

# Theme 16 - Media, MCMC and Paid News

## Guidance Plan:

1. Media Management is an important part of successful Election Management
2. Participants must be briefed about the media behavior and techniques of perception management through media
3. The PPT brings out the snapshots of Media Management, Media Facilitations, Communication Strategy etc. for smooth Election Management
4. The genesis of pre-certification of political advertisements on electronic media, constitution of MCMC are given in Part-II of the PPT
5. The trainees should be given a detailed introduction about the menace of 'Paid News' and how it impacts fair elections. ECI instructions on how to handle 'Paid News' are explained in the slides towards the end.

# Media and Elections – Perception Management

- Media is Omnipresent
- Media, a force multiplier, is a catalyst in the delivery of free and fair elections each time.
- Media is the eyes and ears in the field and thus a useful ally of the Commission.
- Election time is media's special time - they are specially alert/ highlight glitches, opine and spread messages at lightning speed.
- Good news is no news; Normal is boring
- Perception matters - need to steer narrative/ perils of vacuum - lack of information = misinformation

# ECI and Media - two fold relationship

## Media Facilitation

- Media Passes for entry into polling Stations & Counting Centers
- Media centers at state and district level
- Free Air time allocation to political parties on public broadcaster – based on past performance
- National Media Awards for voter education

## Media Management

- ECI does not regulate media. Responsibility to enforce the provisions of law on media or certain aspects of media functioning.
- Pre-certification of Political Ads
- Paid News
- Compliance with Election Laws/Supreme Court orders
- Media Monitoring to avoid violations

# Part – I

## Media Facilitation

# Media Cell

A permanent media cell is to be set in place, equipped with a designated team and a Media Nodal Officer at the level of Additional/Joint CEO.

## **Roles & Responsibilities of the Cell:**

- .Regular interaction with local media to highlight Voter awareness activities.
- .Minimize spread of misinformation, dissemination of correct information on real time basis.
- .Stories on some of the unique initiatives taken by respective Divisions to be shared with the Media persons & Media Division.
- .Press coverage feedback – use for course correction whenever required
- .Ensure consistent messaging

# Media Cell – contd.

**Media Centres are set up in the office campus of the DEOs especially** for the purpose of disseminating election related information.

MCs will commence functioning from the date of notification of election up to the end of the election process. Media Centre to provide reasonable Communication infrastructure

Officers of the level of **DC or District Information Officers** shall be put in charge of District MC and their contact address & telephone numbers are circulated well in advance.

Basic infrastructure like internet/wi-fi, desktop, printer, 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.

# Media Facilitation - Access

- **Entry into the polling stations** and counting centres fully regulated by the statutory provisions –
  - **R 32 COER, 1961**, regulates the entry into polling stations.
  - **R 53(1) COER, 1961** regulates entry to counting centres.
- Authority letters issued by the CEO after approval from ECI to media persons. CEOs to estimate and intimate the tentative requirement of authority letter **not later than 15 days prior to the date of poll. (Reference Page no. 94 of Media Handbook for CEO and DEO, Feb. 2024)**
- CEOs should ensure that list of media persons is practical/rational and it should not result in unnecessary crowding at the polling station.
- For actual covering of polling inside the PS, entry of media in batches is managed by Presiding Officer. However, Media **not to be allowed to go near voting compartment to ensure secrecy of vote.**







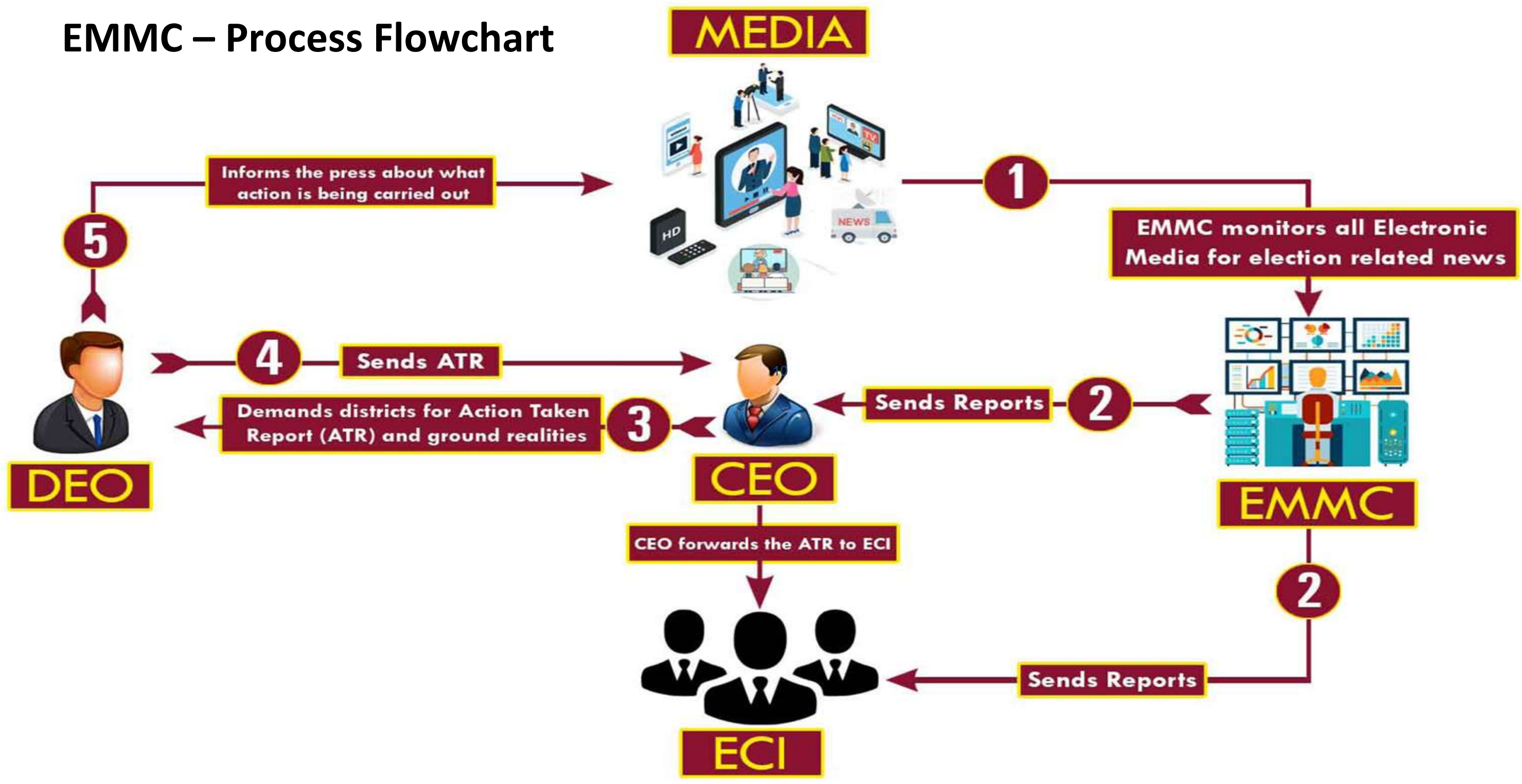
# Media Facilitation – Access - Authority letter – contd.

