	 Yes/ No Yes/ No Yes/ No
10.	Were any camps held specially for any particular group/segment (e.g. service voters, NRIs, or any other group) if yes pl specify	
11.	Details of Multi-Media Campaign	
12.	The most innovative activities and interventions (pl specify)	

Signature of CEO:_____

INSTRUCTION No. 30

By Mail/Speed Post

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 491/SVEEP/63/2013 (ICON) **Dated: 22nd August, 2013**

To

The Chief Electoral Officers
of All States and UTs

Sub: Appointment of regional / State ICON(s) / Brand Ambassadors for promotion of Voters' Participation under SVEEP programme – Reg

Sir/ Madam,

In continuation of Commission's letter no. 491/SVEEP/2013/KT (EGS), dated 3rd June, 2013, in the above said subject, I am directed to forward herewith a sample copy of letter to be communicated from Chief Electoral Officer of the State concerned to the selected renowned personality being considered as State ICON/Brand Ambassador, before appointment as State ICON. A copy of sample letter from CEO to the proposed ICON before appointment as State ICON, is enclosed herewith which may be used in all such future appointment.

Yours faithfully,

(Suman Kumar Das)
Under Secretary

(Sample letter from CEO to the selected renowned personality being considered as

State ICON)

To

Sh./Smt.---------

Subject: Engagement of regional / State ICON(s) / Brand Ambassadors for promotion of Voters' Participation under SVEEP programme –regarding

Sir/Madam,

We deeply appreciate your consent to be ECI's State Icon for promotion of voters' participation under SVEEP programme. I request you to kindly provide us with a declaration in the enclosed format (Annexure-I) for the sake of harmonious working together. This is also to reiterate that your association as State Icon of Election Commission for awareness campaign would be on a completely voluntary and non-commercial basis, which the ECI appreciates.

Yours faithfully,

(Name)

Chief Electoral Officer,------

INSTRUCTION No. 31

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110 001

No. 491/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-I/NVD/2022 **Dated: 10th January, 2023**

To,

The Chief Electoral Officers of
all States & UTs

Sub: - National Voters' Day (25th January) 2023 - reg.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to state that the 13th National Voters' Day shall be celebrated across the country at State, District and Booth level on 25th January 2023. The Theme for the 13th NVD is ***'Nothing like voting, I vote for sure.'*** You are requested to steer the NVD celebrations with wide publicity on the above mentioned theme.

2. The upcoming event of NVD shall also **mark the launch of "Main Bharat Hoon" song. The function of NVD at States/Districts/Booth Level shall be organized preferably at or after 1:00 PM, so that "Main Bharat Hoon" song can be played during the event**.

3. The NVD celebrations in the State, as in the past, shall include the following components in addition to already existing plan at the CEO and the DEO level. The functions around NVD should be celebrated keeping in mind the COVID appropriate behaviour and guidelines in place at or after 1:00 P.M, on that day.

Comprehensive Communication plan:

- Various events/ programs across the state shall be organisedfocusing on the above mentioned theme. Further a comprehensive communication plan shall be developed by issuing necessary Print, TV, Radio advertisements, social media campaigns, field programs and interpersonal communication (as per Covid norms), webinars/ seminars etc.
- Propagation of NVD theme through various Government schemes and programs.
- The NVD theme & related messages in the form of posters and banners should be prominently displayed in the offices of the CEO, DEO, ERO and the VFCs.
- A Print Advertisement shall be brought out on 25th January highlighting the theme in newspapers other than where ECI advertisement shall be published (details regarding ECI advertisement shall be shared subsequently).

Engagement with state/ district Icons:

- The State/ District Icons may be engaged (through recording of audio-video messages) to spread awareness about the Commission's initiatives and widely publishing the current theme 'Nothing like voting, I vote for sure.'
- All States/UTs should take appropriate efforts to nominate inspiring and nonpartisan personalities from all walks of life to be the Election Icon. Persons with disabilities, senior citizens, transgender and personalities from other marginalized sections shall be encouraged.

Partnership and Collaborations:

- The CEOs/ DEOs shall ensure partnerships and collaborations with various Government departments such as banks, Post offices, Railways, Panchayati Raj institutions, Civil Bodies etc.
- The Corporate bodies, Civil Society Organisations and others may be engaged with, for organising various events like competitions (essay, debate etc), webinars etc in the run upto the NVD.

Also various departments/ organisations/ bodies may be encouraged to administer NVD pledge on the National Voters' Day, and the same may be uploaded on their social media handles/ website using hashtags.

Social media engagement activities:

- CEO/ DEO office may engage with various social media agencies, to create and develop the creative content for the NVD and get it uploaded on their respective social media handles.
- All the activities, by various departments/ organisations etc. to be uploaded on their respective social media handles.
- The hashtag#NVD2023, #MainBharatHoon, #VoteDeneJayenge, #NothingLikeVoting, #Bridging TheVotingGap, #MyVoteMyPower could be used while uploading the content on the social media accounts.

1. **Key Activities:** All SVEEP activities related to NVD must be conducted as per COVID appropriate behaviour and guidelines/norms in place.

   a) Activities at Booth Level:

   i. The Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to organise an event at each polling station area and shall felicitate newly registered voters appropriately, also hand over the EPIC to new electors.

   ii. Video and other creatives to be shared extensively with all the households/ participants through WhatsApp groups and other media. Further other awareness films/ material as prepared by State or District on Postal Ballot, Assured Minimum facilities at Polling Stations, EVM/VVPAT, Voter Helpline App, Ethical Voting etc. can also be shown at the ceremony, in local languages. Please note that creatives are to be made available in accessible formats, in line with the current theme of NVD to make the information available to all stakeholders.

   iii. Further NVD pledge to be administered to all the people present during the event, Further the copy of the pledge also to be circulated over Whatsapp groups.

   iv. DEO may provide the logistics required for the brief ceremony in each polling station area.

   b) Activities at District HQs:

   i. The DEO shall organise the NVD function, at the District headquarters in association with various institutions/ organisations such as Panchayat Raj institutions, Academic institutions, Civil Society groups, organisations of youth volunteers like NSS, NCC, Scouts & Guides, NYKS, media etc.

