



## राज्य निवडणूक आयोग, महाराष्ट्र

क्रमांक- रानिआ/मनपा-२०१९/प्र.क्र. ४/का-५,  
नवीन प्रशासकीय भवन, मंत्रालयासमोर,  
मादाम कामा रोड, हुतात्मा राजगुरु चौक,  
मुंबई- ४०० ०३२.  
दिनांक : २४/०७/२०१९.

प्रति,  
सर्व जिल्हाधिकारी, (मुंबई व मुंबई उपनगर वगळून)  
आयुक्त, सर्व महानगरपालिका

विषय:- स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांच्या कालावधीत  
इंटरनेट व मोबाईल सेवा उपलब्ध करून देणाऱ्या कंपन्यांनी  
स्वतःहून अंगिकारलेली आचारसंहिता (Voluntary Code of Ethics)

महोदय,

देशामध्ये एप्रिल-२०१९ मध्ये १७ व्या लोकसभेसाठी निवडणुका पार पडल्या. या निवडणुकांच्यावेळी भारत निवडणूक आयोगाने इंटरनेट व मोबाईल सेवा उपलब्ध करून देणाऱ्या समाज माध्यमांच्या प्रतिनिधींसोबत बैठक घेतली होती. त्यामध्ये सदर प्रतिनिधींनी त्यांच्यामार्फत निवडणूकांदरम्यान स्वतःहून आचारसंहिता (Voluntary Code of Ethics) तयार करून त्याचे पालन करण्याचे कबूल केले (बैठकीचे दि. १९.०३.२०१९ चे प्रसिध्दीपत्रक सोबत जोडले आहे). त्यास अनुसरून देशातील इंटरनेट व मोबाईल सेवा उपलब्ध करून देणाऱ्या कंपन्यांनी स्वतःहून एक आचारसंहिता (Voluntary Code of Ethics) अंगिकारली होती (प्रत संलग्न).

१. स्थानिक स्वराज्य संस्थांच्या निवडणुकांमध्येसुद्धा त्या क्षेत्रातील इंटरनेट व मोबाईल सेवा उपलब्ध करून देणाऱ्या कंपन्यांना स्वतःहून अशा प्रकारची आचारसंहिता (Voluntary Code of Ethics) अंगिकारणे आवश्यक आहे. याकरिता सदर आचारसंहितेची प्रत यासोबत पाठविण्यात येत आहे (अधिक माहितीकरीता भारत निवडणूक आयोगाच्या <https://eci.gov.in> या वेबसाईटला भेट द्यावी). आपल्या जिल्हयामध्ये /महानगरपालिकेमध्ये होणाऱ्या निवडणुकांमध्ये आपण अशा प्रकारची कार्यवाही करावी.

मा. राज्य निवडणूक आयुक्त यांच्या आदेशानुसार,

आपला,

( राजाराम झेंडे )

सह सचिव,

राज्य निवडणूक आयोग, महाराष्ट्र

सहपत्र - व्हालेंटरी कोड ऑफ इथीक्स फॉर द जनरल इलेक्शन, २०१९ ची प्रत

3/19

**ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**  
**Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110 001**

PRESS NOTE

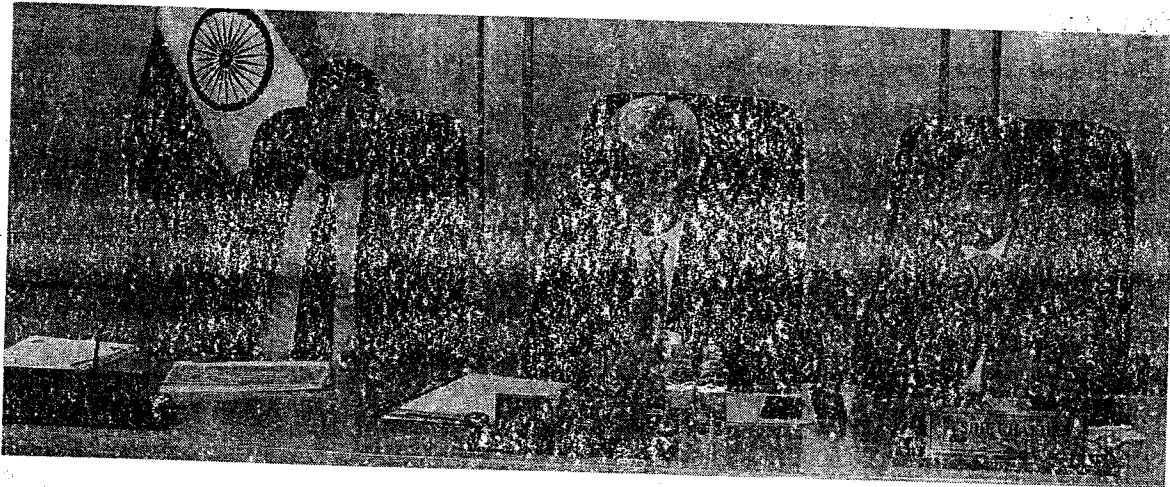
No. ECI/PN/31/2019

Dated: 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

**Sub : ECI convenes meeting with Social Media Platforms; IAMAI and Social Media Intermediaries Willingly Agree to come up with a Code of Ethics for the Industry Laying Down Operational Details**

Election Commission of India today had in-depth interactive session with representatives of various Social Media Platforms and Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) on the usage of Social Media ahead of the Lok Sabha Elections 2019.