## Authority Letter for Entry/re-entry into Polling Stations - sample

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA		List of Constituencies			
<p><b>AUTHORITY LETTER FOR MEDIA PERSONS</b> (For entry/re-entry into Polling Stations)</p> <p><b>NOT TRANSFERABLE</b> (Not valid without seal and signature of the Issuing Authority)</p>		State	No.	Name of Consituency	
No. E/P -					
<p>In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (C) of Rule (49D) of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, the Election Commission hereby authorises the entry / re-entry of: Shri / Smt. / Kum..... Representing..... ..... inside Polling Stations in the constituencies as specified in the table below at the General Elections / Bye-elections to the House of the People / Legislative Assemblies.</p>					
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; font-size: small;">                     Please not that Photography / Videography is strictly prohibited inside the Voting Compartment so as not to violate secrecy of Ballot                 </div>					
Signature of the Holder		<p style="text-align: center;">By order and under the authority of the Election Commission of India.</p> <p>SIGNATURE<sup>\$</sup> <span style="float: right;">SECRETARY*</span></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Election Commission of India.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">or <b>PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR GENERAL</b> (Media &amp; Communications)* Government of India</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or <b>CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER*</b> of State / Union Territory</p> <p>Date:...../...../.....</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="font-size: x-small;"> <p><sup>\$</sup> Not valid if personally signed by any officer other than those specified above No facsimile signature permitted.</p> <p><sup>*</sup> Delete words not applicable</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center; width: 100px;"> <p style="font-size: large; margin: 0;">SEAL</p> </div> </div>			

# Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) - Media Monitoring Reports

## EMMC – Process Flowchart



NB: 2 hourly reports on pre-poll and poll day



# Communication – General Guidelines

- Use media and not get used
- Continuous engagement – positive narrative
- Useful in times of crisis – faster amplification
- One voice through myriad sources – website to Social Media Handles
- Keep channels of communication open
- Information Dissemination for wider reach
- Two sided sword – handle with care
- Plans/strategy depends on the need

Contd...

# Communication – General Guidelines – contd.

- **6Ws of communication:**
  - **When:** timeframe of Plan
  - **Where:** Communication Plan for Polling Station – Sector- District – State – Region; confidential  
separate communication plan for security personnel – threat assessment
  - **Who :** official/voter
  - **Why :** Purpose
  - **What :** messaging needed. Content
  - **How** – telecommunication; human messenger; Shadow areas – alternative means (using vulnerability mapping, GIS mapping etc.)

Contd...

# Communication – General Guidelines - How to communicate – contd.

## ECI's myriad means of communication



Twitter



Twitter



YouTube



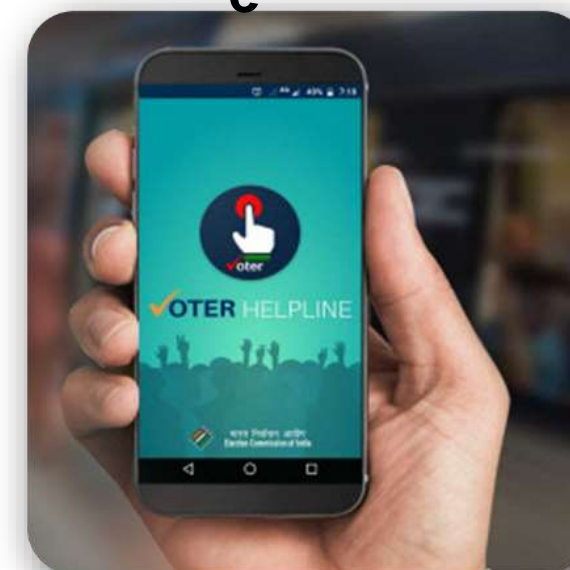
Facebook



Instagram



Website



Apps



Helpline

Contd...



# Communication – General Guidelines - What to communicate – contd.

## Types of information to communicate proactively



**NB 1: The CEO should focus on consistent flow of information rather than only during elections.**

**NB 2: A dedicated media centre should be set up at state & district level for regular information dissemination.**

**NB 3: Updated websites/SMPs are major sources of information**

Contd...

# Communication – General Guidelines - contd.

## Positive Engagement with Media for Information Dissemination:

- disseminate important information ; Focus on regional language
- amplify initiatives/voter awareness efforts
- **Avoid Cluttered information** - *A good communication strategy is the bridge between confusion and clarity.*
- Maintain consistent, positive media interaction;
- build a strong communication channel utilising both traditional & new media to spread the messaging
- Synergy with local channels.
- ensure **year round flow of information** to media and intensify outreach during election period.
- Focus on end to end communication i.e. **from enrolment / voter awareness activities till election participation.**
- **Websites** are a source of authentic information.