   ii. Newly registered voters shall be facilitated by handing over the EPIC Card during NVD function.

iii. Further NVD pledge to be administered to all the people present during the event. Also the pledge to be circulated over WhatsApp groups.

iv. Awareness films on Postal Ballot facility, Assured Minimum Facilities, EVM VVPAT, Assured Minimum facilities at Polling Stations, EVM/VVPAT, Voter Helpline App, Ethical Voting etc. in local language shall be shown. Creatives to be made available in accessible formats, in line with the current theme of NVD to make the information available to all stakeholders.

v. These material to be shared through WhatsApp group of various stakeholders.

c) Activities at State HQs:

i. CEO organizes NVD function at the State capital, in association with Media, Civil Society, Volunteer Groups, State Administration, State Election Commission & Corporates etc.

ii. Awareness films on Postal Ballot facility, Assured Minimum Facilities, EVM VVPAT, Assured Minimum facilities at Polling Stations, EVM/VVPAT, Voter Helpline App, Ethical Voting etc. in local language shall be shown and distributed over WhatsApp groups.

iii. Newly registered voters shall be felicitated by handing over the EPIC Card during NVD function.

iv. Further NVD pledge to be administered to all the people present during the event (as per Covid norms). E-Pledge facility may be provided on CEO website with downloadable certificate sharable on social media by the citizens.

v. Sign Language Interpreters to be deployed during the function in accordance with the present theme. The venue of the NVD functions to be made accessible as far as possible.

vi. Necessary advertisement in print / electronic media to be issued, along with hoardings and banners across different locations across the state.

vii. Deployment of dedicated staff at Block, Sub-division and District levels may be done to effectively undertake NVD related activities as directed. BLOs shall be trained about their role for NVD activities by the EROs/AEROs, as directed.

As the theme of the NVD, this year, is 'Nothing like voting, I vote for sure', it is expected that events would be organised by involvingPwDs, Women, Senior citizens and Vulnerable sections of the society.

4. With reference to the launch of **'Main Bharat Hoon'** song, while uploading the updates about below mentioned activities, the hashtag#NVD2023, #MainBharatHoon, #VoteDeneJayenge could be used. Further the song shall be made available on ECI SVEEP website on the day of NVD 2023 at 1:00P.M.

Following directions may be noted with regard to the launch of **'Main Bharat Hoon'** song :

<u>Activities at State Head Quarters:</u>

- A link for the song along will be shared with the CEOs in due course. The same should be widely disseminated with all DEOs, on all social media handles, WhatsApp groups, website etc.

- Further, a logo/graphic creative pertaining to the song will be shared in due course. The same should preferably appear/flash over all government websites of the State.
- CEOs are requested to encourage the respective State icons to share/post about the song after its launch by ECI, on all of their social media handles along with designated hashtags and taglines.

Activities at District Quarters:

- A link for the song should be widely disseminated on all social media handles, WhatsApp groups, websites of the DEOs.
- As feasible, the DEOs may reach out to district cinema halls/theatres so that the 'Main Bharat Hoon' song is also played as a part of public service messaging, before the screening of the movies or during the interval.
- As feasible, the DEOs may reach out to local malls & restaurants so that the 'Main Bharat Hoon' song is also played as a part of public service messaging.
- DEOs are requested to encourage the respective District icons to share/post about the song on all of their social media handles along with designated hashtags and taglines.

Activities at Booth level:

- The Hindi as well as the regional version of the song shall be played at all Polling stations.
- BLOs to ensure that the link of the song is shared to maximum households vide respective WhatsApp groups.
- The song should also be disseminated at all ELCs, schools and colleges etc

The preparations for the NVD may be closely monitored by the office of the CEO/DEOs. All COVID protocols issued by statutory authorities must be strictly followed.

Yours Sincerely,

Encl: NVD Pledge

(SANTOSH KUMAR)
SECRETARY

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Pledge For National Voters' Day, 25th January 2024

मतदाताओं द्वारा ली जाने वाली शपथ

"हम, भारत के नागरिक, लोकतंत्र में अपनी पूर्ण आस्था रखते हुए यह शपथ लेते हैं कि हम अपने देश की लोकतांत्रिक परम्पराओं की मर्यादा को बनाए रखेंगे तथा स्वतंत्र, निष्पक्ष एवं शांतिपूर्ण निर्वाचन की गरिमा को अक्षुण्ण रखते हुए, निर्भीक होकर, धर्म, वर्ग, जाति, समुदाय, भाषा अथवा अन्य किसी भी प्रलोभन से प्रभावित हुए बिना सभी निर्वाचनों में अपने मताधिकार का प्रयोग करेंगें"।

Voters' Pledge

"We, the citizens of India, having abiding faith in democracy, hereby pledge to uphold the democratic traditions of our country and the dignity of free, fair and peaceful elections, and to vote in every election fearlessly and without being influenced by considerations of religion, race, caste, community, language or any inducement".

INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 32

By E-Mail/Speed Post

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 590/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-III/Awards/2023 **Dated: 21st September, 2023**

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
All States/ UTs

Subject: Best Electoral Practices Award, 2023 - regarding

Sir/ Madam,

With reference to the subject cited above, I am directed to convey that the Commission has decided to give away the following Awards for the year, 2023:-

A. **Best Electoral Practice Awards.**

i.) The **General Category Award** shall be presented to the best performing District Election Officers (DEOs)/ Superintendents of Police (SPs) in the area of election management. The award would carry a plaque and a citation.

ii.) **Special Award(S)** will be presented to officers, other than DEOs/SPs. The award would carry a plaque and a citation.

iii.) **Best performing State** would be given to the State displaying best overall performance in various areas of election management. The Award would carry a plaque and a citation and would be received by the Chief Electoral Officer of the State/ UT.

B. **CSO Award for the best campaign on Voter Education and Awareness.** Award is given away to institutions, Organizations or Individuals for promoting electoral participation through effective and Innovative programmes or projects including accessible elections. The scheme and criteria of the Award is enclosed at Annexure 'A'.

