

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi - 110001

No.76/PPEMS/Transparency/2013

Dated: 29th August 2014

To

1. The President/General Secretary of all Political parties
2. The Treasurer of all Political parties

Subject: Guidelines on transparency and accountability in party funds and election expenditure matter- regarding.

Sir/Madam,

Under article 324 of the Constitution, Election Commission of India is vested with the responsibility to conduct free and fair elections. Concerns have been expressed in various quarters that money power is disturbing the level playing field and vitiating the purity of elections. To curb the abuse of money power during elections, the Election Commission has issued several instructions in the past to the candidates and political parties from time to time.

2. It is desirable for the political parties to observe transparency and accountability in respect of funds raised and expenditure incurred, both during elections and in other times. Further, in the interest of conduct of free and fair elections, it is necessary and expedient to provide guidelines for bringing transparency and accountability with regard to funds of political parties.

3. In order to formulate the guidelines, the Commission sought comments/suggestions/inputs from all recognized political parties. While most of these parties supported the issue of transparency guidelines, some others had a different view. Having regard to the suggestions received from the political parties and in the interest of purity of election process, the Commission hereby issues the following guidelines under Article 324 of constitution, to bring transparency and accountability in funding of political parties:

- (i) Proviso (a) to Section 13A of Income Tax Act 1961, inter alia, provides that political party shall keep and maintain such books of accounts and other documents as would enable proper deduction of its income there from. Accordingly, it is required that (a) the treasurer of the political party or such person as authorized by the party, besides ensuring maintenance of the accounts at all State and lower levels, shall maintain consolidated accounts at the central party Head Quarters as required under the aforesaid provision, (b) the accounts so maintained by him/her shall conform to the guidance note on Accounting and Auditing of political parties, issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), and (c) the Annual Accounts shall be audited and certified by the qualified practicing Chartered Accountants.
- (ii) The Commission has amended the requirements for registration of a new political party w.e.f. 8th October 2010, which inter-alia, require a party to submit a copy of its audited annual accounts. Accordingly, in order to bring uniformity, all political parties shall submit to the Commission or to such authority as mentioned in para (vi) below, a copy of the audited Annual Accounts with Auditor's report for each financial year, before 31st October of each year.
- (iii) The provisions of section 80GGB and 80GGC of I.T. Act 1961, inter alia, state that no deduction shall be allowed on the contributions made in cash by any person or company to a political party. Accordingly, the political party shall maintain name and address of 'all such individuals, companies or entities making donation to it, excepting petty sums, donated by the public only during its public rallies. Further, any

- amount/donation received in cash, shall be duly accounted in relevant account books and deposited in the party's bank account within a week of its receipt. However, the party can retain a reasonable amount required for day to day functioning of the party and for defraying the cash expenses.
- (iv) Section 40A (3) of Income Tax Act, 1961, provides that all payments exceeding Rs. 20,000/- by any business entity to a person in a day are required to be made by account payee cheque/draft, except the exempted category as provided in Rule 6 DD of Income Tax Rules, 1962. Similarly, if a party is incurring any expenditure, it shall ensure that no payment in excess of Rs. 20,000/- is made in a day to any person or company or entity in cash, except where (a) the payment is made in a village or town, which is not served by a bank; or (b) the payment is made to any employee or party functionary towards salary, pension or for reimbursement of his expenses; or (c) cash payment is required under any statute.
- (v) Section 77(3) of the R.P. Act, 1951 provides for a ceiling of election expenditure for a candidate. Therefore, if the party desires to provide any financial assistance to its candidates for their election expenses, such assistance shall not exceed the prescribed ceiling. Any payment in this regard by the party shall be made only through crossed account payee cheque or draft or through bank account transfer and not in cash.
- (vi) While the recognized political parties shall file all reports, namely, the contribution reports in Form 24A, The Audited Annual Accounts as certified by the Chartered Accountants, referred to in para 3 (i) above, and the Election Expenditure Statements, with the Election Commission of India, the unrecognized parties shall file the same with the Chief

Electoral Officer (CEO) of the respective states (i.e. the state where the party Head Quarters is situated) in the prescribed time and manner.

4. The above guidelines shall apply to all political parties with effect from 1st October 2014.

Yours faithfully,



(MALAY MALLICK)
UNDER SECRETARY

Copy to: -

1. All CEOs with request to bring it to the notice of all political parties of their respective states.
2. The Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes, North Block, New Delhi for making relevant rules for the political parties.
3. The President, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, ICAI Bhawan, Indraprastha Marg, Post Box No. 7100, New Delhi- 110022, for incorporating the points in the Guidance note on political parties.