# Communication Strategy - public domain

- 1 Omnipresent media
- 2 Traditional forms of media, Mass media, New media
- 3 Concerns and modes of messaging
- 4 Specifics of Indian elections – regional, national, international press
- 5 Socio – cultural sensitivities – appropriate messaging - Literacy rates – audio visual modes

# Communication Strategy – Digital domain – contd.

- Power of social media – freedom of expression – influencers
- Menace of Fake news / misinformation/ disinformation
- Response time – 24x7
- **Algorithms** – paid posts; surrogate advertisements
- Communication sans frontier
- **Artificial Intelligence-** deep fake; viral load; killing old posts; right to be forgotten;
- Code of ethics – Press Council of India; Broadcasters Association ; Extant Laws and Rules & Regulations
- Election Expenditure Management - costing of ads – Transparency report

# Communication Strategy – Response – contd.

**Proactive sustained communication methods - disseminating info about ECI processes and connect with stakeholders (largely SVEEP work)**

Steering the narrative desired & not imposed on ECI

Active response/crisis management messaging to contain emerging news/ anticipating trends and info sharing

Ascertaining Target group - National media/ Specific channels/ Regional/ **International Media**



# Communication Strategy – Response - contd.

## ECI's Response Management – Thumb Rule

**While ECI can not/should not 'jump' in countering each and every post**

ECI needs to be distanced **observant** and calm amidst chaos - ~~quite often created on purpose~~

ECI also cannot/should not 'appear to be deaf'

Listening mode has to be on 24x7 at HQ and by each CEO team

Response management always in 'ready mode' - pace to be decided by our team rather than reactive under duress

quite often "Less is more" - measured, consistent, fact based messaging

# Communication Strategy – Crisis Communication– contd.

Crisis communication plays an essential part in any communication strategy. It refers to the strategies and protocols that enable an organization to effectively communicate during a major crisis or threat to an organisation's credibility or reputation.

## READY

The media team at the state and district level should always be alert and ready in case of crisis. Field officers should address the local situation promptly.

## RESPOND

Once a crisis situation is identified, field office should keep HQ in the loop for acting immediately and actively to respond to concerns and instil confidence by providing credible information on how the situation is being tackled

## RECOVER

After successfully handling the situation the Local teams shall focus on confidence building and building trust among all stakeholders through regular interaction with media & awareness campaigns




# Communication Strategy – Crisis Communication – contd.

 Election Commission of India ✓  
May 21, 2019 · 🌐

DEO Jhansi while responding to queries on mishandling of EVMs stated that strong rooms were sealed in morning by 7-7:30 am in presence of Observers once all polling parties came back with EVMs. All extant ECI guidelines followed.

#ITrustEVM #KnowYourEVM #VVPAT



 Chief Electoral Officer, Assam ✓  
May 1 · 🌐

Janasanyog: Assam  
Press Release

Reserved EVM found in counting centre premises in Hailakandi had no votes polled.

Hailakandi, May 1: One reserved unused EVM was found inside a trunk at the counting centre here on Saturday evening.

On being detected, District Election Officer, Megh Nidhi Dahal along with Returning Officers rushed to the spot and made an inquiry into it. The contesting candidates too reached the spot.

On being investigated it was found that the unused EVM inside a trunk that found its way inadvertently to the counting venue was a reserved one and there were no votes polled therein. It was open before the contesting candidates who were satisfied with the results and the reserved EVM was taken immediately to the EVM warehouse adjacent to the Deputy Commissioner's premises and stored there.

"The reserved EVM was found in one of the trunks which have been brought to the counting centre for keeping the polled EVMs after counting tomorrow," said Dahal, adding, "The contesting candidates were satisfied that the EVM was a reserved EVM and no votes were polled therein. The machine was later taken to the EVM warehouse and kept under safe custody."

SN, DIPRO, Hkd./1.05.2021

In a situation where panic arises due to incomplete information, the competent officers at the ground level should ensure they go out in public to provide the correct and factual information to all the stakeholders using all available channels of communication

# Planned Communication vis-a-vis Crisis Communication

Can't dream at the nth hour- Keep System Ready- Plan in time, Timely information is strength

Clear Aim and Plan

Reaching out to all – from Polling Station location to Security, Law & Order management officials, media persons, political parties and voters at large

Yet unforeseen situations – Crisis management.

**The Longer you wait – tougher it gets**

Quick response to emergency that may arise

# Documentation

- Teams should document unique initiatives, election management related photographs and videos (like voters' registration drives, Voters' participation at polling station, polling processes, counting process, EVM management steps, security arrangements, polling parties' movement with polling material especially in difficult terrains and any other significant photographs and videos with apt caption details)
- Such material should be shared with the Communication division for use in EMB's publications and audio-visuals.



# Training

**Training of teams is crucial in improvising skills and knowledge of the job and builds the confidence in abilities.**

- MCMC/ Media teams be trained well before elections w.r.t all **ECl guidelines** on **Paid News, pre-certification of political advertisements, guidelines related to Social Media, MCC provisions, related provisions in law, PCI/ NBSA guidelines etc.**
- To ensure regular trainings and workshops for its officers on the importance of perception building and brand management.
- The officers should regularly interact with media persons and clarify doubts if any in person.
- **Training to Political Parties' representatives regarding Paid News, pre-certification of political advertisements, guidelines related to Social Media, MCC provisions, related provisions in law, PCI/ NBSA guidelines etc.**

# Sensitisation of Media persons for enhanced cooperation

- Journalists covering elections in the state capital and districts should be properly sensitised through workshops as a **confidence building** measure.
- The journalists should be informed about various media related guidelines viz political advertisements, paid news, silence period, MCC and fake news.
- They should be asked to lay special emphasis on **fact checking their stories** before publishing them.

# National Media Awards

- ECI from National Voter's Day 2013 started giving away National Media Award every year for outstanding campaign on Voters' Education and Awareness in elections.
- First award was given on NVD 2013 for the year 2012. From the year 2016, Commission has extended the award categories of this award from two to four i.e., Print Media, Electronic Media (TV), Electronic Media (Radio) and Internet/social media.
- Awards recognize the outstanding contributions by Media Houses to promote electoral participation by creating awareness about accessible elections, educating people about electoral process and raising awareness among the general public about the relevance and importance of voting.