C. **Award to Govt. Department/Agency/PSU for enhancing Electoral Participation.** This Award is to be given away for enhancing Electoral Participation including accessible elections. The Award would carry a plaque and a citation. The scheme and criteria of the Award is enclosed at Annexure 'B'.

D. **Annual State Awards for Best Electoral Practices.** Annual State Awards for Best Electoral Practices was instituted in year 2014 to recognize the efforts and contribution of the Officers, and to commend and encourage individual and team accomplishments in diverse fields of election management. The guidelines and framework for this award is enclosed at Annexure 'C'.

2. **Nominations:** The period of achievements / significant contributions for the said awards of all categories would be considered from **January, 2023**. The CEOs shall send the nominations with recommendations for Awards in the enclosed format along with the enclosures. **All the nominations shall have the**

signature of concerned CEOs. The nomination shall not be accepted without the signature of CEO. If possible all the nominations should reach in spiral binding form in a set of 1or 2. The nominations shall be as follows:

2.1 For **General Category Award**, CEOs shall nominate officers based on outstanding performance in election management in any one of the following:

i.) Election Management

ii.) Voter's Education and Electoral Participation

iii.) IT Initiatives

iv.) Security Management

v.) Electoral Roll Management

vi.) Innovative Measures

vii.) Accessible Elections

viii.) Electoral Literacy Clubs

2.1.1 There may be upto 4 nominations (3DEOs+1SP) from States with more than 300 ACs, upto 3 nominations (2 DEOs+1SP) from States between 200-300 ACs, upto 2 nominations (1 DEO +1 SP) each from States/UTs with less than 200 ACs.

2.2 For **Special Award**, CEOs may nominate officers other than DEOs/SPs covering areas as given in Para 2.1 above from among all officers/staff of all categories (including those from CEOs office).

2.2.1 For the special award, 3 officers may be nominated from States with more than 300 ACs, 2 from States between 200-300 ACs, 1 from States less than 200 ACs.

2.2.2 However, the **Election gone States/UTs** can send nomination as per scheme mentioned below:-

Indicators	**Specified as above**		**Allowed for Election Gone States**	
	General Category Award (no. of nominations)	**Special Award** (no. of nominations)	**General Category Award** (no. of nominations	**Special Award** (no. of nominations)
ACs>300	4 (3DEOs+1SP)	3	6	5
ACS 200-300	3(2DEOS+1SP)	2	5	4
ACs<200	2(1DEO+1SP)	1	4	3

The nominations may be sent as specified in above table. The restriction with regard to number of nominations sent from State/UT, may strictly be adhered to.

2.3 **Best performing State** may be given to the State displaying best overall performance in all the following areas:

i.) Election Management

ii.) Voter's Education and Electoral Participation

iii.) IT Initiatives

iv.) Security Management

v.) Electoral Roll Management

vi.) Innovative Measures

vii.) Accessible Elections

viii.) Electoral Literacy Clubs

2.4 For CSO Award and Award to Govt. Deptt. / Agency / PSU, CEOs may ensure that the entries are in prescribed format and **duly recommended by the Chief Electoral Officer**.

3. **Selection:** The Selection Committee may decide the winners in the following manner:

3.1 The nominations for the Best Electoral Practices Award **(General Award and Special Award)** may be scrutinized and names shortlisted. The shortlisted candidates may be required to give a presentation to the Committee. The selected candidates may be recommended to the Commission for the Awards. Commission may, if it so wishes, review the presentations.

3.2 For the Best performing State, the Selection Committee may select the winner based on various performance indicators and recommend to Commission. Commission may, if it so wishes, ask for a presentation.

3.3 The indicators (not exhaustive) for assessing the performance of the State shall be as follows:

(i) Increase in the EP Ratio

(ii) Increase in Gender ratio on rolls

(iii) Increase in 18-19 years registration

(iv) Increase in registration of PwD, NRI, excluded class, etc.

(v) EPIC/PER Coverage, EPIC distributed in NVD

(vi) Partnership building

(vii) Conduct of Elections-peaceful and incident free polls

(viii) Voter turnout –Overall and in low turnout and vulnerable PS

(ix) Voter Turnout – meeting gaps in gender, urban and youth participation

(x) Innovation in process / procedure

(xi) Innovation in the use of technology

(xii) Accessible Elections

(xiii) Electoral Literacy Clubs

(xiv) Additional indicators (may be stated)

3.4 For the CSO Award and Award to Govt. Deptt/Agencies/ PSUs shortlisted agencies may be invited for giving presentation to the Committee.

4. **Last Date:**

4.1 The nominations in the prescribed format, for the Best Electoral Practices Awards, CSO Award and Award to Govt. Department/ Agency may be sent to the Commission **latest by 30th November, 2023**.

4.2 For the Annual State awards, the names of selected Award winners may be sent to the Commission for approval **latest by 15th December, 2023**.

The Awards shall be given on National Voters' Day, those at Para **1'A', 'B', &'C' at** the National function of **NVD, 2024 in New Delhi** and those at Para **1'D' at the state function of NVD**.

All official are requested to forward their application through proper channel.

Further, a due publicity should be given such that general public are encouraged to recommend Officers/ Officials who have worked tremendously for the enhancement of electoral participation.

Yours faithfully,

(LOVE KUSH YADAV)
UNDER SECRETARY

Encl: As above

Copy to:

All Ministries/ Departments of Gov. of India

Copy for information:-

1. PSO to CEC
2. PSO to EC (ACP)
3. Sr. PPS/PPS/PS to Sr DECs/DECs
4. All Zonal Sections

Nomination Form for Best Electoral Practices Awards

(Format)

I. Nomination for : General/ Special Award (Tick one)

II. Name of the Officer :

III. Designation/ Post during the period of consideration:

IV. Present Designation and Post :

V. Nominated for (Tick any one) :

(i) Election Management

(ii) Voter's Education and Electoral Participation

(iii) IT Initiatives

(iv) Security Management

(v) Electoral Roll Management

(vi) Innovative Measures

(vii) Accessible Elections

(ix) Electoral Literacy Clubs

VI. **Summary of Achievement/Work -** The name of the achievement and a summary of the nomination. Describe the achievement/work, key features and the outcomes/effectiveness. (No more than 100 words)

VII. **Description of Achievement/Work -** Use plain language to describe the achievement/work of the nominee (No more than 1000 words)

VIII. Enclosures :

1. ……

2. ……

IX. Recommendation of the CEO (upto 100 words) -

……..

