



Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka
Nirvachana Nilaya, Sheshadri Road, Bangalore 560 001.

Constitution of District and State level Media Certification and Monitoring Committee to check “Paid News”.

The office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka has issued directions to all District Election Officers to constitute District Level Media Certification and Monitoring Committee to check “Paid News” during elections to Karnataka State Legislative Assembly. The committee consists of DEO as Chairman, District Information Officer as Member Secretary, Assistant Returning Officer (not below SDM), Central Government I & B Ministry official (if any in the district), Independent Citizen/ Journalist as may be recommended by PCI as members. Accordingly all DEO’s have constituted District level MCMC committee.

This action has been taken as per the directions of the Election Commission of India. The ECI has directed that maximum vigilance may be observed by making use of the existing provisions of law 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” generally manifest in the form 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 newspaper periodical would amount to further corroboration as circumstantial evidence that such news publication could result from collusion of the candidate/party with the editors, publishers, financiers of the news papers etc. Such collusion would however have generally no transactional evidence of payment of consideration in cash or kind.

The DEO’s in each district as soon as the election is announced would do vigorous scrutiny of all news papers published or having circulation in the district in order to locate political advertisement in the garb of news coverage appearing within the election period. The DEO’s shall 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 expenses incurred their on are duly reflected in the account of the concerned candidate/party.

The district MCMC committee shall 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 shall be served with notices by the DEO's to explain her/his stand as to why the coverage should not be treated as advertisement and matter should be reported to the commission.

State Level MCMC:

In addition to District MCMC the CEO, Karnataka has also constituted State level MCMC to perform two sets of function.

1. Deciding appeal from the District committee on Certification of advertisement and
2. Examining all cases of Paid News on appeal against the decision of the District MCMC or cases that they may take up suo motu, in which case it shall direct the concerned RO's to issues notice to the candidates.

The State level MCMC committee has been formed comprising the following persons:

- a) The Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka, **Chairman.**
- b) Sri P.S. Ishwar Bhat (Ishwar Daitota), Senior Journalist and Columnist and Former Editor, Vijaya Karnataka,
- c) Sri Arkere Jayaram, Former Chief Reporter, The Hindu.
- d) Sri Venkateshwaralu, Additional Director General, Press Information Bureau.
- e) Any Observer appointed by the ECI (to be nominated later).
- f) Officer on Special Duty (SVEEP), Member Secretary.