# Part – II

Media Management - MCMC & Paid News

# MCMC - Genesis –

## **Hon'ble Supreme Court Order** dated April 13, 2004

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 ECI/ Designated Officer, prior to the commencement of use of advertisements.**

**ECI to monitor telecast of advertisements on cable networks/channels**

**ECI given authority to delegate its power to District Magistrates/CEOs**

Where ECI is satisfied that there is a violation of this order, or any provisions of the **Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995**, it will issue an order to the violator to **forthwith stop such violations and it will also be open to direct seizure of equipment.**”



# Pre-certification of Ads- Expanse

As per **Hon'ble Supreme Court order dated 13.04.2004**, all political ads in the Cable TV and TV Channels are to be pre-certified – round the year by MCMC and not just during election period ; **Article 142** – Applicable through the territory of India

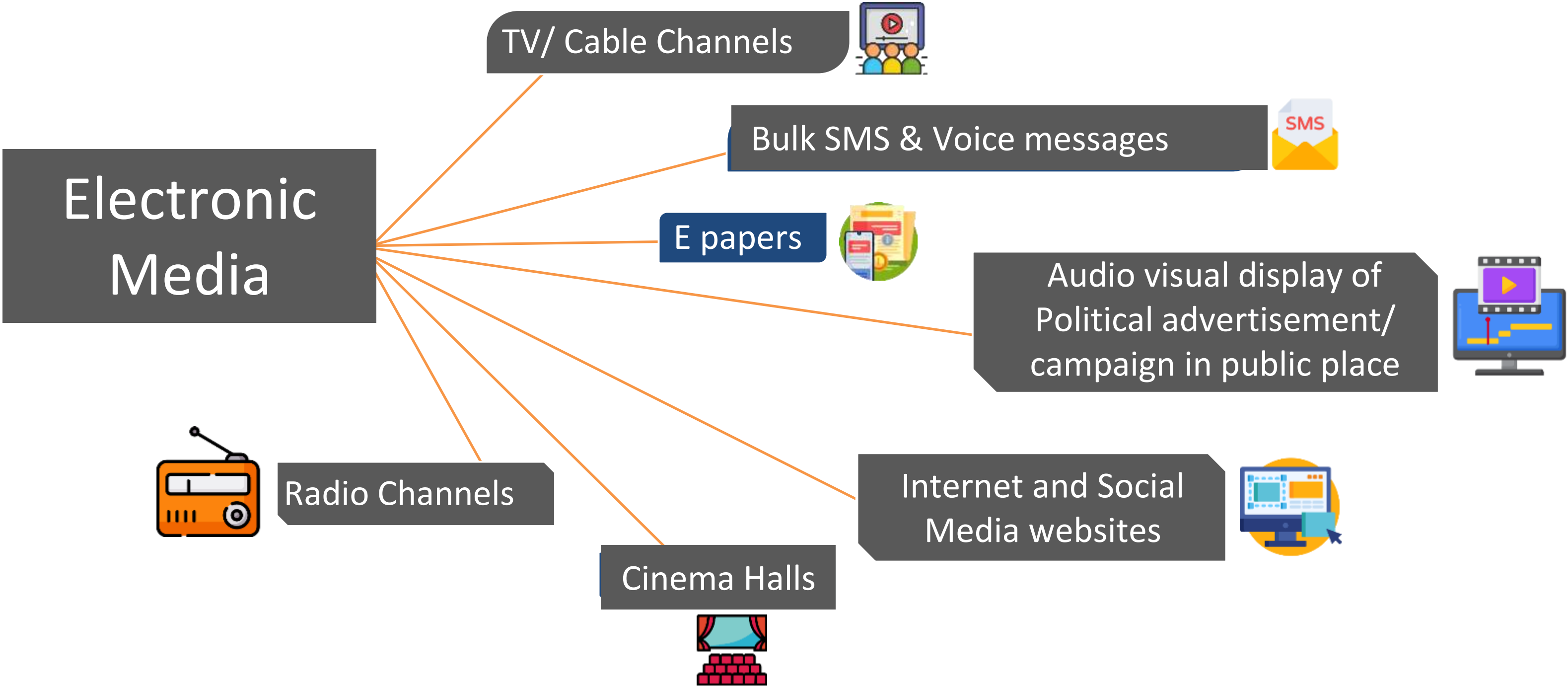
Since **Social Media by definition falls in the category of Electronic Media** , all political ads on social media are also be to be pre-certified. Also bulk SMSs /voice messages , ads in Cinema Halls, Private FM/Radio, e-papers are to be pre-certified.

**Political Ads in Print Media on pre-poll day & poll day** to be pre-certified by MCMC. (since Bihar LA elections 2015). **Otherwise no pre-certification required for print media ads.**