Signature

…….....

(Name of CEO)

……

(Name of the State/ UT)

Nomination Form for Best Performing State

(Format)

I. Name of the State :

II. Relevant Indicators (Comparative data for the period in consideration) :

(from list given at point 3.3 of the circular No 590/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-III/Awards/2023, dated ____ September, 2023)

III. Summary of Achievement / Work-Use plan language to describe the achievement / work in the State (Note more than 1000 words)

IV. Enclosures :

i. ……

ii ……

iii ……

V. Recommendation of the CEO (upto 100 words) -

……

Signature

……..

(Name of CEO)

CEO of

……

(Name of the State/ UT)

Annexure 'A'

CSO AWARD FOR BEST CAMPAIGN ON VOTERS' EDUCATION & AWARENESS

A. Who is eligible?

Institutions, organizations or individuals from among CSOs promoting electoral participation through effective and innovative programmes or projects.

B. How to apply?

The submission of nominations shall be made to **Secretary (SVEEP), ECI** by the CEOs, as well as by Civil Society Organizations maintaining official partnerships with CEOs/DEOs. Each nomination must be accompanied by a written recommendation by CEO/DEO. A self-nomination cannot be considered.

C. Selection process

The selection of prize winners will be made by a Jury appointed by ECI. The Prize shall be awarded at the official ceremony on National Voters' Day (25th January).

The following specific selection criteria will be applied to candidatures:

4. The ability, as demonstrated in the proposal narrative, **to improve electoral participatory practices**.

5. The project must have made an outstanding and tangible contribution to improving electoral participation and developing awareness on electoral process. Possible impacts to be considered but are not limited to:

    a. Increased stakeholder engagement in elections.

    b. Increase of community awareness on registration and voting process;

    c. Increase of community understanding of informed and ethical voting;

    d. Assisting CEO / DEO on Accessibility.

6. The best practice has been successful in developing awareness and action on electoral process particularly among:

    a. Women

    b. People with low levels of literacy

    c. Persons with disabilities

    d. Youth

    e. Urban Populace

    f. Tribal

    g. Specific groups/communities

Please provide the information in the Application form:

AWARD FOR CSO

Application Form

1. BASIC INFORMATION

i. Name of implementing organization:

ii. Chief executive officer of the organization:

iii. Type of Organization: National NGO ■ International NGO[1] ■ Other National Institution ■

iv. Other (Local branch of National NGO, Private body, Trade Union, Religious mission, etc.). ■ Please specify :

v. Operating in: All India ■ State ■ District ■ Community ■ Other ■ Please specify:

2. CONTACT DETAILS

i. Name of contact person:

ii. Job title (or position):

iii. Full Address:

iv. Telephone/Fax:

v. Web site, if any:

vi. E Mail:

3. ORGANIZATION

Describe the organization, its history, its aims and mandate, its governance structure, any other relevant information (maximum 250 words):

4. PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Describe the vision and rationale of the programme/project: the main goal and the particular problem/s it seeks to address (maximum 250 words):

5. THEMATIC AREAS (tick those that apply)

i. Electoral participation and Gender ■

ii. Weaker Section ■

iii. Special Communities/Groups ■

iv. Fighting Urban Apathy ■

v. Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities ■

vi. Youth and Elections ■

vii. Other ■ please specify:

6. PROGRAMME DETAILS

[1]Only if they are represented in India as organisation and their Indian chapter only is eligible.

A. Specific objectives

List and explain the specific objectives of the programme/project (150 words):

B. Outreach

i. Main target group(s):

ii. Number of locations where the programme is running for the specific theme:

iii. Number of people reached annually (average) on the theme :

iv. Number of participants reached in the year of consideration on the theme:

C. Programme delivery

Structure and mechanism

i. How are the programmes organized? Please describe:

ii. What kind communication or behavioural change methodology is applied? Please describe:

iii. What kind of material is being used?

iv. What are the main topics covered? Please describe:

v. How and by whom is the material developed?

Language(s) of instruction

i. Official language ■

ii. Mother tongue ■

iii. Other:

D. Resources

What resources were used and how were they mobilized?

E. Partners

Provide full list:

i Government:

ii List contributions from the private sector and/or NGOs:

iii Other partnerships (please specify):

7. Programme Results

List and describe the achievements of the programme/project (minimum 150 words)

8. Innovative Features

List and describe the innovative features of the programme/project (max 150 words):

9. Additional Information

List any sources from which information regarding the programme/project is available:

10. Please list here documents in the following categories that will accompany this application

i Documents, films, audio visual material available about programme:

ii Published research studies / reports available about the programme:

iii Internal or external evaluations of the programme, reports on impact assessments:

11. Recommendation by District Election Officer / Chief Electoral Officer:

Annexure 'B'

AWARD TO GOVT. DEPARTMENT/ AGENCY/ PSU FOR ENHANCING ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

A. Who is eligible?

Institutions, organizations or departments from among States/UTs promoting electoral participation through effective and innovative programmes or projects.

B. How to apply?

The submission of nominations shall be made to ***Secretary (SVEEP), ECI*** by the CEOs, as well as by Govt. Departments maintaining official partnerships with CEOs/DEOs. Each nomination must be accompanied by a written recommendation by CEO.

C. Selection process

The selection of prize winners will be made by a Jury appointed by ECI. The Prize shall be awarded at the official ceremony on National Voters' Day (25th January).

