

By speed Post/Email

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001

No.464/OBS/2018/OPS

Dated: 30th January, 2018

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of all States/UTs.

Subject:- Responsibility regarding monitoring of 'Paid News' – regarding

Madam/Sir

I am directed to draw your attention towards the issue of 'paid news' which has become a major cause of concern for the Commission and all stakeholders in the conduct of elections in a free, fair, transparent and credible manner.

Due to the easy access to news and media through newspapers, magazines, television, internet and other electronic gadgets, the menace of 'Paid News' has increasingly spread its venomous tentacles in the electoral democracy. 'Paid Media' is basically intended to influence gullible, and even aware voters, by publishing articles/reports about a particular candidate or a party eulogising them, or similar news articles/reports denigrating the opponents, both intended which unduly influences 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 newspaper etc.

'Paid News' makes the voters vulnerable to undue influence through misinformed/biased coverage and encourages the role of money power and other forms of electoral malpractices in a covert manner and disturbs level playing field in elections.

In the view of the above, to further strengthen its vigilance, the Commission has directed that besides Expenditure Observers, **all General Observers are also required to keep a close watch on the violations related to paid news and all such cases must be immediately brought to the notice of concerned DEO, RO and the Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) at District level and State level.**

The Commission's instructions may be brought to the notice of all General Observers.

Yours faithfully,


(NIKHIL KUMAR)
DIRECTOR