In his opening remarks, Chief Election Commissioner Shri Sunil Arora cited Model Code of Conduct as a unique and historic document which is followed by all political parties /entities from the date of declaration of schedule of elections till the election process is concluded. This Code is the outcome of consensus evolved amongst the different Political Parties and ECI. Infact, more often than not, this Code has obviated the need for application of more stringent provisions of law, he said. Shri Arora exhorted the Social Media Organizations, who are formidable force-multipliers, to come up with a similar Code for the ongoing election process in the immediate context and a lasting document in the long run.



Election Commissioner Shri Ashok Lavasa pointed out that today's has been a momentous meeting for evolution of 'behaviour' of Social Media platforms on Social Media. He said that voluntary restraint is a hallmark of civilized society and works as effectively as any regulation. He suggested that a clear clause on users' voluntarily agreeing not to misuse social media platforms for election or political purposes should be considered by the management.

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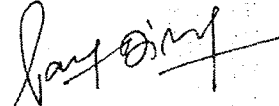
Election Commissioner Shri Sushil Chandra reminded the representatives that Election Commission of India is committed to ethical, free & fair elections. He reiterated that role of social media in helping spread information as well as curbing misinformation cannot be underestimated. He added that deterrents like some punitive action against users misusing the platform should be considered pro-actively. Shri Chandra said that a participative approach from the social media platforms would greatly help ECI meet its objectives.



The meeting was centered on discussing issues like appointment of dedicated grievance channel for expeditious action by the organizations, pre-certification and transparency in expenditure of political advertisements. The meeting also focused on evolving a notification mechanism by social media platforms for acting upon the violations of Section 126 of R.P. Act, 1951 and preventing misuse of these platforms.

Today's meeting was attended by the industry head Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and representatives from social media organizations such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Google, ShareChat, TikTok and BigoTV.

IAMAI and Social Media intermediaries willingly agreed to come up with a 'Code of Ethics' for the Industry laying down operational details by tomorrow evening.

  
**Pawan Diwan**  
Under Secretary



## Voluntary Code of Ethics for the General Elections 2019

### **Preamble**

The Internet has created opportunities for all to access reliable information, seek out credible sources, and obtain relevant facts. The web's openness has made these benefits available to all no matter who they are and where they are located.

This equally applies to elections, which are key to nurturing and strengthening a democratic culture. A free and fair election is the foundation of democracy. Access to reliable information and communication platforms via the Internet enables people to make informed choices in exercising their franchise during elections.

Keeping this context in mind and as per recommendations of the Sinha Committee Report, Participants recognise that while their products/services allow users to post content, the Participants are neither the author(s) nor the publisher(s) of such content. However, the Participants have together developed this 'Voluntary Code of Ethics for the General Elections 2019' (Code) and are committed to helping support such democratic processes by improving the integrity and transparency of the electoral process.

The Participants recognize that their group companies provide and administer different products and services, each operating under different business models and technologies while having varying audiences. Therefore, the Participants will endeavour to ensure that such products/ services meet the spirit of the Code while accounting for the diverse nature of the products/ services, which are governed by their respective product policies.

The Code shall apply within the existing legal framework in India. In case of any conflict between the voluntary framework and the existing legal framework, the legal framework will prevail.

### **Purpose of the Code**

The purpose of this voluntary Code is to identify the measures that Participants can put in place to increase confidence in the electoral process. This is to help safeguard the products



and/ or services of the Participants against misuse to vitiate the free and fair character of the 2019 General Elections in India.

### Commitments

The Participants will endeavour to meet, in good faith and to the best of their ability, the following commitments during the 2019 Lok Sabha General Elections in India:

1. Participants will endeavour to, where appropriate and keeping in mind the principle of freedom of expression, deploy appropriate policies and processes to facilitate access to information regarding electoral matters on their products and/ or services.

2. Participants will endeavour to voluntarily undertake information, education and communication campaigns to build awareness including electoral laws and other related instructions. Participants will also endeavour to impart training to the nodal officer at ECI on their products/ services, including mechanism for sending requests as per procedure established by law.

1. Participants and the Election Commission of India (ECI) have developed a notification mechanism by which the ECI can notify the relevant platforms of potential violations of Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and other applicable electoral laws in accordance with procedures established by law. These valid legal orders will be acknowledged and/ or processed within 3 hours for violations reported under Section 126 as per the Sinha Committee recommendations. All other valid legal requests will be acted upon expeditiously by the Participants, based on the nature of reported violation.

1. Participants are creating/opening a high priority dedicated reporting mechanism for the ECI and appoint dedicated person(s) / teams during the period of General Elections to interface with and to exchange feedback as may assist with taking expeditious action upon receipt of such a lawful request, following due legal process, from the ECI.



Internet And Mobile Association Of India

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2. Participants will provide a mechanism for relevant political advertisers, in accordance with their obligations under law, to submit pre-certificates issued by ECI and/ or Media Certification & Monitoring Committee (MCMC) of the ECI in relation to election advertisements that feature names of political parties, candidates for the 2019 General Elections. Further, Participants shall expeditiously process/action paid political advertisements lawfully notified to Participants by the ECI that do not feature such certification.
  3. Participants will commit to facilitating transparency in paid political advertisements, including utilising their pre-existing labels/ disclosure technology for such advertisements.
  4. Participants will, pursuant to a valid request received from the ECI, via Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) provide an update on the measures taken by them to prevent abuse of their respective platforms.
  5. IAMAI will coordinate with the Participants on the steps carried out under this Code and IAMAI as well as Participants will be in constant communication with the ECI during the election period.

***Entry into Force***

This Code will become effective and will enter into force on 20 March 2019 and will be in force for the duration of the 2019 Indian General Elections.