The following specific selection criteria may be applied to candidatures:

1. The ability, as demonstrated in the proposal narrative, **to improve electoral participatory practices**.
2. The project may have made an outstanding and tangible contribution to improving electoral participation and **developing awareness** on electoral process. Possible impacts to be considered include but are not limited to:
    a. Increased stakeholder engagement in elections;
    b. Increase of community awareness on registration and voting process;
    c. Increase of community understanding of informed and ethical voting;
    d. Assisting CEO/DEO on Accessibility.
3. The best practice has been successful in developing awareness and action on electoral process among particularly:
    a. Women
    b. Migrant Labours
    c. Excluded Classes
    d. People with low levels of literacy
    e. Persons with disabilities
    f. Youth
    g. Urban Populace
    h. Tribal
    i. Specific groups / Communities

Please provide the information in the Application form:

Award to Best Govt. Department/ Agency/PSU for Enhancing Electoral Participation

Application Form

1. BASIC INFORMATION

i. Name of department:

ii. Name of Head Office:

iii. Name & address of concerned Ministry:

iv. Operating in : All India ■ State ■ District ■ Community ■ Other ■ Please specify.

2. CONTACT DETAILS

i. Name of contact person:

ii. Designation:

iii. Full Address:

iv. Telephone/Fax:

v. Web site, if any:

vi. E- Mail:

3. SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE / INTERVENTION

(Maximum150 words):

4. DETAILS OF THE INITIATIVE / INTERVENTION

a. Specific objectives

List and explain the specific objectives of the initiative/intervention:

b. Outreach

Main target group(s):

i Women & Girls ■

ii Adults (18 +) ■

iii Youth in educational institutions ■

iv Urban Population ■

v Tribals ■

vi Persons with Disabilities ■

vii Minority groups ■

viii Employee of the Deptt ■

ix Other, please specify

c. Implementation (Details of the Intervention – 250 words)

d. Partners

Provide full list:

i Government:

ii Private sector and/or NGOs:

iii Other partnerships (please specify):

5. Results

List and describe the achievements of the initiative (minimum 150 words)

6. Recommendation by the Chief Electoral Officer

Annexure 'C'

State/UT Awards for Best Electoral Practices

(Framework)

Annual State awards for Best Electoral Practices shall be instituted by all States/UTs from 2014 to recognize the efforts and contribution of the Officers, and to communed and encourage individual and team accomplishments in diverse fields of election management. The broad framework of the awards is as follows:

1. STATE AWARDS

1.1 The Awards shall be presented to the performing District Election Officers (DEOs) (other than National Award winners), ERO/AERO and BLO of the State. The awards may carry cash component. The awards would be given to the officials who have done exceptional innovative work in election management.

1.2 **Special Award** will be presented to officers who have made significant contribution to conduct of elections, covering all areas like SVEEP, Expenditure control, Technology, Security, Polling Station management etc. from amongst all officers/staff of all categories outside those mentioned at 1.1. This may also carry cash component.

1.3 The Officers winning the Best Electoral Practices Award may not be given the State Award. However the Best Electoral Practices Award winners from the state shall be mentioned at the State level function (NVD) though they are not given any award there. (The names of Best Electoral Practices Award winners shall be intimated before 30th December)

2. CRITERIA

Award	On Innovation/best practice in any of the themes	Key Indicators (indicative)
Best DEO	i. Election Management ii. Voter's Education and Electoral Participation iii. IT Initiatives iv. Security Management v. Electoral Roll Management vi. Innovative Measures vii. Accessible Elections viii. Electoral Literacy Clubs	• Increase in Turnout over previous election. • Identification of communities outside electoral roll and enrolling them. • Innovations.
Best ERO/ AERO	i. Electoral Roll Management. ii. Complaint Disposal iii. SVEEP Activities.	• Identification of potential electors. • Number of duplicate/dead/ shifted electors identified and deleted following due process. • Against errors identified, no of corrections made in ER. • Percentage of complaints disposed – online and offline complaints. • Increase in submission of form 6 over past year SR. • EP ration compared to last year. • 18-19 enrolment percentages against last data.

Award	On Innovation/best practice in any of the themes	Key Indicators (indicative)
Best BLO	i. Improvement in the quality of Electoral Roll. ii. SVEEP Activities	• Identification of Prospective Electors and distribution of relevant forms. • Correction of entries in Electoral Roll. • Efforts in bridging gender gap. • Efforts in enrolling 18-19 year olds. • Efforts towards 100% EPIC and PER coverage. • Efforts in enrolling non- registered communities/ groups.
Special Award	i. Election Management ii. Voter's Education and Electoral Participation iii. IT Initiatives iv. Security Management v. Electoral Roll Management vi. Innovative Measures vii. Accessible Elections viii. Electoral Literacy Clubs	

2.1.1. Number of Awards In States (Indicative)

Number of Districts in the State	Number of Awards			
	Best DEO	Best ERO/AERO	Best BLO	Special Award
Up to 9	1	1	2	1
10 to 29	2	2	5	2
30-49	3	3	10	3
50 and more	4	4	15	4

3. UNION TERRITORIES AWARDS

3.1.1. The criteria for the Awards shall be similar to that in the State except that the Best DEO Award shall be replaced with "Best Electoral Practice Award" and to be given to either a DEO or an ERO.

Award Title	Category	Numbers (indicative)
Best Electoral Practice Award	For DEO or ERO	1
Best BLO	Booth Level Officers	2

4. OTHER AWARDS

The State may also institute Awards to recognize the contribution from **Campus Ambassadors, Village Awareness Groups** (formed under directions from EEM), Civil **Society and Media** for their contribution to the electoral process. These Awards may be instituted on need basis and wherever the contribution from this category of partners have been worthy of recognition and acknowledgement.

5. SELECTION

5.1. A Committee at State/UT Level may be constituted to scrutinize the nominations and shortlist the winners. The constitution of the Committee may be sent to the Commission for approval.

5.2. **All officers nominated by the CEO for the Best Electoral Practices Award may automatically be included for the State Award for consideration of the State Committee**. In addition, more entries may be invited.