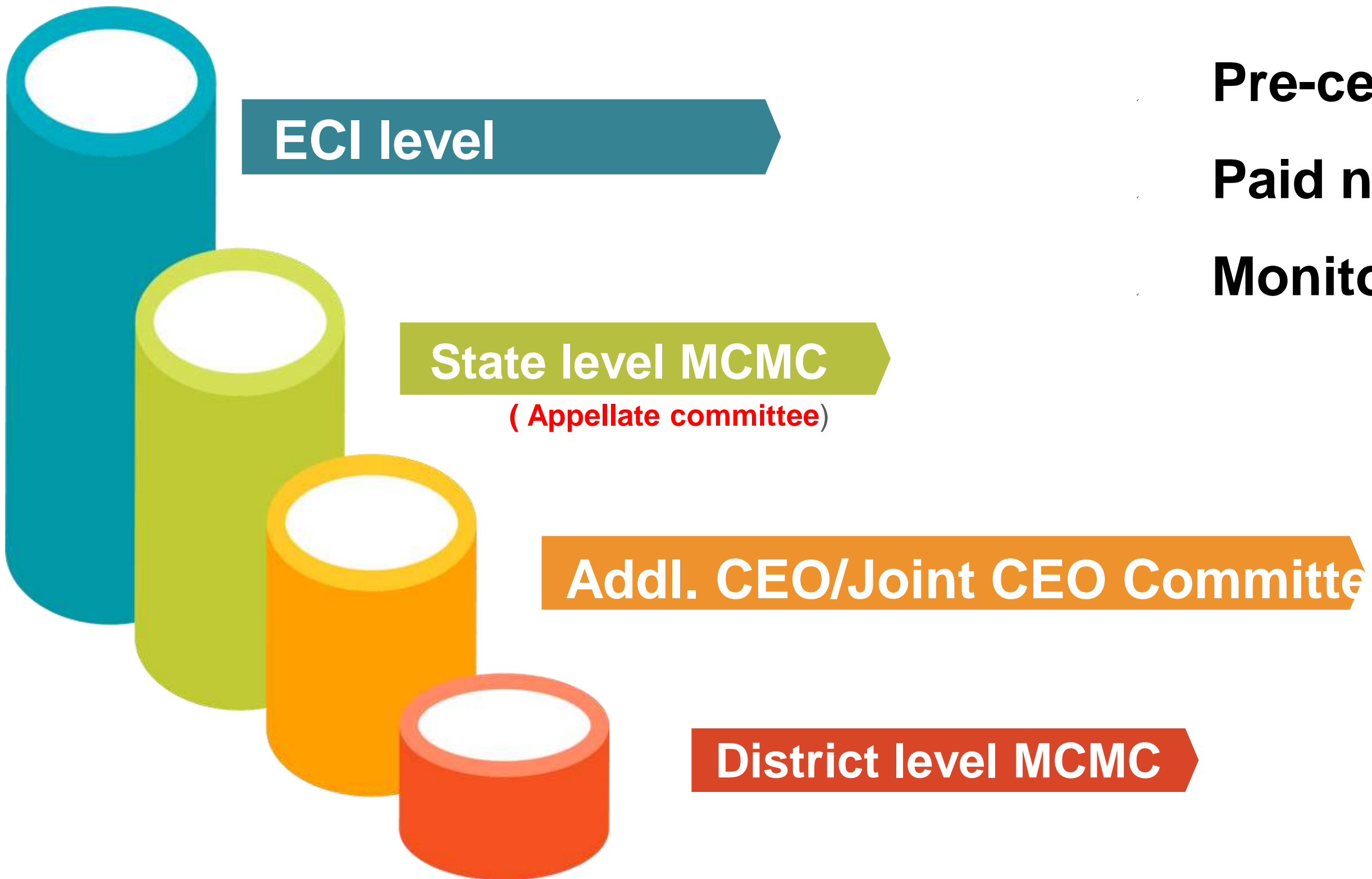
Any political content in the form of messages/comments/photos/videos uploaded on 'blogs/self accounts'/websites/social media platforms will not be treated as political advertisement. Even if the same is posted/uploaded by political parties/candidates, it would not be treated as political advertisement.

# Pre-Certification of Political Ads – contd.

All political advertisements appearing in the Electronic Media are required to be pre-certified by the MCMC



# Media Certification & Monitoring Committee- MCMC



**Pre-certification of political advt.**  
**Paid news – Monitoring and Action**  
**Monitoring Media violations**

# MCMC & Grievance Redressal Channel

**ECI Level Committee**

For decision on Paid News

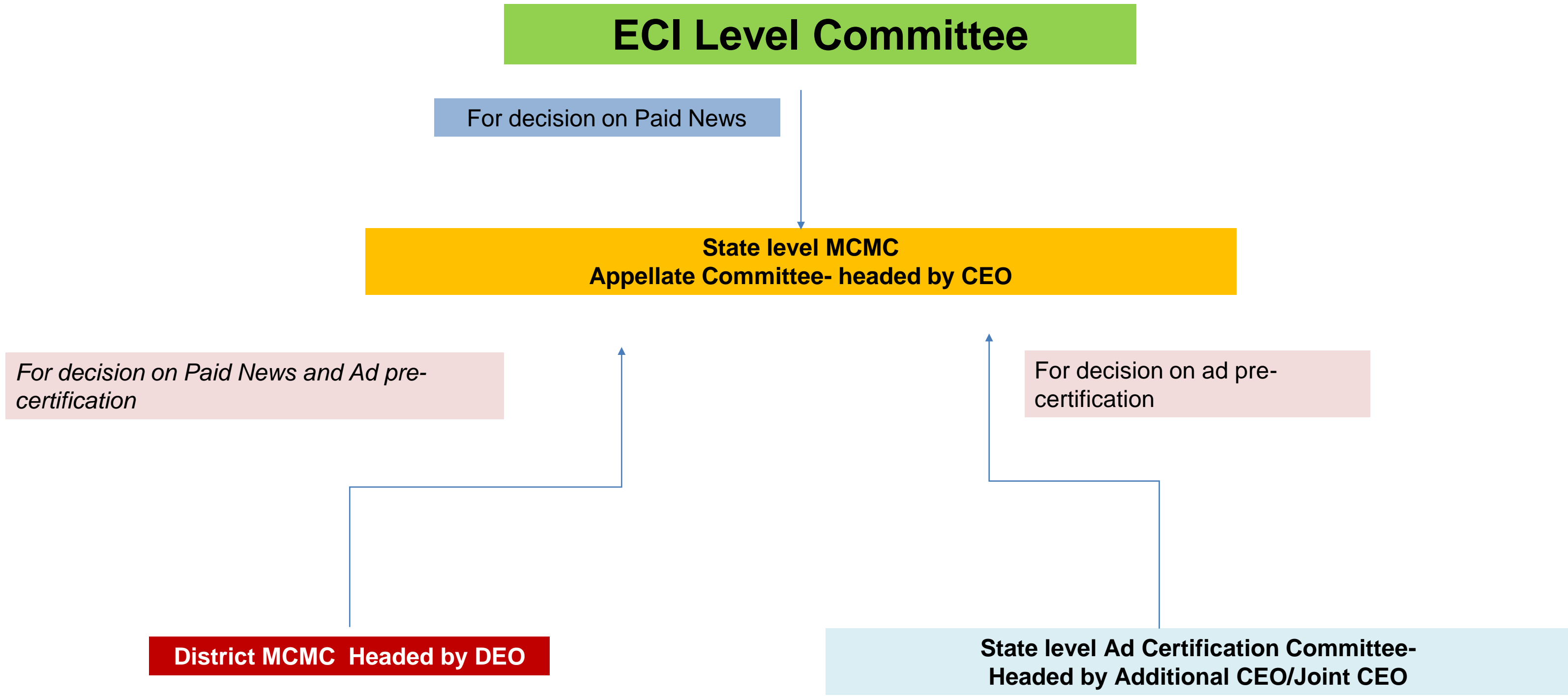
**State level MCMC  
Appellate Committee- headed by CEO**

*For decision on Paid News and Ad pre-  
certification*

For decision on ad pre-  
certification

**District MCMC Headed by DEO**

**State level Ad Certification Committee-  
Headed by Additional CEO/Joint CEO**





# District MCMC -

## Composition

- a. DEO/RO (of Parliamentary Constituency)
- b. ARO (not below the rank of SDM)
- c. One Social media expert ( to be chosen by RO)
- 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

## Functions:

Certification of Advertisements for which **three specific members of MCMC** (at a, b &c above) have to consider and decide.

