

Establishing the Institute of
Democracy & Elections for
Good Governance ...



**STATE ELECTION COMMISSION
MAHARASHTRA**

No. SEC 2018/CR-16/D-2
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Order

A historic attempt was made in 1992 through the 73rd & 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India, to provide rightful place to the Local Self Governments (LSGs), third tier of Indian Democracy, in Nation building. These amendments provided for, besides others, (i) Constitutional Status to the Local Self Governments (LSGs) in the country, and (ii) Independent State Election Commissions (SEC) in each state for regularly conducting their elections in a free, fair and transparent manner.

2. Though State Election Commissions have done fairly well in timely conducting the elections which are complex, intimate and fiercely contested, following concerns have emerged regarding LSGs, their elections and SECs :

- (i) Lesser importance & Insensitiveness of various stakeholders towards the role of LSGs & SECs,

- (ii) Less than optimal devolution of functions, finances & functionaries
- (iii) Existence of very little knowledge relating to these elections
- (iv) Serious implementational issues e.g. (a) training of large number of Returning Officers (approx. 20,000 for LSGs as against 48 in Parliament and 288 Assembly in Maharashtra), (b) Implementation of Model Code of Conduct in dispersed Gram Panchayats etc.

3. There is probably no Organisation / Institute at present working in the field of elections to Local Self-Governments. The Institute "India International Institute of Democracy & Election Management" (IIIDEM) established by Election Commission of India (ECI) is working for the elections to Parliament & Assembly only.

4. State Election Commission, Maharashtra (SECM) after realising the above gaps in research, knowledge, training and capacity building etc. in the elections to LSGs, conceived of an Institute in the year 2016 to conduct research and knowledge oriented activities. Major activities done under the banner of this Institute so far are briefly mentioned below:-

- (i) Research on nearly 20 topics by Gokhale Institute of Political Science & Economics, Pune and various Universities in Maharashtra like Mumbai University, Savitribai Phule, Pune University etc. between 2016-18 during live elections.
- (ii) National & 7 Regional Conferences on the subject of "Twenty Five Years of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments: Progress and Future Directions" between November 2017 and January 2018 with the active support of Government of Maharashtra. The National Conference was inaugurated by

Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra and concluded by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

- (iii) Democracy Fortnight by Government of Maharashtra from 26th January to 9th February 2018, throughout the State at the instance of above Institute.
- (iv) State & Regional Workshops of various Political Parties on the subject "Role of Political Parties towards Healthier Democracy" in May 2018
- (v) International Conference on the subject of "Better Elections for Healthier Democracy" at Mumbai on 25th and 26th October 2018 with the active support of Government of Maharashtra. The International Conference was inaugurated by Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra and concluded by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

5. Encouraged by the good results obtained in the above activities, the State Election Commission, Maharashtra feels that time has now come to formally issue orders establishing the above Institute.

6. After considering all the factors, State Election Commission hereby passes the following order:-

Order

(i) An Institute called '**Institute of Democracy & Elections for Good Governance**' is hereby established by the State Election Commission, Maharashtra.

(ii) It shall strive to generate & disseminate knowledge towards making the elections of LSGs better for a healthier democracy. This would involve amongst other things promoting research, sharing of good

practices, training of election managers, strategies for tackling emerging challenges, working as extension organisation to various International Institutes etc.

(iii) A suitable person (Serving / retired academician or researcher or officer etc.) of repute and deep understanding of research & LSG elections shall be appointed to lead the Institute. He / She can be either recruited by SECM directly or taken on deputation / secondment etc.


(iv) There shall be an Advisory Committee consisting of minimum 3 persons of repute including academician, practitioners, NGOs etc. to advise the SECM and head of the Institute & his team for the proper growth of the Institute from time to time.

(v) The Institute shall strive to work with minimum infrastructure & minimum permanent staff on its pay roll. It shall involve the best persons/ institutions available in the required areas through innovative methods.

(vi) The Institute shall evolve over time in terms of legal, structure, staff infrastructure, sources of funding, areas of work etc.

(vii) State Election Commission shall provide the initial funds for the Institute.

By order of State Election Commissioner,


(Shaktar Channe)
Secretary

State Election Commission, Maharashtra.