5.3. DEOs may submit their nominations to the CEO for Best DEO Awards.

5.4. The nominations for remaining Awards, including those instituted under Serial No '4' may be forwarded by DEOs to the CEO.

5.5. The selected names shall be recommended to the Commission for approval.

5.6. The awards shall be given away on National Voters Day at State/UT HQs.

5.7. Detailed guidelines on the selection and nomination may be chalked out by the CEO within this broad framework and communicated to the Commission.

6. FUNDING

The funds for the Award for 2023 shall be met from the State funds (under Elections/ER) and no separate budget shall be provided by ECI for the same.

INSTRUCTION Sl. No. 33

By E-Mail/Speed Post

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 491/SVEEP-III/ELC(Main)/2022 **Dated: 22nd June, 2023**

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
All States and UTs

Subject: Mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy: Establishment of Electoral Literacy clubs in Schools, Colleges and Communities – regarding.

Sir/Madam,

This has a reference to ECI's letter No. 491/ECI/LET/SVEEP-I/EL/ELC/2017 dated: 3rd November, 2017 on the subject cited wherein certain guidelines were issued by the Commission for mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy. As per Para 3.2 of the said letter, it was mentioned that the ELCs shall be established as per the following pattern:

(i) **ELC Future Voters –** For Classes IX to Class XII (Secondary and Senior Secondary Level)

(ii) **ELC New Voters –** College, University, all other educational institutions including professional and technical educational institutions

(iii) **Chunav Paathshala –** ELC in communities for the youth who are not a part of the formal education system

(iv) **Voter Awareness forums –** in Government Departments, Organizations, Autonomous Bodies, Semi Government and non-Government and the private sector.

Details of activities are given below:

2. <u>ELC Future Voters:</u>

Electoral Literacy Clubs will be set up in Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools. The club will have students of Class IX-XII as its members. Students may be encouraged to run the ELC through an elected body of Executive Committee with elected representatives from each of the Sections. Alternatively School may conduct the activities through teachers involving the students. One or two teachers, preferably from the Humanities Department will act as the Nodal Officers and Mentors for the ELC. The teachers with election duty experience should be given preference for this work.

3. <u>ELC New Voters:</u>

Electoral Literacy Clubs will be set up in colleges and university campuses for engaging students in hands on experience in electoral literacy. Guidance and involvement of teachers especially those who have

experience of election duties will be an important component the club will have students as its members and would be run by an Executive Committee from amongst the students with elected representatives from each of the Classes. Campus Ambassador will act as the Convenor of the ELC and will assist the Nodal officer in discharge of their functions. One or two teachers, preferably from the Political Science Department etc will act as the Nodal Officers and Mentors for the ELC.

4. ChunavPathshala:

Electoral Literacy Clubs will be set up at the Polling Station level catering to those outside the formal education structures and may be named as per the name of the polling station or a group of polling stations. These shall be called Chunav Pathshala. The BLO will act as Nodal Officer for the Chunav Pathshala and the BAGs shall support and guide the ELC and shall assist the BLO in making the Chunav Pathshalas functional and for enrolling members. Voluntary help by teachers, non-partisan CSOs, NLM functionaries, Panchayat officials or the Municipal officials (Non-elected) of that Polling Station area may be taken for enrolment. The Venue of the 'Chunav Paathshala' shall be Polling Station in the last Lok Sabha or the Assembly Election or any other venue identified by the BLO.

5. Voter Awareness Forums (VAFs):

Voter Awareness Forums will operate in Government Departments, Non-government Organizations, Corporate and other Institutions. The membership will be open to all employees. Head of the Organization shall appoint one person as the Nodal Officer. Preference shall be given to an officer who has experience of the election duty. Nodal officer will liaise with the District Election Officer or the CEO of the State for VAF Resources.

Despite constant reminder of the Commission, no ELC Activities is taking place at ground level and it seems that ELCs are being functional only on paper. Hon'ble Commission has taken a serious view of this apathy of Election Officials towards ELC and has instructed to revamp ELC activities at ground level without any delay. Any further negligence from your end will be taken seriously by the Commission.

In view of the above, you are kindly requested to intimate the Commission about the work done till date for revamp of ELC activities within 30 days of receipt of letter.

Yours sincerely,

(SANTOSH KUMAR)
SECRETARY

INSTRUCTION No. 34

By Mail/Speed Post

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

F.NO. 491/SVEEP/60/2003 (CA) **Dated : 20th September, 2013**

To, The Chief Electoral Officers of all States/UTs.

Subject: Framework for engagement of Campus Ambassadors – regarding.

Sir / Madam,

In continuation of Commission's letter No. 491/SVEEP/60/2013 (CA), dated 05.02.2013 regarding appointment of Campus Ambassador, I am directed to enclose herewith a detailed framework for engagement of Campus Ambassador duly approved by the Commission. In this connection, I would like to invite your attention to the direction of the Commission during Chief Electoral Officers' Conference on 16th September, 2013 wherein the Commission has directed that the Campus Ambassador should be in position by 01.02.2013 positively. A compliance report to this extent may be sent to the Commission along-with number of Campus Ambassadors latest by 10th December, 2013.

The Chief Electoral Officers who are not in a position to identify and select Campus Ambassador(s), may convey that no Campus Ambassador (S) has been appointed along-with the reasons for non appointment.

Those who have appointed/are going to be appointed as Campus Ambassadors should indicate the total amount of honorarium to be paid to the Campus Ambassadors for the year 2014-15 @ Rs. 2000/- (Two Thousand only) per annum per Campus Ambassador, in their budget estimate for Financial Year 2014-2015. Kindly acknowledge the receipt of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

Encls: As above

(SUMAN KUMAR DAS)
UNDER SECRETARY

File No 491/SVEEP/60/2013(CA)

Election Commission of India

SVEEP Division

FRAMEWORK FOR ENGAGEMENT OF CAMPUS AMBASSADORS

Campus Ambassadors may be appointed only in Campuses identified by the CEO/DEO where neutral and non-partisan students can be easily identified. CEOs may communicate to Commission, if no such Universities and Government Colleges can be identified in their State.