Examining complaints/issues of Paid News etc. **by all members**

# District MCMC - Social Media Expert – contd.

Preferably be a Government Officer subject to following eligibility criteria

## If he /she is a Govt. Officer

- Not below the rank of SDM
- Has at least 5 years of Experience of working in the IT department/cell/social media cell of Government

## If he/she is a Private Individual

- Have Masters Degree in field of IT
- Have at least 10 years of experience working in the IT Dept/social media cell of Govt or have good understanding of social media platforms
- Eligibility in terms of background & neutrality

## **Addl. CEO/ JT. CEO Committee for Pre-certification at State level**

### **Composition:**

Additional/Joint CEO - Chairperson.

RO of any Parliamentary Constituency located in the capital of the State.

One expert being an officer not below the rank of Class- I officer to be requisitioned from the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

One social media Expert

### **Functions :**

Pre-certification of ads from political parties at State/UT Level

**NB: This Committee has no jurisdiction over cases of paid news.**

# State Level MCMC - Appellate Committee

## Composition:

Chief Electoral Officer (Chairperson)

Any Observer appointed by ECI

One expert to be co-opted by the committee or

*ADG/Director level officer from PIB/BOC in the state*

Social Media Expert

One IIS Officer (at level of US/DS posted in the State/UT)

Independent Citizen/Journalist as recommended by PCI

Addl./Joint CEO in charge of Media (member secretary)

## Functions:

Deciding appeal from both District and Addl./Jt. CEO Committees on Certification of advertisement by the top 4 members

Deciding appeal on Paid News cases against the decision of District MCMC or cases taken up suo-motu; by all members of the committee.



# ECI Level Committee - Appellate Committee

## Composition:

ADG, NSD AIR

ADG, DAVP (now CBC)

PCI member

Principal Secretary/ Secretary (Election Exp Division)

Principal Secretary (Legal)

Principal Secretary (in-charge of the State/UT from where reference is received)

Principal Secretary (in-charge of CC & B.E. Division)

Director/Principal Secretary/Dy. Secretary (Media Division) - Convener

## Functions:

Deciding appeal on Paid News cases against the decision of State MCMC

# Pre-certification - Jurisdiction

- Pre-Certification **request of candidates** shall be entertained by **District MCMC**
- Pre-Certification request of recognized/registered **political parties from their HQ in the state** shall be entertained by the committee headed by **Addl. CEO/Joint CEO at state level**
- Pre-Certification request of recognized/registered political **parties from their HQ in NCT of Delhi** shall be entertained by the committee headed by **Addl. CEO/Joint CEO at CEO Delhi office**

# Pre-certification - Timeline for application & decision

Application in desired format **A** - submission deadline for:

- **Registered National & State Party and contesting candidates** - Should not be later than **3 days prior** to the proposed commencement of telecast
- **Other Organizations** - Should not be later than **7 days prior** to the proposed commencement of telecast
- **Decision Timeline by District/State Level MCMC** - Within **two days** receipt of the application for pre-certification
- **Certification letter will be issued in annexure B having 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.” reference ECI letter 491/MCMC/5/2023/communication dated **24.8.2023**

**For pre-certification of advertisements in print media on pre-poll and poll day, the timeline to submit application is 02 days before the date of publication.**

# Pre-certification of advertisements - criteria

- a) Criticism of other countries;
- b) Attack on religions or communities;
- c) Anything obscene or defamatory;
- d) Incitement of 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;

**reference ECI letter 491/MCMC /5/2023 /communication dated 24.8.2023**



# Pre-certification of advertisements – criteria - contd.

## Examine the advertisements keeping in mind the basic principles of Model Code of Conduct (MCC)

- use of temples/mosques/churches/gurudwara or any place of worship in posters, music etc. or electioneering
- photographs of defence personnel and photographs of functions involving defence personnel
- No aspect of private life, not connected with the public activities of the leaders or workers of other parties shall be criticized.
- No criticism of other parties or their workers on behalf of unverified allegations or on distortions.
- **Restriction on use of animals and children (ECI order dated 05.02.2024)**

# Pre-Certification Matrix

Platform	Applicability Period	Legal Provision/Commission Orders
TV and Cable Network, Cable Channels, cinema halls, audio visual displays	Applicable in the whole territory of India at all times	SC directions in 2004 and subsequent ECI directions dated 15.04.2004
Radio including private FM channels	Applicable during election period (MCC period) period only	SC Directions and ECI directions dated 15.04.2004 . Also, Clarified through ECI instructions dated 21.11.2008
Bulk SMS/Voice Messages including IVRS	Applicable during election period (MCC period) period	Clarified through ECI instructions dated 28.05.2013
Print Media	Applicable only for pre-poll day and poll day	ECI instructions issued under <b>Article 324</b> during every State Assembly/Lok Sabha elections since 2015 Bihar Assembly Elections (No standing Instructions)

# Pre-Certification Matrix

Platform	Applicability Period	Legal Provision / Commission Orders
Advertisements in e-newspapers	Applicable in the whole territory of India at all times	ECI instructions dated 26.02.2014 and 16.04.2014
Advertisements on social media and internet websites	Applicable in the whole territory of India at all times	ECI instructions dated 25.10.2013

**Note :**  
Any political content in the form of messages/comments/photos/videos uploaded on 'blogs/self accounts'/websites/social media platforms will not be treated as political ad. Even if the same is posted/uploaded by political parties/candidates, it would not be treated as political ad

# Paid News

**Definition : Press Council of India (PCI) defines Paid News as - Any news or analysis appearing in any media (Print & Electronic) for a price in cash or kind as consideration.**

**Impact of Paid News on elections -**

**Paid News misleads the public** and hampers their ability to form correct opinions.

**Causes undue influence on voters** and also affects their Right to Information.

**Adversely affects the level playing field.**

**Seeks to circumvent election expenditure laws/ ceiling**

**Action Taken: Umlesh Yadav Case in 2007 in UP Elections; Narottam Mishra case in MP Elections)**

**NB: Paid News case is not an electoral offence and no legal action is mandated in the RPA 1951.**

# Rate Card

As per **ECI guidelines dated 27<sup>th</sup> August 2012**, six months before the due date of normal expiry of State LA, a list of all Television channels/radio channels/newspapers, broadcast/ circulated in the State/UT and their standard rate cards shall be obtained by the CEOs and provided to all **District level MCMCs** for fixing the rates of advertisements.