I. Selection: Government Colleges and Universities may have Campus Ambassadors besides recognized Colleges identified by the CEO. In states where wide gaps in 18-19yr enrolment exist, some Higher Secondary Schools may also have such Campus Ambassadors.

a. The Campus Ambassador/s shall be selected from among a list provided by the Head of the College/ University. Alternatively CEOs may devise their own method of selection, with due weightage given to girl students. CEOs may like to involve NSS in the selection of the Campus Ambassadors.

b. Each Campus Ambassador shall be in position for one Academic year. The appointment may be renewed on a yearly basis.

c. In co-educational college two Campus Ambassadors (one male and one Female) may be selected.

II. Conditions: The Campus Ambassador shall not have any affiliation with any political party and shall not associate in any activity of any political party. Also the immediate family of the designated Campus Ambassador should not be engaged in active politics.

As Campus Ambassador s/he shall act in a responsible manner and avoid indulging in any unbecoming activity. An undertaking to this effect will be obtained from the concerned student through the Head of the Institution. Any complaint regarding the conduct and behavior of the Campus Ambassador may be immediately investigated and appropriate action taken in this connection.

Police Verification of the designated Campus Ambassadors should be done by the district administration. (Collector-Returning Officer)

III. Role & Duties:

1. Identification of students, teachers and non-teaching staff and their family members who are not registered in the electoral roll and those without EPIC or with wrong EPICs;

2. Facilitating their registration in the electoral roll by providing forms and guiding how to fill the forms and co-ordinating with the electoral machinery for approval of the new applications, correction and distribution of EPICs to the Campus electorate;

3. Organising with the help of CEO/DEO office, special drive for registration and also online registration;

4. Educating campus electorates about the electoral process i.e. registration, correction of errors, transposition of names, voting process and ethical voting;

5. Facilitating inclusion of Voter Education in various co-curricular activities/festivals of the Campus through

different activities such as Slogan writing, Poster making, quiz, debate, essay writing, song, street plays etc;

6. Creating core team of students to work as Volunteers for the SVEEP activities in the campus;

7. Coordinating with campus related organizations like Scout and Guide, NCC, NSS for enrolment

8. Organizing talks/workshop etc for capacity building in Voter Education among student community;

9. Organizing National Voters' Day programmes in their campus;

10. Acting as an educator and motivator in family and neighborhood and helping them in filling registration forms.

IV. Honorarium: The honorarium to the Campus Ambassadors may be Rs 2000/- per annum paid in two instalments of Rs 1000 each on completion of six months each time. The maximum Campus Ambassadors in a state/UT shall be as given in the annexure.

Also CEOs may devise criteria for identifying best Campus Ambassadors in the state and felicitate them on NVD function at State HQ. Any other incentive or cash reward can be instituted by the CEO. Campus Ambassadors of ECI will be provided necessary identifying items and outreach material by CEO/DEO from time to time.

V. Coordination of Campus Ambassadors with Election Machinery:

1. CEO or DEO shall brief the Campus ambassadors immediately on their appointment about their roles and responsibilities; Campus Ambassadors may be given a road map for the year and if found achievable, quantitate targets may also be given.

2. CEO office or DEO Office (wherever the campus is situated) may regularly coordinate with the Campus Ambassadors for various activities to be carried out within the campus.

3. It may be ensured that all support is extended by various EROs office to the Campus Ambassadors for facilitating registration.

4. A quarterly meeting of the Campus Ambassadors may be taken by the CEO to review the various activities undertaken in the campus and progress made in registration;

INSTRUCTION No. 35

By Mail/Speed Post

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

SECRETARIAT OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

निर्वाचन सदन, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली–110001

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No. 491/ECI/LET/FUNC/SVEEP-II/Women Polling Station/2023 **Dated: 30.08.2023**

To,

The Chief Electoral Officers of
All States / UTs

Ref: 1. No.470/INST/2018-EPS dated 5th November, 2018

2. No.464/INST/2022 dated 15th March, 2023, and

3. No.464/INST/EPS/2023 (Election Official) dated 7th June, 2023

4. NO.464/INST/EP(AS)/2022 dated 3rd August, 2023

Subject: - Inclusive and Pariticipative Elections – Setting up of All Women / PwD / Youth managed Polling Station - regarding.

Sir / Madam,

I am directed to refer to the subject cited above and to say that in order to make elections more inclusive and participative for all citizens including Women, PWDs, Youth, etc., the Commission has taken various new initiatives during the elections held in recent past. In this context, as a part of its commitment towards gender equality and greater constructive participation of electors in the electoral process, the Commission has been issuing directions from time to time.

2. Now, for clarity of subject, following instructions are being issued, consolidating all the existing instructions issued vide the above-listed letters-

I. <u>All Women managed Polling Stations:</u>

i. To the extent possible, at least one polling station, exclusively managed by women officials shall be set up in every assembly constituency of election-going state.

ii. This number can be increased by DEO subject to the availability of suitable women officials in the district.

iii. In such women managed polling stations, all election staff, including police and security personnel should preferably be women.

iv. The political parties and contesting candidates may be encouraged to appoint women polling agents in women managed polling stations.

v. The women managed polling stations should be established in rural and urban areas separately, particularly in areas with low voter turnout during the last elections. While making planning for women polling booths, DEO should focus on the polling areas where number of female voters is large.

vi. The female polling personnel should be put on duty in the neighbouring polling stations so that they are able to reach to the polling stations in the morning of poll day at least two hours before the start of polling and assume their duties, well in time.

vii. The women officials should not be deployed on polling duty in inaccessible or remotely located areas.

viii. Proper arrangements for stay at the place of posting with all basic amenities and transportation of the female officials should be made and advance intimation about such arrangements be given to them well before the day of election duty.

ix. Pregnant women and lactating mothers, whether on maternity leave or not, or women officials who are otherwise on medical advice not to undertake rigorous or hazardous work may be exempted from election duty.

x. For randomization of female polling personnel, the DEO shall refer to the Commission's letter dated 15th March, 2023, mentioned above.

II. <u>All PwD managed Polling Stations:</u>

In order to motivate and facilitate the eligible PWD citizens for enrolment and voting at polling stations, the Commission has issued comprehensive instructions covering all aspects, like identification, enrollment, mapping of PwD, infrastructure and facilities for easy accessibility at the polling stations, vide letter dated

3rd August, 2023. Besides, the PWD voters with benchmark disability and who are flagged as 'PwD' in ER database are given additional facility of postal ballot at their homes. The Commission has also been encouraging Persons with Disability to actively participate in the election process as polling personnel. Concept of all PwD managed polling station is a positive step in that direction. In this context, the Commission has issued the following guidelines:

i) To the extent possible, at least one polling station managed exclusively by officials of PwDs category shall be set up in each assembly constituency with prior approval of the CEO of the election going state.

ii) As per the Commission's instructions issued vide above-cited letter dated 7th June, 2023, the employees under PWD category with 'benchmark disability, as defined under Section 2(r) of the Rights of Persons With Disabilities Act, 2016 should be deployed on election duty only under unavoidable circumstances.

iii) Therefore, considering the nature of hardship being faced by Persons with Disability and their special needs, only willing PwD officials should be drafted for duty at PwD managed polling stations

iv) The DEO and RO shall make personal efforts to ensure that special needs and requirements of PwD officials are taken into account while selecting polling stations for their deployment.

v) The polling stations should invariably be on ground floor with good access route and permanent ramps as per national standard.

vi) Assured Minimum Facility (AMF) alongwith facilities like parking space, mobile barricades, separate entry, pathway to polling booths, wheel chairs, etc. should be ensured for PwD voters as per the Commission's instructions.

vii) Braille feature should be provided in the EVMS.

viii) The PWD employees should invariably be posted at the polling stations located in the headquarters. This provision can be incorporated in the randomization software itself so that database contains information about the PWD personnel, and if any PWD staff inadvertently is deployed at difficult or remote locations, the DEO/RO should make necessary changes manually in consultation with the Commission/Observer.

ix) Proper training should be imparted to the polling officials and all other staff/volunteers deployed for assistance and facilitation of PwD officials and PWD voters as per their requirements. In this connection. NGOS/CSOS/ DPOS/RWAS can be engaged for capacity building and outreach to PWD in a non-political and non-partisan manner.

III. <u>All Youth managed Polling Stations:</u>

i) The Commission as a new initiative, has decided that at least one polling station per district shall be managed by the polling teams consisting of available youngest eligible employees of that district to address youth apathy.

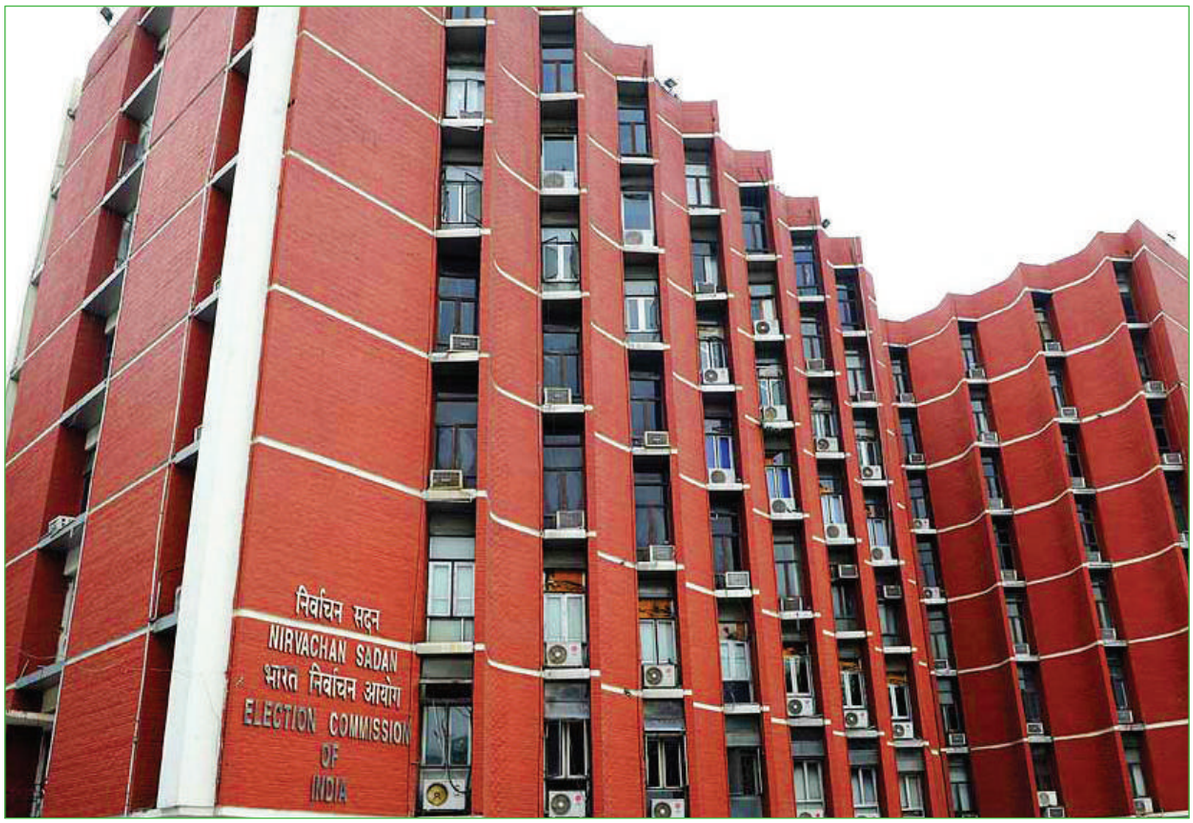
ii) DEOS should ensure involvement of local youths for aesthetic makeover for these youth managed polling stations.

3. The above instructions shall be brought to the notice of all the concerned.

4. The CEOs and DEOS shall take initiative to popularize such polling stations more actively during SVEEP activities.

Yours Sincerely,

(SANTOSH KUMAR)
SECRETARY



ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

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