District MCMCs should have the **list and standard rate cards of the media**.

In case of any doubt relating to the application of the standard rate card, matter shall be referred to DIPR/DAVP for advice through CEO.

No standard Rate Card for advertisements on social media platforms



# Rate Card – contd.

## Advertisements on TV/Cable Channels owned by Political parties/functionaries/candidates:

If a candidate or their sponsoring parties utilize any TV channel /newspaper / cable channel 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 candidate concerned, even if they do not pay any actual amount to the channel.

**MCMC to keep a close watch on the content telecast** and after following all due procedure, the notional expenses as per standard rate card shall be added in candidates account.

# Paid News - Monitoring Mechanism

## Measures to be ensured :

Constitution of MCMC – Monitor all political ads- overt and covert

Obtaining list of TV Channels/ radio stations/ newspapers in the state and their standard Rate Card

Training of Media Monitoring Staff- Skilled employees and experts to be deputed for reporting media/MCC violation/ Paid News/ Social Media. PCI Training of Media Monitoring Staff- Skilled employees and experts to be deputed for reporting media/MCC violation/ Paid News/ Social Media. PCI & NBDA guidelines to be followed as well.

Sensitization of Media; Organizing Media and Political party Workshop – Self Regulation

**NB: No Straight Jacket formulae – Case to case basis decision by MCMC**

# Paid News – action to be taken - steps

**1**

## NOTICE:

Paid news cases be taken into account from the date of filing of nomination by the candidate (Sec 77(1) of RP act 1951)

On reference from District MCMC, RO shall give notice to the candidates within 96 hrs of publication/ broadcast/telecast/receipt of complaint to explain why expenditure should not be added to the candidate's expenditure.

District MCMC shall decide on the reply expeditiously and convey to the Candidate/Party its final decision.

In case no reply is received by District MCMC from the candidate within 48 hrs of serving of notice, the decision of MCMC will be final.

**2**

## APPEAL (STATE LEVEL MCMC)

If decision of District level MCMC is not acceptable to the candidate, he/she may appeal to State level MCMC within 48 hrs of receipt of decision, with information to the District MCMC.

State level MCMC shall dispose of the case within 96 hrs of receipts of appeal

**3**

## APPEAL (ECI LEVEL COMMITTEE)

The candidate may appeal against the decision of State level MCMC to this committee within 48 hrs of receiving of order

The decision of ECI shall be final.

# **Paid News - action to be taken - confirmed cases – contd.**

## **In the established cases of paid news:**

Its actual or **notional expenditure** based on DIPR / CBC rates is added in the candidate's election expenses accounts.

**Name of the candidate** (and not the media house) shall be **published on CEOs website** in appropriate manner.- erring candidate to be identified

**Weekly report in Format 1** shall be Submitted to the Commission on each Friday from the date of filing of nomination

Immediately after the completion of elections, **all the confirmed cases in Format 2 with all the Supporting documents** shall be submitted to the Commission by CEO

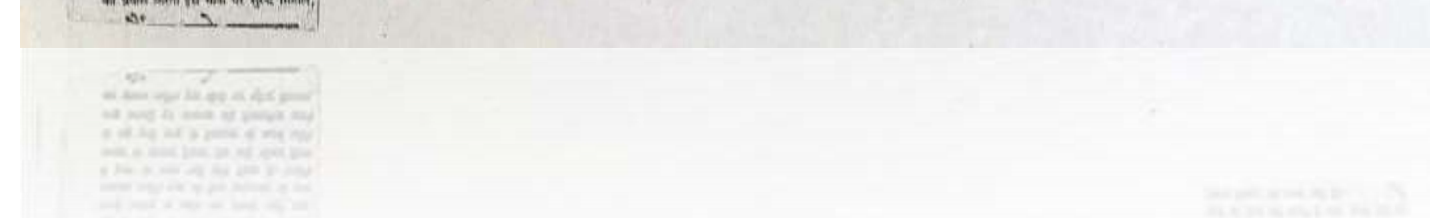
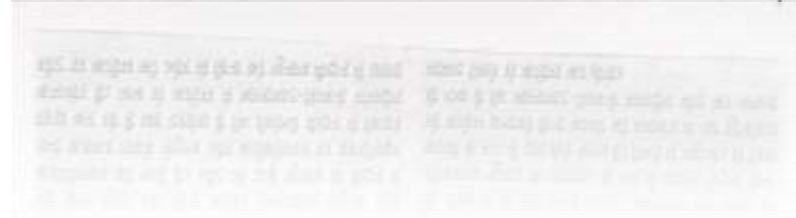
Name of the print and electronic media, with all the details of the paid news item shall be forwarded to **Press Council of India (PCI)** and **News Broadcasters Association (NBA)** by the Commission (and not by the O/o CEO/DEO)



# Paid News – Sample Cases

Identical articles with photographs and headlines appearing in competing publications carrying by lines of different authors around the same time.

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.





# Paid News – Sample Cases – contd.

Identical article with photographs and headlines appearing in competing publications carrying by lines of different authors around the same time.



## Paid News – Sample Cases – contd.

On the same page of specific newspapers, **articles praising competing candidates** claiming that both are likely to win the same elections.

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

# Paid News – Sample Cases – contd.

In specific newspapers, multiple font types and multiple drop case styles were noticed within the same page of a single newspaper. This happened because just about everything - the layouts, fonts, printouts, photographs - was provided by candidates who had paid for slots in the pages of the newspaper.

**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

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.

## What constitutes PAID NEWS

- Columns of news items which **largely indicate names of voters on caste basis and supporters of the candidate of a particular party**, such tenor and manner of presentation of news establish the report to be paid news.
- **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
- **An attempt to influence the voters by projecting the contesting candidate with all virtues during the elections is paid news**
- A news item giving **negative aspects of a candidate** and at the same time **the positive aspect of a candidate of other party** without any basis is clearly paid news



# Monitoring other media violations

ECI does not regulate media; however it is the responsibility of ECI to enforce the provisions of the law or the Court's directions, which might have linkages with media or certain aspects of media functioning. These laws are:

**S 126A RPA, 1951-** It prohibits conduct of **Exit Poll and dissemination of their results** during the hour fixed for commencement of polls in the first phase and half hour after the time fixed for close of poll for the last phase in all the states. **No restrictions on Opinion Poll (Except last 48 hours before poll)**

**S 126 (1) (b)-** It prohibits displaying of any election related matter by means of cinematograph, on television or similar apparatus during the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for conclusion of poll.

**S 127A-** The printing and publication of election pamphlets, posters, etc. is governed by its provisions, which makes it mandatory to bear on its face the **names and addresses of the printer and the publisher.**

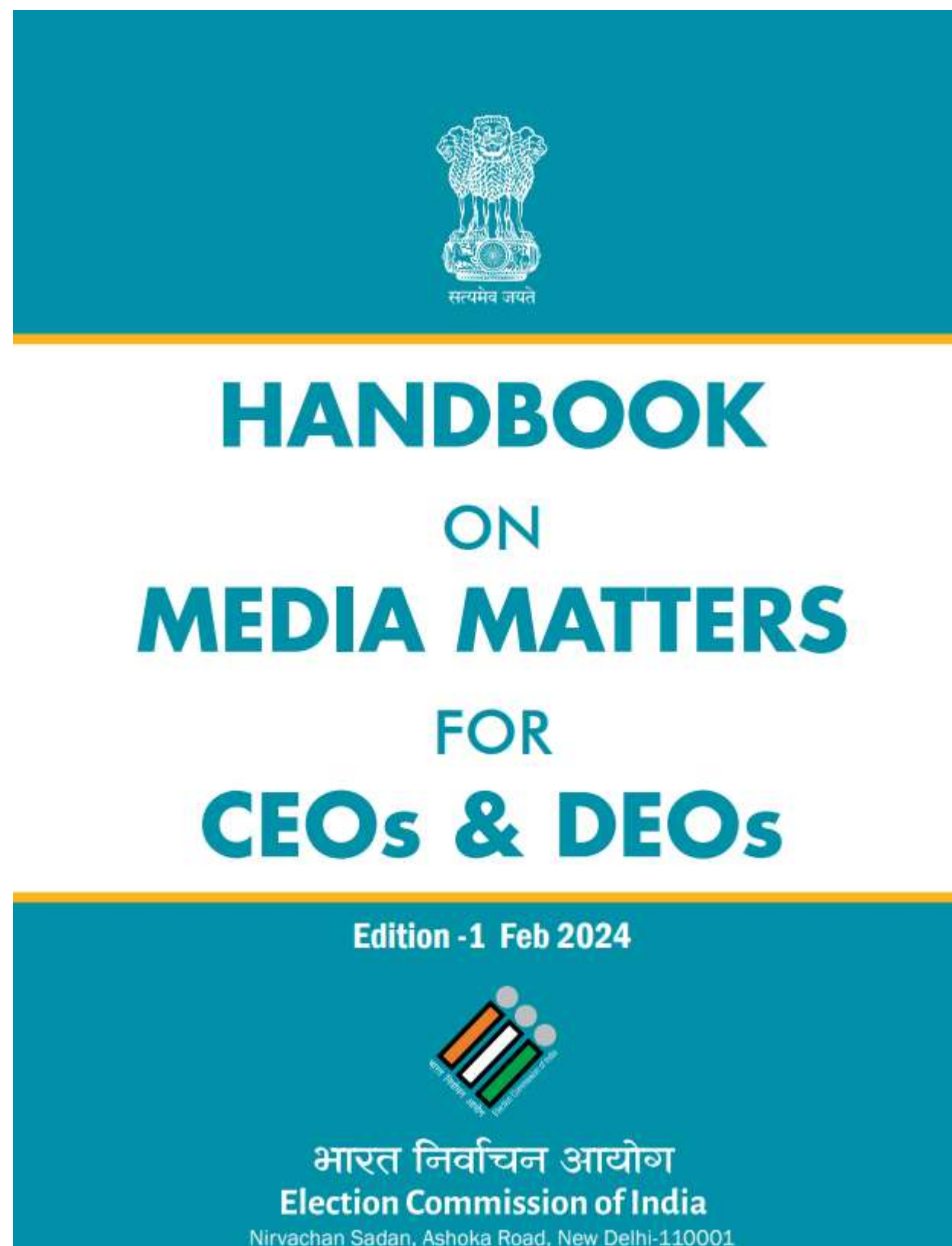
**S 171 (h) - of the IPC** prohibits incurring of **expenditure on advertisement without the authority of the contesting candidate.**



# Allotment of Broadcast/telecast time to political parties

- National Parties and Recognized State Parties are given time on All India Radio and Doordarshan as per their performance in previous Assembly elections or Lok Sabha Elections, as the case may be.
- CEOs to coordinate with the Regional Kendra's and Political parties in their State/UT for distribution of time on the Prasar Bharti Platforms as per the draw of lots process and further coordination requirement, as and when required.
- Vide order dated 18th July, 2023, ECI introduced digital time vouchers through an IT platform. During Lok Sabha elections 2024, this digital time voucher facility has been implemented successfully across the country.
- CEOs can also view the entire process/database of the time voucher portal via dedicated login from the link - <https://timevoucher.eci.gov.in/ceo/login>  
(View only option is provided)

# Hand Book on Media Matters



<https://www.eci.gov.in/eci-backend/public/api/download?url=LMAhAK6sOPBp%2FNFF0iRfXbEB1EVSLT41NNLRjYNJJP1KivrUxbfqkDatmHy12e%2Fzk1vx4ptJpQsKYHA87guoLjnPUWtHeZgKtEqs%2FyzfTTYYSmk%2FXleTcuaS9RoOeAyFO4jyvJqQIR5ZMChqCiQwfQ%3D%3D>